

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 7 Wednesday, June 3, 2015



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for June ...read on page D13

Drip by Drip

Water-saving efforts are becoming commonplace

By Chris Lavin



Stephen "Steamer" Stanley demonstrates how his shower diversion invention can be disconnected or engaged in one step.

Photo Chris Lavin

Just before the late great comedic writer Erma Bombeck died in 1996, she made a list of the things she would have done differently in her life. One of the things she listed, besides not worrying about whether she wore make-up before she went out: she would have run her dishwasher more often before it was full, making life a little bit easier.

That was obviously thinking in pre-drought, pre-water-conscious California. In Lamorinda, most

people – besides cramming their dishwashers full before hitting the “on” switch – are thinking instead about how they can conserve water in their homes. Conversations about rain barrels, gray water systems, and drip irrigation are becoming commonplace. Some are even putting buckets into their showers to catch the cold water before it gets warm and then using it to flush their toilets. And that got former Orinda Chamber of Commerce president

Stephen “Steamer” Stanley and his business partner, Mike Gompertz, thinking.

“We were hearing about some people putting five-gallon buckets in the shower, then hauling them out,” Stanley said. With water weighing eight pounds a gallon, that’s no easy task. “So that’s how we came up with this.”

Stanley stepped into a shower (note: fully clothed) and with a simple close of a valve, demonstrated what the two former Orindans have invented. It’s the “shower water saver kit,” which diverts water from the shower pipe into a small reservoir. When the person who wants a shower feels the pipe begin to warm, he or she flips the valve off again and can shower instantly. “Then watch,” Stanley said as he stepped over to remove the ceramic top of the toilet tank and flushed the toilet. Water began to pour through a plastic hose snaking into the top of the tank and ran until the tank was, again, full, and then shut off. The water had come from the reservoir of cold shower water. “It’s that simple,” Stanley said.

At a time when many homeowners are starting to get embarrassed by their lush lawns or thirsty ornamental gardens, inventions like Stanley and Gompertz’s are becoming more popular. “We waste so much water in this country,” he said. “So, so much.” With the current water shortage, regulatory agencies have become involved, making conservation mandatory. Homeowners are finding out where their water meters are located, and monitoring their use of gallons.

... continued on page D4

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City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	14	\$701,000	\$2,025,000
MORAGA	5	\$420,000	\$1,260,000
ORINDA	112	\$875,000	\$2,200,000

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

3423 Black Hawk Road, \$2,025,000, 4 Bdrms, 2688 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 4-10-15; Previous Sale: \$1,600,000, 05-18-12

10 Burnt Oak Circle, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2070 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 4-14-15; Previous Sale: \$795,000, 07-26-01

56 Carolyn Court, \$1,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 2094 SqFt, 2010 YrBl, 4-10-15; Previous Sale: \$960,000, 05-25-12

3393 Goyak Drive, \$1,449,000, 5 Bdrms, 2721 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 4-13-15

1709 Greenhills Court, \$1,380,000, 3 Bdrms, 2749 SqFt, 1985 YrBl, 4-17-15; Previous Sale: \$832,500, 05-29-01

4149 Hidden Valley Road #A, \$1,060,000, 3 Bdrms, 2268 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 4-10-15

3166 Lucas Drive, \$1,431,000, 4 Bdrms, 2404 SqFt, 1964 YrBl, 4-15-15

112 Marsha Place, \$1,020,000, 3 Bdrms, 1429 SqFt, 1962 YrBl, 4-15-15

3363 Moraga Boulevard, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 1956 SqFt, 1947 YrBl, 4-21-15; Previous Sale: \$599,000, 09-28-00

