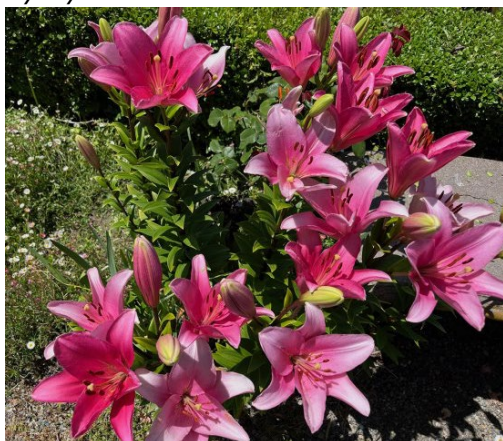


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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



A fan favorite, Asiatic lilies. Daylilies are also great for summer blooms. Photos Cynthia Brian

during hot and dry periods. Teeming with beneficial microorganisms including fungi, bacteria, and earthworms, organic matter is easily broken down to create a healthy soil ecosystem that suppresses disease, resists pests, and encourages root growth. When I'm planting new specimens, I mix the compost with new soil before planting, and for established plants, like my roses, I use it as a top dressing.

Thankfully, June was cooler than expected which allowed for summer plantings to take root. Because the sun's intensity usually brings soaring temperatures in summer, we must implement specific strategies to grow our gardens in July and August. For vegetables, heat-loving tomatoes, sweet potatoes, eggplant, peppers, and okra can still be planted.

Flowers that will thrive in the heat include zinnias, sunflowers, cosmos, marigolds, Mexican primrose, calendula, daylilies, birds of paradise and lamb's ear. Echinacea, lavender, Black-eyed Susan, and California poppies will be stellar bloomers throughout the summer months. Continue to deadhead your roses for repeat flowering. My roses are the bedrock of my July blooms. I cut bouquets for the house for their colorful beauty and enticing perfume.

To keep your summer blooming brighter, follow these instructions:

1. Deep water to encourage deeper root growth.
2. Water early in the morning or later in the evening to minimize evaporation.
3. Focus watering on the roots, not on the foliage to prevent disease.
4. Apply a layer of mulch now before the summer heat begins. Mulching will assist in retaining moisture, suppressing weeding growth, and insulating the soil from the extremes in temperatures we are experiencing between daylight and nighttime hours. Wood chips and straw are excellent choices.
5. Use shade cloth, umbrellas, or plant sun-sensitive plants under taller plants to provide shade. Intense sunlight stresses many plants.
6. Choose heat-tolerant plants such as natives and succulents that will thrive in drought conditions. My succulents are blooming with very interesting colors, shapes and textures.
7. Apply slow-release or organic fertilizers as necessary. Do not over-fertilize or you'll encourage weak growth and increase the need for moisture.
8. Deadhead perennials as needed, remove wilted flowers, and trim leggy growth to encourage new and continued blooms. By doing this you will also maintain the health of your garden and keep your landscape tidier.
9. Remove weeds as they emerge. Weeds zap the water and nutrients from the plants we want to showcase. Poison oak is popping up in unexpected places. Wear gloves when pulling it out and never burn it as the oils are toxic and can cause severe allergic reactions.
10. Birds, bats, butterflies, lizards, frogs, spiders, and snakes are welcome in the garden as they pollinate, eat detrimental insects, and in the case of gopher and King snakes, devour rodents including gophers, moles, rats and mice.

Make a field trip to your favorite nursery to see what is in bloom. Ask for advice from the experts. Buy a flowering specimen or two or three. These floral investments will spice up your porch or patio. Enjoy summer, flower by flower.

I'm excited to announce another blossoming sensation. My second book, 'Family Forever' in my children's book series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures, is in publication. Pre-sales are available now at a discounted price at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Order your autographed copies today for summer reading!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy July!

DON'T FORGET: Shoe Drive for Be the Star You Are! extended to July 30th as our goal is 2,500 pairs. Shoes may be dropped off at <https://5aspace.com/>, 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga or www.TeamHoogs.com, 629 Moraga Road (next to 7/11), Moraga. For more information, visit

"I should like to enjoy this summer flower by flower, as if it were to be the last one for me." ~ Andre Gide

Summer is the most beloved season of the year for most people for many reasons. It is a time for vacations, picnics, beach excursions, barbecues, and plenty of outdoor activities. For me, summer is all about the flowers and alfresco living. I finally finished my first round of weeding my landscape, cleaned my deck and patio furniture, re-potted plants, and am in the process of adding additional compost to my blooming plants.

Compost is an essential ingredient to promote blooming, improve the health of the soil, and increase the vigor of any plant. As a nutrient-rich soil amendment, compost is aptly referred to as 'black gold' with its balanced mix of macro and micronutrients including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, plus other slow-release nutrients. The organic matter in compost acts like a sponge that retains moisture around plant roots. This retention reduces the stress on plants

<https://www.bethestaryouare.org/shoedrive>



A plethora of blooms including lamb's ear, roses, mint, and nigella. Photos Cynthia Brian



Mexican primrose and calendula bloom in July. Photos Cynthia Brian



The lime green leaves of newly sprouted poison oak are sprouting in gardens. Photos Cynthia Brian



A bee just left the big magnolia blossom's nectar. Photos Cynthia Brian



Cynthia Brian's newest children's picture book, Family Forever



Wear sunglasses and sunscreen while gardening advises Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian.

Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com. Her newest children's picture book, Family Forever, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard

Adventures is available for PRE-ORDERS now at
<https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects,
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