

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Nature talks

Photos Cynthia Brian



Fresh garlic was harvested and will be dried for 30 days before consumption.



Cherry tomatoes growing in a container with thyme and peppers.



Purple trumpet vine and potato vine twine together.

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The garlic I planted last fall had green leaves in June, but this past week I harvested it. My recipe for success is to harvest garlic between July 4 and Aug. 1. When the leaves are about one-third golden, gently dig up the soil around the bulb to see if the garlic is large enough. If so, use a fork to dig, not pull, the garlic out of the ground, shake off the dirt, and don't wash. If you let the leaves go completely brown the garlic won't be tasty. I braid my leaves and hang them in a dark, dry place for at least 30 days before consuming them. A dark garage or shed is a perfect location. As with all home-grown produce, home-grown garlic is more flavorful. Also, a solution with garlic and water sprayed onto plants is a natural pest repellent! I also add a clove of garlic to the soil around my roses to deter bugs.

In my last article, (Summer blooms brighter: www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1710/Digging-Deep-with-Goddess-Gardener-Cynthia-Brian-Summer-blooms-brighter.html) I discussed the importance of composting. I fill five-gallon buckets with compost, then spread it around my roses, and dig it into the soil in my potager. Compost works miracles and it is so easy to make. Save everything

but meat and add to a closed container, pile or bin. Add scraps of soap if you want to keep the unwanted insects at bay.

It is time to start considering the bulbs you may want to plant in the fall. Peruse garden catalogs or ask your nursery expert for suggestions. With ample sunshine and warmer temperatures, we can enjoy a dazzling summer of garden parties and floral displays. Going beyond our backyards, check out community gardens throughout our area that unite neighbors and foster a sense of camaraderie. The joys of July gardening include ecologically friendly practices, promoting biodiversity, conserving water, and supporting the artistic heritage of our environment. The Monarch Butterfly Garden created by the Moraga Garden Club at Rancho Laguna Park in Moraga is a favorite. Get inspired by the collective efforts of Lamorinda residents who have beautified each city by creating vibrant and sustainable green spaces.

Unleash your creativity and indulge in the art of cultivating colorful gardens and explore the wonders of nature in this glowing golden month.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy July!



A friend's daughter, Maria, created this hand-painted birdhouse from a gourd.