3279 Mt. Diablo Court #5, \$701,000, 3 Bdrms, 1684 SqFt, 1987 YrBl, 4-21-15; Previous Sale: \$605,000, 02-07-14

631 Murray Lane, \$1,825,000, 4 Bdrms, 3171 SqFt, 1990 YrBl, 4-14-15; Previous Sale: \$1,230,000, 08-18-00

3460 Sky Lane, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 3454 SqFt, 1957 YrBl, 4-14-15

1049 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,000,000, 4-14-15

3113 Withers Avenue, \$1,108,000, 3 Bdrms, 2498 SqFt, 1957 YrBl, 4-16-15

MORAGA

2129 Ascot Drive #4, \$420,000, 2 Bdrms, 1314 SqFt, 1970 YrBl, 4-16-15; Previous Sale: \$124,000, 09-24-98

611 Augusta Drive, \$850,000, 2 Bdrms, 1985 SqFt, 1976 YrBl, 4-21-15; Previous Sale: \$695,000, 10-21-10

23 Carr Drive, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1519 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 4-21-15; Previous Sale: \$306,000, 05-07-97

774 Crossbrook Drive, \$1,260,000, 4 Bdrms, 2048 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 4-10-15; Previous Sale: \$1,200,000, 10-09-13

179 Cypress Point Way, \$1,195,000, 3 Bdrms, 2200 SqFt, 2005 YrBl, 4-10-15; Previous Sale: \$700,000, 02-08-06

ORINDA

6 Arbolado Court, \$985,000, 3 Bdrms, 1518 SqFt, 1974 YrBl, 4-10-15

207 Camino Sobrante, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 3932 SqFt, 1987 YrBl, 4-15-15; Previous Sale: \$625,000, 05-18-88

22 Camino Sobrante, \$1,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 3351 SqFt, 1938 YrBl, 4-17-15

345 Camino Sobrante, \$1,270,000, 5 Bdrms, 3073 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 4-21-15; Previous Sale: \$1,085,000, 04-22-03

3 El Verano, \$903,500, 2 Bdrms, 1167 SqFt, 1939 YrBl, 4-15-15

63 La Cuesta Road, \$2,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 3637 SqFt, 1931 YrBl, 4-21-15; Previous Sale: \$940,000, 08-29-95

26 Longridge Road, \$945,000, 4 Bdrms, 1416 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 4-14-15; Previous Sale: \$715,000, 05-17-11

14 Los Cerros, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 2556 SqFt, 1981 YrBl, 4-17-15; Previous Sale: \$397,000, 05-14-93

85 Oak Road, \$1,218,000, 3 Bdrms, 2131 SqFt, 1996 YrBl, 4-16-15; Previous Sale: \$840,000, 08-19-11

515 Tahos Road, \$1,950,000, 5 Bdrms, 4120 SqFt, 1965 YrBl, 4-15-15; Previous Sale: \$1,211,500, 05-02-11

58 Valley Drive, \$1,450,000, 5 Bdrms, 2799 SqFt, 1967 YrBl, 4-10-15

238 the Knoll, \$875,000, 1 Bdrms, 1532 SqFt, 1975 YrBl, 4-16-15; Previous Sale: \$725,000, 09-26-06

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Drip by Drip

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The blue ring shows the attachment of the reservoir hose. A turn of a valve diverts the water; the closing allows water to flow through the showerhead.

According to the California Department of Water Resources, the average household uses 360 gallons of fresh, treated water every day. Gov. Jerry Brown has called for a 20 percent reduction in that number, which has EBMUD and individual users thinking about how to make that cut. Agencies have recommended measures that are becoming more widely used, such as:

- Install water-efficient fixtures and appliances, such

as dishwashers and washing machines, or point-source hot-water heaters.

- Don't follow Erma Bombeck's advice and do cram the dishwasher (and fill the washing machine) before you click the "on" button.
- Get a high-efficiency toilet, or put a brick in the tank to displace some water.
- Don't flush for pee. Follow the "yellow is mellow,

brown goes down" rule.

- Get a foaming hand-soap dispenser, thoroughly soap up hands, and then turn on the water to rinse off.
- Shut the faucet off while brushing teeth, for goodness sake.
- Shorten the shower by a couple of minutes.

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One, two, three: Sink, shower reservoir, toilet. The reservoir has a spigot at the bottom for filling other receptacles.

Photos Chris Lavin



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Drip by Drip

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The clear plastic hose at the top of the toilet tank comes from the reservoir of cold shower water that is stored, rather than drained, from the shower.

