

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Nature talks



Mexican primrose and calendula bloom in July.



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



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

Photos Cynthia Brian

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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 tem-

peratures 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!