

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 17 Wednesday, October 21, 2015



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D12

Saving the Garden ... and Water, Too

By Sophie Braccini



Mike Taylor on his trailer with water containers.

Photo Jann Taylor

Water restrictions can be painful. It is not easy for local gardeners to see the trees, annuals and perennials that were chosen with care, and grown with dedication, wither away. But several Lamorinda residents have found an innovative solution to lessen the pain: using free recycled water from the Central Contra Costa Sanitary district (Central San) to save all or part of their landscaping.

Passersby may have noticed small signs planted on front gardens that say: "Irrigated with free recycled water." The solution might be free, but it is not for everyone. It takes equipment and weekly trips to Martinez, but these residents are proving every day that you can save potable water and the garden at the same time.

"We wanted to save our trees, the citrus and the small maple," explains

Lafayette resident Carolyn Lane. "We were not trying to get the lawn going, but we were concerned about the trees." The Lanes were willing to make as big an effort as possible to contribute to saving potable water for drinking use, so when they saw in the Central San newsletter, *The Pipeline*, that the agency was giving out free recycled water to residents, they looked into it and now go twice a week to Martinez,

bringing back 150 gallons each time.

"We have had the recycled water program available for industrial and agricultural use for some time," says Central San project manager Nathan Hodges. "We decided to make it available for residents to get people used to recycled water." Hodges explains that the water coming out of the treatment plants is either sent to the San Francisco Bay, or is retreated before it is used as recycled water. "We recycle one and a half to two million gallons a day," says Hodges. "A part is used by ourselves in our treatment plant; other large users include the Pleasant Hill and Concord school districts that use it for their landscaping, local golf courses, and parks." He says that the Dublin San Ramon Services District was the first one to start recycling and using this water in the area.

In Moraga, Barbara and Tom Preston are also taking advantage of the free water to take care of a garden lush with plants and trees. "We first went to Central San with the trash cans we use to collect roof run-off, but were told that we needed containers with a screw-in lid," explains Barbara Preston, "so we bought drums that could fit in the back of the minivan." The Prestons go to Central San twice a week and get about 135 gallons of water each trip.

... continued on page D4



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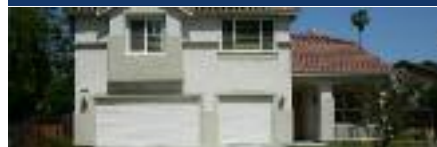
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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	17	\$555,000	\$3,000,000
MORAGA	14	\$365,000	\$1,430,000
ORINDA	9	\$865,000	\$2,047,500

Home sales are compiled by CalREsource, 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

- 3562 Boyer Circle, \$1,285,000, 3 Bdrms, 3182 SqFt, 1937 YrBl, 8-20-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 05-24-06
- 3108 Del Oceano Drive, \$933,500, 4 Bdrms, 2067 SqFt, 1962 YrBl, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$690,000, 09-12-12
- 1089 Glen Road, \$2,495,000, 4 Bdrms, 3408 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 8-25-15
- 3265 Greenhills Drive, \$1,625,000, 5 Bdrms, 4244 SqFt, 1989 YrBl, 8-20-15;
Previous Sale: \$142,500, 07-02-87
- 3483 Hamlin Road, \$1,780,000, 4 Bdrms, 2665 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 8-24-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,015,000, 08-25-10
- 4120 Happy Valley Road, \$950,000, 5 Bdrms, 4986 SqFt, 1990 YrBl, 8-24-15;
Previous Sale: \$950,000, 10-22-13
- 3300 Helen Lane, \$850,000, 6 Bdrms, 1879 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 8-21-15
- 3755 Highland Road, \$1,025,000, 4 Bdrms, 1972 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 8-28-15;
Previous Sale: \$725,000, 03-04-10
- 1503 Huston Road, \$900,000, 6 Bdrms, 2158 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 8-25-15;
Previous Sale: \$900,000, 04-21-05
- 3261 Marlene Drive, \$555,000, 2 Bdrms, 1160 SqFt, 1972 YrBl, 8-27-15;
Previous Sale: \$28,000, 10-31-78
- 3741 Meadow Lane, \$3,000,000, 5 Bdrms, 4457 SqFt, 1961 YrBl, 8-28-15;
Previous Sale: \$2,100,000, 05-13-10
- 948 Reliez Station Road, \$1,170,000, 2 Bdrms, 1950 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 8-27-15
- 570 Silverado Drive, \$1,525,000, 3 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 8-27-15;
Previous Sale: \$799,000, 04-10-03
- 3362 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,855,000, 3 Bdrms, 3289 SqFt, 1989 YrBl, 8-25-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,695,000, 08-24-07
- 3370 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,975,000, 4 Bdrms, 4069 SqFt, 1989 YrBl, 8-28-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,729,000, 08-17-10
- 4036 Valente Drive, \$900,000, 2 Bdrms, 2316 SqFt, 1975 YrBl, 8-20-15;
Previous Sale: \$565,000, 09-28-01
- 1010 Woodbury Road #201, \$1,569,500, 8-28-15

