

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly

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Lamorinda Home Sales

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Joys of July gardening



Cezanne Clematis is a true painter's dream climbing vine.

By Cynthia Brian

"Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas." ~ Elizabeth Murray

The verdant hills have turned golden as the peak of summertime splendor arrives in July. The sunsets are sensational while the wonders of nature captivate our senses. A girlfriend gifted me the book, "Color In and Out of the Garden" by Lorene Edwards Forkner, and I find myself swinging in my hammock under my magnificent magnolia perusing the brushstrokes and hues of the garden as I turn the pages.

Finally, my months of intense weeding are complete. My hands and fingers are still numb from the repeated motions, yet I am reaping the



A surprise bright pink bloom on this potted succulent.

glorious joy of nature's painted floral magic. My garden is indeed the lens through which I see the world.

The tapestry of color helps me learn to see with eyes wide open what the landscape produces this month. The compact Cezanne clematis boasts deep purple flowers that cover the vine. (I seem to have numerous famous artists in my garden collection including a rabbit named Monet and a bird named Rembrandt.) Fluorescent pink perennial sweet pea has covered parts of my hillside and crept into my carpet roses. Speaking of roses, they are flourishing providing continual bouquets of beauty and fragrance. Pink and purple appear to be my summer theme as purple trumpet vine and potato vine climb together in my rose garden where cerise-colored

Photos Cynthia Brian

Angel Face roses reign and pink knotweed blanket the soil. A new succulent growing in a container on my front porch burst into bloom in shades of luminous pink/purple. What a joyous, festive summer surprise!

Birds of Paradise, both the orange and blue varieties, are showstoppers in gardens. Their flowers do indeed resemble birds. They are easy to grow, easy to maintain, and a wonderful addition to a garden when you are seeking a more tropical feeling. Speaking of birds, hopefully you have included birdhouses, bird baths, and bird feeders in your garden design. Birds are one of our best pest control options. As a bonus, they serenade us with song and provide entertainment as they flit from limb to limb. Install a porch swing, bench, or hammock (my go-to) and enjoy the performance.

As an experiment, I planted tomatoes, thyme, peppers, and shallots in a large container outside my kitchen window so that I could grab and go. The plants are happy and thriving. I've already harvested shallots, peppers and thyme, and the cherry tomato vines may eventually cover my window!

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For a tropical look and summer stunner, the blue-flower bird of paradise is a winner.