

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 22 Wednesday, January 1, 2014



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide
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Organization for the Naturally Disorganized

By Sophie Braccini



Christine Dodier (right) and "Jennifer" organizing the computer files.

Photos Sophie Braccini

The beginning of the year is a great opportunity to look at things with a fresh perspective and decide to improve one's life. One area is the organization of the home. For some, this is a simple process that can take a couple hours by defining a private space, adding shelving, or filing cabinets. For others who might be

stressed by a busy professional life, are going through a tough life transition, or are naturally disorganized, it is a major hurdle, especially for the long term.

One local resident, who asked to be called "Jennifer" for this article, decided she needed extra help to get a handle on things and move forward

with her life. Letting go, clearing up space, and putting simple systems in place made a major difference for her.

The retired stress management professional, who had traveled the planet, was at a point where she was no longer able to let go of material things around her. "It was like giving away some of my life," she said. After the loss of her husband, and raising a disabled child, then downsizing to a smaller space, Jennifer had the feeling that her brain was like a messed up ball of yarn, "like when a kitten has been playing with it," she said, "and I needed help slowly pulling the strings one after the other and getting a handle on things."

She found the help she needed with Christine Dodier, an interior designer and personal assistant who owns Spaces in Place in Lafayette. Dodier started working with Jennifer a few hours every week, reorganizing the space and setting in place what she calls simple systems.

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$385,000	\$2,400,000
MORAGA	3	\$470,000	\$542,000
ORINDA	12	\$500,000	\$2,100,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

998 Almanor Lane, \$670,000, 2 Bdrms, 1178 SqFt, 1946 YrBl, 11-22-13
4077 Coralee Lane, \$920,000, 2 Bdrms, 2478 SqFt, 1975 YrBl, 11-27-13
921 Dewing Avenue, \$579,000, 2 Bdrms, 1311 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 11-25-13
1110 Estates Drive, \$540,000, 2 Bdrms, 1304 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 12-3-13
3683 Happy Valley Road, \$2,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 4210 SqFt, 1974 YrBl, 11-22-13
3182 Old Tunnel Road #C, \$385,000, 771 SqFt, 1953 YrBl, 11-22-13
859 Sibert Court, \$1,685,000, 4 Bdrms, 3477 SqFt, 1946 YrBl, 12-3-13
3518 South Silver Springs Road, \$1,731,500, 3 Bdrms, 2292 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 12-3-13;

Previous Sale: \$1,760,000, 05-09-08

1725 Springbrook Road, \$900,000, 5 Bdrms, 2381 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 11-27-13;

Previous Sale: \$975,000, 06-02-06

MORAGA

2024 Ascot Drive, \$469,000, 3 Bdrms, 1687 SqFt, 1972 YrBl, 11-26-13
1438 Camino Peral, \$542,000, 3 Bdrms, 1348 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 12-3-13;
Previous Sale: \$340,000, 11-02-11
1489 Camino Peral, \$470,000, 2 Bdrms, 1265 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 11-27-13;

Previous Sale: \$430,000, 09-02-10

ORINDA

12 Bates Boulevard, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1897 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 11-26-13
316 Camino Sobrante, \$910,000, 5 Bdrms, 2286 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 12-2-13
572 Dalewood Drive, \$1,970,000, 5 Bdrms, 5211 SqFt, 1991 YrBl, 11-26-13
358 El Toyonal, \$775,000, 3 Bdrms, 1357 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 12-4-13
138 Lombardy Lane, \$899,000, 2 Bdrms, 1435 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 11-22-13
724 Miner Road, \$500,000, 3 Bdrms, 1472 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 11-22-13
62 Moraga Via, \$1,130,000, 5 Bdrms, 2619 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-26-13
673 Moraga Way, \$868,000, 4 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 11-22-13
17 Rheem Boulevard, \$520,000, 2 Bdrms, 1408 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-26-13
17 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$995,000, 3 Bdrms, 1803 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 11-27-13;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 04-14-04
258 Sundown Terrace, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 3616 SqFt, 1988 YrBl, 12-3-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,395,000, 12-02-11
30 Van Ripper Lane, \$1,339,500, 3 Bdrms, 1732 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-27-13

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Organization for the Naturally Disorganized

... continued from page D1



Dodier recommended transforming the cloth closet into an organizing and storing space. Photos Sophie Braccini

“Some people need help once to solve a specific problem, but there are others who have been struggling with organization for longer periods of their lives, for various reasons, and are going to require a little more support,” said Dodier. She explains that people who need extra help have often experienced one of these three situations: disorganization has been a factor in life for many years; the level of disorganization interferes with the quality of life on a daily basis or affects relationships with others in house; or disorganization persists despite attempts to change.

Dodier worked with Jennifer to get boxes out of storage, a few at a time, and sort through them, but Dodier never told her to get rid of something, only asked her to consider it. “Sometimes it would take me a few days to get ready after she planted the seed,” Jennifer said. “It was like clearing the deck for the next

phase of my life.”