Photo Chris Lavin

Other ways to conserve are less obvious. On one small community water system in Canyon, usage dropped dramatically when board members started printing the average daily use of each user on the back of the quarterly bills. Some households were using an average of 60 gallons a day, others more than 200. The largest users immediately began to curtail their usage. “They just didn’t know how much they were using,” said Stanley when told this anecdote. “Most people don’t.”

And diverting the water that goes down the drain while the user waits for it to get warm is yet another way to save.

“Every house is unique,” Stanley said. In some houses, the water to the kitchen sink might come out hot almost instantly, while the shower water stays cold for a minute or two until it gets

warm. In other houses, that situation could be reversed. “It all depends on where the water heater is located,” he said, “and how big the house is.”

Stanley’s patented shower invention, which is a DIY \$125 kit, fills a plastic, stand-alone reservoir that can then be used for anything – drinking by people or pets, watering plants, you name it. When asked why use good, treated water to flush a toilet, Stanley replied, “Otherwise it would be going down the drain.” Good point. (But Stanley and Gompertz are developing a gray-water system too. “Just wait,” Stanley said.) More information can be found at www.housewatersaver.com.

“As a community, as a state, as a country, we need to conserve water,” Stanley said. “Why should you waste something just because you have it?”

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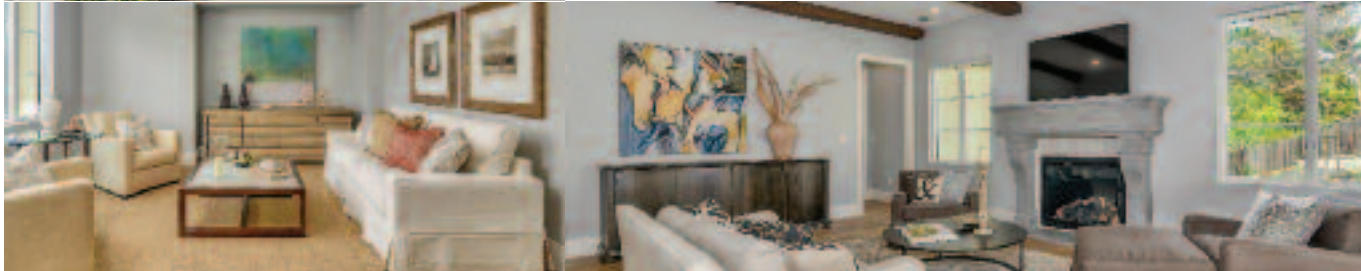
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Stylish Solutions

What's New in the World of Design

By Ann McDonald



Mark D. Sikes' red gingham room.

Photos courtesy Couture Chateau LLC

What do the Kip's Bay Decorator Show House, International Contemporary Furniture Faire, MoMA, Frieze Art Faire, Wanted Design and the National Stationery Show have in common? They are all parts of New York's Design Week, also referred to as NYCX or NYCXDesign, www.nycxdesign.com.

This month I am excited to share on point trends that you can implement this season as stylish suburbanites.

As my co-workers and I were being driven from openings to private parties we had to pinch ourselves. Design as a profession is usually hands-on hard work,

but for this week a group of 11 other women and I were sponsored by several larger brands to do nothing but attend and blog and post on social media. Dream time. During the entire trip, I was thinking about pieces that would translate into real life in Lamorinda.

Here are my top trends relevant to our Lamorinda lifestyle:

1) A return to traditional: Mark D. Sikes hit it out of the park with his red gingham room. From the upholstered walls layered with red painted moulding to the shaped wicker dining table and chairs, each element in his room easily translates into real life.

What I loved was his use of different pieces of furniture in a cohesive way. The room felt flexible. Armless banquettes settled in two corners, a simple side chair in another and my first thought was, brilliant! When the large dinner party night arrives, these could be pulled up to a fully extended table. For every day, you had several beautiful spaces and places to choose for

your morning coffee. It was stunning.

The other standout room in my opinion was the kitchen. Christopher Peacock designed the cabinets replete with custom brushed brass hardware; Dacor supplied the built-in appliances and Kohler the sinks and faucets.

