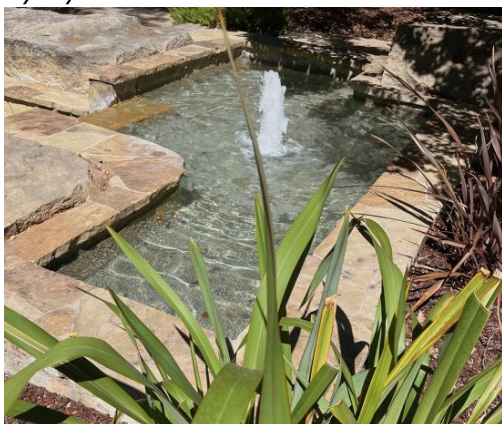


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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian



Fountains and ponds are especially enjoyable to the birds and wildlife. Photos Cynthia Brian

"Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own." ~ Charles Dickens

☐ Monochromatic. My featureless October garden appears unicolor. There are several shades of green, so perhaps not completely boring, but other than splashes of pink from the crape myrtles, rock purslane, roses, Jacobinia, and late-blooming Naked Ladies, as well as purple from the Princess flowers and muscari, colors are absent. I'm trying to find the beauty in this "in-between time" before autumn leaves turn brilliantly bright.

☐ It seems like it was only last week that I was power washing my patio, setting out umbrellas, and arranging my outdoor furniture in a landscape that was filled with blooms. The summer wasn't endless as fall arrived abruptly and with it the numerous chores in preparation for winter and spring. It's time for my annual seasonal reset.

☐ Because summer is so wonderfully pleasant in our community, my husband and I choose Saturday and

Sunday "staycations" instead of traveling elsewhere in the warmer months. Summer is when we do our outdoor entertaining for family and friends. I've designed my backyard to reflect a relaxing and rejuvenating resort complete with multiple market umbrellas, lounges, tables, chairs, firepits, hammocks, games, and spa refinements. Summer is glorious, colorful, and comfortable.

☐ When October arrives, it's time to pack up. It takes me more than a week to clean, cover, move, and store all the furniture, cushions, umbrellas, hammocks, and more. The dozen atmospheric rivers of last winter may be an indicator of even stronger storms requiring sand bags coming this winter. I prefer to be prepared. Most of my outdoor cushions I custom sewed myself using Sunbrellar fabrics in the colors that complement my landscape. Although these fabrics are created to last years in the sunshine, rain, and inclement elements, I choose to protect them from winter wear and tear.

☐ Here are my recommendations for shielding your outdoor furnishings from the harsh winter to increase their longevity.

- ☐ 1. Wipe off all dirt from furnishings. If dirt or bird droppings are on your furniture or pads, wash them thoroughly and allow them to dry in the sunshine.
 - ☐ 2. If you have the space, it is best to store your chair pads and lounge cushions indoors. After cleaning and drying, I place mine in plastic bags to keep them dust-free.
 - ☐ If you can't store them indoors, make sure to seal them in water-proof plastic bags and place them in an area that will incur minimal rain, wind, or rodent invasions.
 - ☐ 3. Buy outdoor furniture patio covers for each of your patio chairs, tables, and chaises. Search for quality workmanship that will last longer. Most of my patio covers last an average of two years in the wind and rain. Cover your furniture and make sure to anchor the bottoms of the fabric so it doesn't blow off.
 - ☐ 4. Because much of my patio furniture is vintage wicker, I not only cover it, but I move it under a protected balcony. Wicker can be fragile. If you have wooden furniture, oil it or treat it to prevent moisture damage.
 - ☐ 5. To keep the patio looking a bit tidier and to hold down the coverings, I place my potted plants around the perimeter.
 - ☐ 6. The last thing on my list is to fold up the hammocks carefully. Again, I clean them of any bird droppings or other debris, then, return them to their cloth bags. The bags are stored in my weather-proof shed.
- ☐ When spring unfolds, I uncover everything. Wipe down any dust. Take the cushions out of storage, hoist up the umbrellas, hang the hammocks, and voila! We are ready for another season of beautiful outdoor living.

☐ Gardening Guide for October from Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

☐ While winters are generally milder in our area, these are important steps to take to ensure the health of your garden this October:

☐ - PLACE flags on sprinkler pop-up risers in lawns to make it easier to find them in the spring. Because I over-seed each year, roots in the grass form a thick carpet over the sprinkler heads, not allowing them to pop up. Without the flags, it takes hours of probing and digging to find the sprinklers.

☐ - BUY colorful gourds and small pumpkins to brighten your porch. They will serve dual holidays with the simple addition of decorative spiders, skeletons, or ghouls for Halloween and a turkey, fall leaves, or pilgrims for Thanksgiving.

☐ - CLEAN and cover patio furniture and cushions before storing for winter.

☐ - REMOVE dead or diseased plants from your garden to prevent disease spread.

☐ - ADJUST your irrigation schedule and stop watering when it rains.

☐ - REDUCE lawn mowing frequency as grass growth slows.

☐ - ENSURE container plants have adequate drainage to prevent waterlogging.

- REFRIGERATE your tulips for four to six weeks before planting. Daffodils and other spring-blooming bulbs can be planted anytime.
- ENJOY the soothing sounds of water with a pond or fountain.
- TAKE steps to protect your garden from gophers.
- HARVEST Asian pears as they are crunchy and sweet.
- PICK tomatoes as they ripen or make fried green tomatoes.
- SAVE seeds of fennel for sowing and savory licorice flavors in recipes.
- Prepare for this seasonal reset and you'll be ready to weather winter, whatever it will be.
- Happy Gardening! Happy Growing.



Get in the fall spirit by decorating with gourds and pumpkins. Photos Cynthia Brian



Harvest Asian pears as they are crunchy and sweet. Photos Cynthia Brian



Tomatoes grown in a window box are still providing fruit. Photos Cynthia Brian



Mash dried fennel seed in a mortar with a pestle to create savory licorice flavors. Photos Cynthia Brian



Patio furniture is covered for winter with colorful planters holding the plastic.



Cynthia Brian and Be the Star You Are!r charity volunteers thank you for coming to our Pear Festival booth. For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out

Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>.
Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian is a New York Times best-

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