Dodier asks clients to think about the big picture. What is the goal? “You may want to organize your desk because you want to write a book, or organize the kitchen to have a healthier lifestyle. Higher goals are conducive to higher motivation,” she said. “First we create new habits, and only then we find the shelving or the cabinets that will fit.” Dodier acknowledges that getting more organized is a journey, and that there can be backsliding. “It is a commitment, and you need to have compassion for yourself.” She breaks down tasks into small commitments, gives homework so clients can practice the new skills, and then she builds on them, one step at a time.

Dodier looked at Jennifer’s living room and made simple adjustments to clear paths and increase circulation, and they worked together on a color scheme.

Then they tackled Jennifer’s office, focusing on information circulation. “Christine helped me with organization of my computer files,” explains Jennifer. “For example, we created a file for my medications where I record what I take, the frequency and the purpose. That allows me to interact better with the pharmacist and doctors.”

Her mail now goes directly into a receiving basket in her office, ready to be sorted. Each aspect of Jennifer’s life has a file, with sub-files, all neatly labeled.

“One very important element is to separate things by project,” said Dodier. “It makes working more efficient and keeps the mind and the space clear. It does not have to be absolutely neat, you can have piles, but they have to be organized piles.” For very important projects, Dodier recommends dedicating some permanent space that will hold all the elements of the projects.

Since her daughter is disabled, Jennifer has worked for years with professionals to develop a video that presents fitness exercises for affected individuals. Her most important project at this time is the publicizing and distribution of the CDs. In her office, a dedicated shelving system holds all the pieces of the project together: the CDs, the files, and all the material to complete the tasks Jennifer has given herself.

“I feel that Christine is giving me courage,” said Jennifer, “and I no longer feel lost.”

Dodier continues to come to Jennifer’s house once a week for a few hours, but said this is not always necessary; it depends on the personality and needs of her clients, who sometimes are busy people who simply need help in one area, like the kids’ rooms or the kitchen. “I can check in with them on a regular basis, meeting for tune-up sessions, first once a week, or once a month. For some, speaking on the phone can be enough,” she said. Dodier believes that being clutter-free in the home reflects how we are inside, and that clearing our space, both mentally and physically, starts with awareness and acknowledging the need to change our habits. Dodier has also worked in partnership with other organizers to help hoarders, “but that is a different field that requires additional sets of psychological skills,” she said.

For information about Spaces in Place, visit www.spacesinplace.com.



Dodier is also an interior designer and help Jennifer create an inviting and uncluttered living room.



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When pruned properly, crepe myrtles make a dramatic statement in the landscape.

Photos Cynthia Brian

To better serve our readers' gardening needs, Lamorinda Weekly will offer Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide in the first issue of every month. The second issue will showcase Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia Brian with some mid-month tips. The Ask Cynthia, Reader's Request will be published as space is available. We hope you enjoy our new garden format for 2014.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

By Cynthia Brian

"A gardener is one for whom the prospect of the future is not threatening, but happy." – Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Welcome to a new year filled with abundant cheer and probably too many deer! Okay, an accomplished poet I am not, however, I am a dedicated nature girl. I look forward to being your personal gardening guide every month. Most everyone begins January with big dreams, expansive goals, and resolutions to be and do better. We want to lose weight, get a better job, find our Romeo/Juliette, or move to our dream location. Statistics indicate that by Feb. 1, four out of five of those sacred resolutions have died like a plant that isn't watered. Why do we give up? Because it's hard work to change, morph, and grow. It takes dedication, perseverance, and a deep commitment to imagine magnificence and know we deserve to receive the best. Gardeners have the strength of character and the desire to make the world a more beautiful place, one seedling at a time. We are optimists. Even in a drought, or the long December freeze, our glasses remain half full. We know that failure is fertilizer for the compost pile. I look forward to meeting each landscape challenge with you this year with tenacity and courage. We are gardeners and we are strong. Most of all, we are not threatened and we are super happy. Together we will grow where we are planted!

- CREATE a budget for your gardening desires for the year. By including everything you want to do in your private paradise, you will be armored to meet the unexpected.
- THINK next winter harvest by putting a few different squash varieties on your spring planting list. Flavors, textures, and growing times vary. Consider Bush Delicata (80 days), Gold Nugget (95 days), and Sweet Mama (84 days), all appropriate for smaller garden spaces.
- ALLOW the bright berries of cotoneaster, pyroantha, holly, purple beautyberry, and viburnum to remain on the bush to give nourishment to the hungry birds.
- REFRAIN from pruning any foliage damaged by the December freeze. Wait until March when the frost danger has passed.
- PRUNE rose bushes towards the end of the month. Cut above the bud and also remove all crossing or deadwood. Your prized bushes will be sprouting new growth within six weeks.
- PRUNE wisteria, deciduous flowering vines as well as crepe myrtle, apple, pear, and peach trees. There is no need to prune cherries.
- FEED your citrus trees. Check with your local garden center for the best fertilizer combinations. A feeding of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium in a ratio of 2-1-1 is usually a smart bet when used according to the directions.
- BRIGHTEN the dreary garden with paths of pansies and primroses.
- CUT back the dried foliage from ornamental grasses as well as any old stems from perennials.
- SPRAY diluted horticultural oil on fruit trees and roses to kill the overwintering insects and insect eggs.