Attention to detail and mix of surfaces appealed most to me. No boring white kitchen when you add plaid tile backsplash, live edge burl in one section of counter and face several individual drawers with cuts from the burl wood. Absolutely beautiful.

2) Real life arrangements: I noticed several consoles were layered with more realistic displays. It was as if someone actually lived there. Gone are the days with books piled so high you could never hope to read one next to a bust of some Greek icon you should know, but can't recall, and an oddity no one dares to ask about.

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Each year for the past 43 years, Kip's Bay has put on a Designer Show House. This year's kitchen featured a live edge burl wood counter.

An Adorable Encounter



This mother fox and her two kits were spotted in Laura Waal's Lafayette backyard May 26. Photos Laura Waal



Outside Conservation as Important as Inside



Seth Wright of Wright Landscaping explains a complicated system of reducing outside water use to Lafayette resident Jason Kim at a recent seminar on drip irrigation at Lafayette Community Garden. At the well-attended workshop he explained evapotranspiration and how using the right equipment, and the right plants, can severely reduce homeside water use. Photo Chris Lavin

All the chairs were filled at a recent symposium at the Lafayette Community Garden, where landscaper Seth Wright, who specializes in outdoor irrigation systems, overwhelmed his audience with information: Saving water in the garden has to do with the weather, evaporation, the plants themselves, and times to water. Then he threw a mathematical equation in there to account for division by amount of precipitation.

Not that anyone has had to worry about precipitation too much lately, yet his audience was rapt. And the strange thing was these home landscapers seemed to understand everything he was talking about: how the diameter of the hose is essential, how drip nodule spacing depends on the plant, and list goes on.

"This stuff isn't all that complicated," Wright told his audience. "It can be, but it doesn't have to be."

As California's drought continues, the need for people like Wright is increasing. He said a holistic plan for outside water conservation needs to include the plants themselves. Heavy water-drinkers might have to be replaced with lower water users. The right equipment and timers have to be put in place. And finally, he said, never put a drip ring where it doesn't belong.

"Never, never put it over the mulch," he said. "It needs to go under the mulch."

C. Lavin

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Stylish Solutions

What's New in the World of Design

... continued from page D10



Lights from the Wanted Design show

These types of displays popped up in several shows. I felt the theme of real life penetrated through

to the fabric and rug introductions as well, which leads me to my third trend.

3) Natural textures either in small artisan runs or hand-made: From the lighting at Wanted Design to the carpets and rugs at ICFF, natural was everywhere. Two favorites were the natural woven carpets and the sculpted lighting. Several trade manufacturers were weaving either by hand or in small quantities true craftsman product in wood, wool, cotton, jute and even metals.

There will always be ultra-modern and cutting-edge design at expos like this. I am fine to see and enjoy the inspiration, but at the end of the day what I noticed most: Designers are creating for more intimate spaces, human scale and tactile experience.

Even the lacquered pieces and minimalist European designs had a softness to them. Whether it was the curve where previously we would have found a straight cut or an embellishment or bright color where three years ago it was stark black, things felt approachable.

You can find more pictures and thoughts over on the blog at <http://www.couturechateau.com/blog> or on my Instagram: annlmcdonald with the hashtag #blogtourNYC.

Have a blessed day, until next time!



One detail in this kitchen was irresistible: a custom drawer for coffee pods. Over the top? Yes, but oh so fun for this orderly girl.



A few years ago a table may have been all straight corners and heavy lacquer. Today it's rounded with upholstered chairs. Still fresh, but easier on the eye.



Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda. For a complete blog post including other design ideas, visit www.couturechateau.com/blog.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for June

By Cynthia Brian

"Why stay on earth except to grow?" – Robert Browning

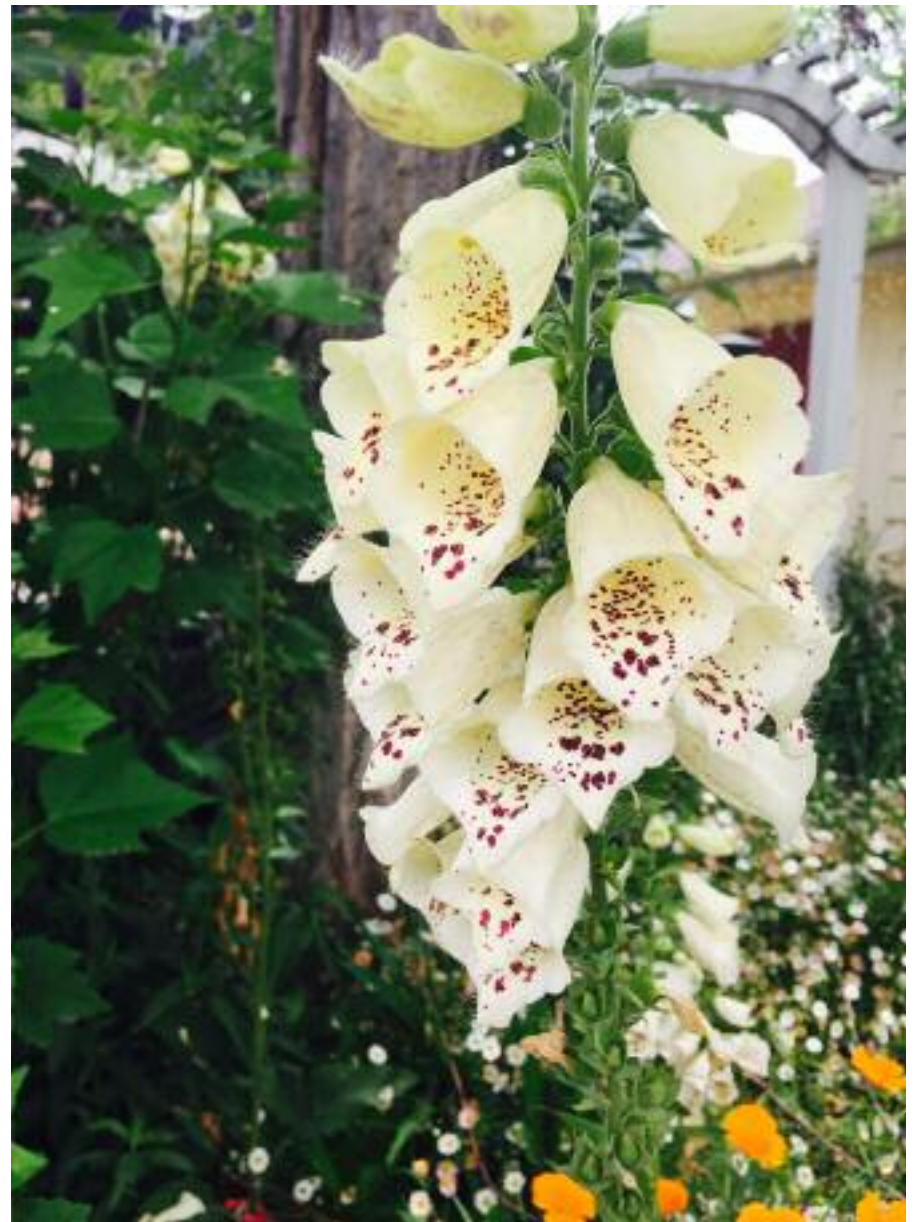


Alstroemeria and lilies are perennial beauties this time of year. Photos Cynthia Brian

End of the school year, graduations, Father's Day, weddings, baby showers, vacations. June signals the beginning of summer and the season of outdoor celebrations. With so many milestones to check off our fun to-do lists, we hardly have a moment to think about gardening. Yet, for the next several months most of us will be enjoying the outdoors more than ever. It's time to make sure that our landscapes are welcoming, manicured, and inviting. Kumquats, loquats, and cherries are ripe for the picking, bougainvillea is resplendent with fluorescent radiance, pansies brighten beds while poppies still flourish on hillsides. Pick a bouquet of alstroemeria,

the lily of the Incas, for a pop of bright color to add to your party. If you have been diligent in saving your gray water, make sure you are dumping it daily into your garden to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Heidi from Vector Control informed me that because of the drought, mosquitoes are expected to be a major problem this summer as people collect water in barrels and buckets. Be water and mosquito conscious by pouring out your saved water immediately into your landscape or houseplants.