MORAGA

- 2063 Ascot Drive #115, \$365,000, 2 Bdrms, 1068 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$240,000, 12-24-02
- 2051 Ascot Drive #202, \$380,000, 2 Bdrms, 1191 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$325,000, 08-05-03
- 390 Birchwood Drive, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 2060 SqFt, 1970 YrBl, 8-20-15;
Previous Sale: \$52,500, 10-27-70
- 148 Calle La Montana, \$1,110,000, 3 Bdrms, 1817 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 8-26-15;
Previous Sale: \$769,500, 10-24-03
- 8 Doral Drive, \$745,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1978 YrBl, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$340,000, 04-30-98
- 307 Draeger Drive, \$1,430,000, 4 Bdrms, 2318 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 8-21-15

... continued on page D9

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Saving the Garden ... and Water, Too

... continued from page D1



Edwin Oto uses recycled water in his garden.

Once water is on site, the question became how to get the water to the garden. Since the Lanes' lot sits below the road, they simply use gravity to get the water flowing; the Prestons have a level lot so gravity was not an option. Instead, they created a simple system with a sump pump to transfer the water from Central San to different containers around their garden and they water their plants manually with hoses.

The Taylors in Lafayette, who travel many times each weekend to get between 1,500 and 2,000 gallons of water, had to get professional about their water handling. They use a trailer to haul the water, a maximum of 300 gallons a trip, which equals about 1.2 tons, not something any normal vehicle can handle safely. "We are maintaining a small orchard and a front yard (that includes a lawn)," says Jann Taylor. "Personally, we would love for Californians to recycle and reuse all our sanitized water." She notes that a large part of her weekend is dedicated to getting the water, something she does not see as sustainable. "If we do not get a good downpour of water with El Niño this winter, the lawn might have to go," she says.

Edwin Oto also uses a trailer pulled by a small truck. He bought a 275-gallon container, at a cost of \$200, as well as a new powerful pump that gets him enough pressure to efficiently water his garden. He

goes to Martinez twice a week.

As a young man in college, he visited a treatment plant where he learned about the safety and benefits of recycled water. "Some say that this water has more minerals than the tap water," says the Moraga resident. "This could be why the plants we water with it are doing so well."

Taylor agrees and adds that it is like using Miracle Grow all the time. "My roses look so healthy," she says. Oto and his wife don't feel that they needed a lawn; they consider it a waste of water and they took theirs out, "but we needed water to keep plants alive," he adds.

The sanitary district confirmed that recycled water is perfectly safe for the vegetable garden, though people should not drink it. "In Monterey County recycled water is used widely by commercial growers," says Hodges. "The water is perfectly safe to use for vegetable gardens; all you need is to wash your vegetables before eating them."

For information and to registration to participate in the program, visit <http://centralsan.org/index.cfm?navid=1348>.

Photos Sophie Bracinni



Bobbie and Tom Preston's garden

10 Las Palomas, Orinda



Beautiful 5BR, 3.5 BA, 3983 sq. ft. home. Located in Orinda Country Club on .5 acre. Free flowing floor plan, saltwater pool, spa, full outdoor kitchen, level lawns & mature plantings. Lower level has own entrance, ideal for guest or in-law.

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Stylish Solutions

Stress-Free Fall Tables

By Ann McDonald



This photo shows layers: washed linen on the table, copper tray as charger, glass plate for main dish, blue vintage for first course, tea towel for napkin and same faux greenery we shared in last month's tip for using basics fall through New Year's. It is OK to layer and mix!

Photos courtesy Couture Chateau llc

We are so blessed to live in Lamorinda, in such natural beauty. As the weather shifts ever so slightly, do you have the fall table planned out? From Halloween parties to harvest brunches to Thanksgiving, thoughts of lavish parties can loom large. First, don't panic. Second, don't worry that you have not even thought about holiday cards, never mind next week's buffet at your house.

Last month we covered top tips for color coordinating your holiday décor for the upcoming months. That will help you make decisions at the decorating stores quickly. This month we will get specific on how to set your table and what you need to get a high-style look without breaking the bank or spending hours planning.

Setting up a quick buffet can work for large or small scale. You can switch the buffet out and set up for a sit-down party with the same materials. Because the items are flexible, you can have them on hand and switch last minute, if needed, from buffet to sit-down or vice versa.

One of the biggest stresses is transforming your year-round home into a space worthy of the holiday party, big or small, formal or informal. It all has to do with setting the table. It is fun to host friends, but no one wants to fret over styles and if the table decoration works with what you already have going on at home, why not do it that way?

