

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Expert's advice on decluttering sentimental items read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

It's Eco-Optimism for the 2024 Garden Trends Report!

By Cynthia Brian



Photos Cynthia Brian

Clip baby arugula to add to salads as it grows.

"With gratitude, optimism is sustainable." ~ Michael J. Fox

Welcome to 2024. New cheer for a new year! Here we go again. Every year the Garden Media Group scouts global consumer trends, including fashion and home design, plus everything in between via global experts to bring resources, new products, and ideas to help companies and gardeners become trendsetters, gatekeepers, and influencers.

I have never considered myself a trendsetter, gatekeeper, or influencer because I believe in creating a style that reflects one's individual



Roses are still performing and blooming. (Tournament of Roses)

tastes and aesthetics. My company is StarStyle® Productions, LLC because I believe that we each can design a life that allows us to live in a style as the stars of our own lives. Yet, every year, I look forward to the Garden Trends Report because it is filled with information that anyone can utilize to craft their horticultural year in a positive, affirmative manner.

As an ultra-optimistic person, I find their 2024 trends theme of Eco-Optimism especially critical and thought-provoking. This column is based on their findings, and I hope you find it as fascinating and noteworthy as I do.

First the bad news.

Did you know that 67% of Americans 18-23 years of age experience eco-anxiety, which is a chronic fear of environmental cataclysm? With 2023 ranking as the hottest year on record with record-high temperatures since record-keeping began 150 years ago, it is no wonder that eco-anxiety is rising. From January through September, Earth's average temperature was 2 degrees Fahrenheit higher than the 20th-century average of 57.7 degrees Fahrenheit; 200 million people could be displaced by 2050 and 25,000 species are in danger of extinction due to climate change (and we better do something so that humans are not among those listed). Since 2000, climate-related disasters including fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanoes, storms, droughts, landslides, melting glaciers, and extreme temperatures have increased by 50%.

Where's the optimism in these statistics?

The good news is that 68% of people ages 18-24, more than 1.2 billion individuals, are acting to make positive climate impacts. Hurray for our young people! Wind and solar power broke energy use records this past year. If we eliminated greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide), within three years, global temperatures would begin to lessen. In March of 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced over \$1.6 billion in apportionments to support states, commonwealths, and territories in their efforts to connect people with nature and conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats. When we support wildlife and their habitats, we support ourselves.

As gardeners, scientists, horticulturists, and communicators, we have a responsibility to understand the environmental roadblocks and ease the very real eco-anxiety that permeates our global population.

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