... continued on page D14



Look closely at the throats of foxgloves.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for June

... continued from page D13

CLEAN patio furniture, if you haven't already. If you've left your lounges outside for the winter, they will need a thorough scrubbing. Check cushions and pillows to either wash or replace.

GOING on vacation and want to make sure that your indoor plants don't die while you are gone? Instead of hiring a person to come water, clip off the ends of a long thick shoelace, place one end deep into the soil and the other end into a tall vase of water. Water will wick up the shoelace keeping your plant hydrated while you are on holiday!

BOOST your creativity quotient by taking a walk outside. A study recently published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology found that your creativity soars 60 percent by walking in nature as opposed to brainstorming at your desk.

PLANT pumpkins now for a Halloween harvest. This is also a perfect opportunity to get your corn, eggplant, beets and cucumbers started.

SUCCESSION plant your greens every three weeks including lettuce and arugula as well as root vegetables like carrots, radishes and turnips.

SOW seeds of basil, cilantro, chives and parsley for a summer season of savory spice.

CHECK your drip irrigation systems as well as any sprinkler heads.

SOAK your big trees, such as magnolias, with a deep soaker hose. If leaves are yellowing and curling, the tree is thirsty and wants a very long, deep drink.



Cumquat trees are the perfect size for picking the small ripe treats.

SAVE water by watering only once or twice a week, early in the morning when the plants will absorb the most. Watch for runoff.

PROPAGATE azaleas, carnations, fuchsias and hydrangeas by taking cuttings and planting in rich soil.

NET your fruit trees to prevent hungry birds from devouring your summer crops of cherries, peaches, apricots and apples.

DEADHEAD spent rose petals weekly to encourage continuous blooms.

MAINTAIN your weeding schedule. Be vigilant to pull weeds as soon as they appear as they zap nutrients and our precious water from plants that we actually want.

COMPOST all of your scraps except meat products to stimulate microbial activity while limiting nematode invasions.

ATTRACT butterflies and honeybees by planting nectar-rich specimens including zinnias, butterfly bush and scarlet runner beans.

WIN a grant of \$10,000 sponsored by the National Garden Bureau with a therapeutic garden that supports and promotes the health and healing powers between people and plants. For more information, visit www.ngb.org.



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Mulching is important for trees and also shrubs. Besides being attractive, mulch can be used to conserve soil moisture, to buffer soil temperature extremes, to control weeds and competing vegetation and to replenish organic matter and nutrients in the soil.

The majority of landscape trees evolved in a woodland environment with natural mulch around them. Often the practice is to rake up or blow away any natural mulch in a home landscapes.

In a natural environment, trees generally do not grow in lawns or meadows and their root systems do not compete well against lawn grasses. A mulched area around a tree should be provided for the benefit of the tree. The size of the mulched areas around a tree depends on the size of the tree.

So don't wait until it's too late have a complete inspection by a Certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping.

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California poppies brighten a rock garden.

PINCH seedlings on annuals to encourage branching and lush, fuller growth patterns.

CUT a stem of digitalis, common name, foxglove, to enjoy the speckled throats indoors. Since foxglove is poisonous, deer don't bother it.

SUPPORT your sprouting tomatoes with wire cages or teepees to prevent them from toppling over and sprawling on the ground. The fruit will rot when in contact with soil.

ALLOW passion flower tendrils to vine and twine over fences and trellises. Although there are over 400 species of vines and shrubs, all Passiflora boast an exotic flower that lives only a day.

MULCH your entire garden with at least three inches of material to help retain moisture, keep the soil cooler, and prevent drought-related problems throughout the upcoming hot months.

GIVE the gift of a living plant for all the special occasions of the month. Live plants clean the air while affording beauty, fragrance, and the presence of nature.

Congratulations to all our local graduates. May you be happy, healthy, and always curious.

Happy Gardening! Happy Growing!