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Winter Pruning

Winter is the best time to start pruning deciduous plants and trees, such as maples, shrubs, roses, most fruit trees and most of all your Monterey pines. They go dormant in the winter and some lose their leaves. Deciduous plants are best pruned in the winter because that's when they're dormant and less prone to disease.

Before you start hacking away at your yard, you may want to call in a professional Arborist from Advance Tree Service to give you their advice on what should be done, the proper handling during pruning is essential to ensure a healthy future for your trees and shrubs.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help make your yard its very best.

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Geraniums before the freeze are pretty and perky.



Geraniums look sad after the freeze. Once they are pruned in March, they return to their normal splendor.

- AVOID walking on your lawns when they are very wet or when there has been a cold spell as you will damage the grass blades.
- PERUSE seed catalogues to discover the new offerings for 2014. Stick to GMO free heirloom varieties. Check out www.sowtrueseed.com and www.rareseeds.com for suggestions on varieties.
- MIST houseplants and check for dryness often. During the winter months our houseplants suffer from our heating sources.
- PLANT bare root fruit trees, roses, and berries this month.
- REMOVE all ornaments, tinsel, lights, and hanging wires from Christmas trees. If at all possible, shred your tree and add to your compost pile. If you will be recycling through your waste service, make sure to check the pick-up days for your area.
- PLAN your spring and summer garden. We may be going into a very dry season. Consider drought resistant specimens. 2013 may be the driest year in California history since 1895. We need a mindset of "spare the water!" Plant more yarrow, sedums, sage, and gaillardia.
- SHARPEN and clean tools in preparation for spring.
- TAKE your mower and shredder in for annual maintenance.
- BEWARE of bees in your boots! Yes, before putting on your shoes, check if any living creature is visiting. My right foot will attest to the sting.
- ENJOY winter downtime by wandering in your backyard and daydreaming of what could be.
- FIND evergreen varieties of azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons that suit your style, sun/shade exposure, and color preferences that bloom in late winter.
- VISIT a secret garden this year. Find out open days on private places at <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/opendays>.
- SET your sights high and grow for it!

Let's make this the best year ever in our gardens and in our lives. We'll do it together! Happy Gardening, Happy Growing, Happy New Year!

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Cynthia Brian

The Goddess Gardener

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Cynthia is available as a speaker and consultant.



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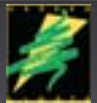


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40 Dos Osos

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\$545,000

ORINDA



34 La Vuelta

Located on coveted street in OCC, this appx .37 ac parcel is surrounded by expensive homes & incredible opportunity to build on special location. Approved site plan w/stylish designed home comes w/purchase.

\$569,000

ORINDA



Pending

20 Muth Drive

Beautifully updated contemporary ranch style, 4bd/2.5ba on spacious 3/4 ac lot. Hdwd flrs, slab counter kit. w/ breakfast area & formal dining rm together w/ big lawn & huge back patio w/spa are just a few of what this home has to offer.

\$899,000

ORINDA



54 La Campana

Brilliant 1938 south facing lathe & plaster construction in heart of Country Club. 4bd/3ba with approximately 2608 sf. One of largest pools in Orinda, Trader Vics built BBQ poolside, gardens. A bit of TLC needed.

\$1,000,000

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9 Las Piedras

Picturesque private 6bd/3ba in park like setting w/panoramic views, level lawn & recreational pool. 3745 sf classic custom w/vaulted ceilings, walls of windows, hdwd flrs, den, workout rm, FR & well-appointed kitchen.

\$1,349,000

ORINDA



1 Camino del Cielo

Sophisticated and stylish 4900+ square foot newer construction with four bedrooms plus office, three and one half baths, decks and views.

\$1,599,000

ORINDA



92 Sandhill Road

Absolutely One-of-a-Kind Bay Area Home with captivating, sweeping views from every rm. Perched on foremost knoll of the coveted Sandhill enclave. Ideal for active family as well as large scale entertaining.

\$5,200,000

MORAGA



137 Via Joaquin

Updated Moraga Townhome with Oversized loft, chef's kitchen, open floor plan, lots of windows, private setting. Inviting patio backs to open space. 75 Walk Score.

\$645,000

MORAGA



127 Cypress Point Way

Light, bright MCC Plan 4, 3bd/2ba with huge patio, living rm, dining rm, kitchen/family rm combo w/ new pecan hardwood floors & carpet. Very desirable location on cul-de-sac: walk to clubhouse, swim, tennis, golf & town.

\$749,000

MORAGA



Pending

1743 Spyglass Lane

Moraga Country Club Forest Hills model, updates throughout include new kitchen appliances, granite counters, updated bath, hardwood floors, new carpet, paint & lighting.

\$950,000

LAFAYETTE



9 Mountain View Place

Fabulous updated 4bd/2.5ba, 3481 sf custom contemporary on .78 ac in tranquil setting. Spacious LR & DR, new hardwood flrs throughout, new eat-in kitchen/DR open to FR, voltaic solar panels, new redwood deck & more.

\$1,299,000



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