

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Prescription to Plant



Cabernet Sauvignon in Cynthia Brian's family vineyard awaits harvesting.



Acer Palmatum-Crimson Cut Leaf Japanese Maple shines brightly.

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Moisture: In autumn, we may be fortunate to get a bit of rainfall. With such a hot, dry season, our summer water bills were off the charts this year. Cooler weather combined with some precipitation will build strong roots and ease financial anxiety.

Root Development: Speaking of roots, with the soil still warm from sum-



A multi-trunk watermelon-hued crape myrtle tree.

Photos Cynthia Brian

mer, plants can focus on building a strong root system as they spread more effectively. Flowers get a head start on growing that will ensure a spring with robust, vibrant blooms.

Minimal Weed Competition: When autumn rolls around, most gardeners have eradicated most weeds from the landscape. Weeds compete with plants for nutrients, water, and space. Before fall planting, take a serious stroll through the garden to investigate the conditions. Pull any remaining stragglers. Clean up the garden by clearing away old plant materials to prevent pests from overwintering.

Bulbs are a mainstay of my garden. Every autumn, I plant more bulbs to surprise me with their blooms. In the next few months, you can cultivate bulbs of tulips, daffodils, crocus, fritillaria, hyacinths, muscari, Dutch iris, alliums, and more. Tulip bulbs need to be chilled for six to ten weeks before planting, so plan accordingly.

If some of your daffodils didn't bloom last spring, it could mean that the mother bulb is getting strangled by the bulblets. Dig out the bulb, remove the bulblets to plant elsewhere, and then replant the mother. Although muscari normally blooms from March through May, I have patches of muscari blooming now. Over the years, I have planted thousands of bulbs. Sometimes when I'm transplanting, I inadvertently dig up several bulbs of various species. When that happens, I dust them off and plant them in other areas, regardless of the time of year. Because of this routine, I often have blooms when blooms of these plants aren't normal. Isn't nature marvelous?

For an interesting conversation starter, grow Brugmansia, commonly known as angel's trumpet. This tropical pollinator and hummingbird-friendly plant originally from South America enjoys six to eight hours of sun daily and it's not picky about the soil. The species boasts distinctive, drooping, scented trumpet-shaped flowers. At full height, it can grow to 20 feet or more, although if kept in a container it will grow to about 12 feet if it is pruned. The downsides are that Brugmansia is a thirsty hog, and all parts are highly poisonous to humans and pets.

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