The pink bower vine blooms in Cynthia Brian's garden.

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Cynthia Brian
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13 Muth Drive Location Location! Single story 4 bedroom, 2 bath home w/ 2449 square feet resides on .56 acres. Close proximity to commute, restaurants & top rated schools.

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New Listing

180 Lombardy Lane Brilliant 3bd/2ba, 1,869sf single level home in Sleepy Hollow. Flooded w/natural light. Spacious liv rm, eat-in kit & master suite. Radiant as well as on-demand heat keep it cozy.

\$1,250,000

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New Listing

31 Crestview Drive Enjoy incredible views from this remodeled & renovated contemp. 5bd/3+ba, 3275sf home on .49ac lot. Hdwd flrs, Marvin wndws, lrg fam rm & master. Drought tolerant grdns. Top schools.

\$1,795,000

ORINDA



New Price

41 Van Tassel Lane Allure abounds in/outside w/easy access through an abundance of doors. Fabulous high-end features, the finest of workmanship & materials. Spa, lawn, sports court.

\$2,695,000

ORINDA



New Price

130 Silver Oak Terrace Center hall traditional 5404sf home on 1.65 private acres on cul de sac, updated kitchen, lux. master, two fam rms, wine cellar, gym, 3 car gar, pool, spa, lawn, sport court & outdr kitchen!

\$2,995,000

MORAGA



New Listing

62 Amberwood Court Fun house/great yard/peaceful setting! Prof. landscaped yard w/pool, spa, level play space. 5bd/2.5ba home w/gourmet kit/family combo, master retreat w/steam shower, top schools.

\$1,249,000

MORAGA



New Listing

5 Paseo Linares New Construction...Quality throughout all 4142 sf, 5bd/4.5ba, "Chef's" kitchen, "Great Room" opens to covered Lanai & level yard. Fab floor plan for family & entertaining.

\$2,695,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3484 Springhill Court Charming close-in 3bd/2ba, 2000+ sq. ft. home on private court, walk to Acalanes HS & Springhill Elem. Over .5 acre absolutely level lot... unlimited opp. for expansion/pool/tennis.

\$1,389,000

LAFAYETTE



New Price

4161 Coralee Lane Custom built by current owners, a well loved family home of great spaces w/large rooms, abundance of windows. Easy access outdoors to lawn, pool, decks & tons of beauty.

\$1,549,000

LAFAYETTE



4038 Happy Valley Road Happy Valley 2 acre estate, exquisite priv. setting, views, level yard, stylish beaut. updates, walls of glass, high ceilings, dramatic 2 story living, Lrg fam rm, 2 offices, greats schools.

\$2,495,000

LAFAYETTE



3921 Happy Vally Road Fabulous gated estate in coveted Happy Vly. Custom home w/beaut. Indscp, pool w/waterfall & patios. Views! Hdwd & marble flrs. Cherry cbnts. Chef's Kit/FR. Au pair set-up. Wlk to HV school.

\$2,595,000

LAFAYETTE



1141 Vallecito Court Treasured Happy Valley estate custom built in 2006 w/finest craftsmanship. Chef's kitchen, gorgeous master, ofc, fam rm, home gym. Pool, spa, firplc & level lawn w/views. Detached guest house.

\$3,900,000

LAFAYETTE



1155 Camino Vallecito Happy Valley masterpiece by architect Joseph Esherick. Exquisite sophisticated style, high ceilings, French drs, walls of glass. Priv. 2 ac w/views, guest quarters, beautiful grounds, pool.

\$4,650,000

BERKELEY



New Listing

40 Halkin Lane Classic Mediterranean 6bd/5ba home w/view of Bay & Golden Gate Bridge. Very accessible & versatile floor plan for ease of living. Spacious rooms. Level out to patio & yard.

\$1,695,000

PLEASANT HILL



New Listing

6 Paddock Court Entertainers Delight in Saddle Ridge. 2883 sqft, 4bd/2.5ba, Lg Bonus, Mud Rm. Gourmet Kitchen w/built-in Dacor Appliances. All Hardwd Flrs on 1st floor. Pool. Move In Ready.

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