Here's a partial list of what we keep in our proverbial table-setting war chest:

- Chargers in all sizes and types
- Small, low rimmed trays for buffets, all sizes and types
- Good quality square glass plates and bowls

- Good quality stainless silverware
- Interesting tea towels, usually in some type of theme, bought in bulk and used only as napkins
- Five- to seven-yard remnants of good quality upholstery fabric to use as table coverings
- Mini battery-operated white or amber colored lights to weave into and under centerpieces

I love to host parties and think they are a beautiful way to share unique styles during different seasons. Homes, like people, have personalities. Embrace yours and host friends. During the fall, it is fun to have soup and chili parties or luncheon sit-downs with friends. We just wrapped our Stress Free Holiday Home live workshop (you can purchase the Workshop Course, see below) and one of the bonus sections I shared was on "Easy Elegant Entertaining: Bohemian to White Tie."

Here's a truth we forget: To create a great eating area, you don't even need a dining room table, or a dining room. You can use simple folding tables and cover with fabric, even desks and side tables, to create flat surfaces worthy of holding what's necessary. These can be set up anywhere in your home depending on how you want people to circulate.

Once you identify the table surfaces, consider good quality upholstery fabric. With five to seven yards, you can get enough coverage for about 12 people at a sit down rectangular table, up to 24 for a buffet table. To calculate needed yardage: measure your tables in length, add 12 to 15 inches to each end depending on how much overhang you want, and divide by 36.

Since one yard equals 36 inches you will know approximately how much material to buy.

... continued on page D8



Think outside the box with napkins. Close-up of simple scrap leather strips as ties for decorative tea towel napkins. Great for buffets, they cover the whole lap.

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Easy El Niño Home Prep

By Andi Peterson Brown

I know, I know—it's 80 degrees out and I'm writing about prepping your home for rain. But El Niño is looming, and if you are anything like me, once the holidays hit, getting up on the roof to clean the gutters is just not going to happen. Thus, there is no better time than a warm fall weekend to spend a few hours preparing your home for the cold, wet weather that is just a couple short months away. These easy tips can prevent future costly repairs, lower your utility bills, and ultimately protect your largest investment from the impending deluge.

- **Clean your gutters.** It's so easy and yet so hard. But failing to clean your gutters can lead to leaks as well as cause long term water damage to your siding, roofing, and wood trim.

- **Inspect your roof and flashing.** Been some time since anyone's been up there? For minimal cost, a roofer can inspect, diagnose, and perform basic repairs.

- **Extend downspouts.** Water should drain a few feet away from your foundation, not flow right onto it.

- **Caulk around windows and doors.** And those foam and fabric front door draft stoppers—yes, those, the ones on late night infomercials for twelve bucks—they work wonders.

- **While you're at it, why not inspect your heating system.** For minimal cost, an HVAC technician can tune up, clean, and perform basic repairs to ensure your system is running at maximum efficiency.



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Stylish Solutions Stress-Free Fall Tables

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The buffet table is easy to set up. Start with chargers or trays so guests aren't balancing just the plate on their lap. Lay out food just as you would serve it and finish with napkins (see tea towel suggestion) and serve-ware at end.

Example: 132-inch table plus 24 inches for fabric overhang (12 inches each end) equals 156 inches; 156 divided by 36 (the length of one yard) equals approximately 4 1/3 yards.

By purchasing five to seven yards, you accommodate for shrinkage and can use extra fabric to cover pedestals for food or for visual interest around a centerpiece.

Where to get these fabrics? Everywhere! From discount stores to online fabric shops. Make sure to wash fabric ahead of use, especially if near food. The un-ironed look is nice for fall as it is more casual. If you have a round table or are using folding tables, consider using an under cloth in a solid color to hide the legs and then the upholstery fabric to sit on top, where most people see.

Now, to the setting. There are lots of ways to set tables these days, and the old rules have been thrown out for many. You are free to mix styles, textures, materials and even colors on the same table. It is very au courant to mix interesting chairs at a dining table, especially for larger groups. We've all seen the gorgeous clean-lined 60-foot-long table with matching chairs – which is lovely for an outdoor gar-



Use upholstery fabrics to cover your table instead of the standard cloth. Here are four we have set aside for harvest through Thanksgiving and into December. By switching out the centerpieces and table settings, the look is changed.

den party – but for the indoor fall events, just like the mixing of colors with the leaves, I recommend mixing your colors and textures.

Don't try to force a look when it is not happening in nature. No guilt over not having 40 matching plates or chairs!

Let me know how your table setting goes. For the perfect holiday home join in on our Stress Free Holiday Workshop series. You can access it 24/7, 365 days a year and it includes the option of a printed workbook. I even include my infamous cookie bribery recipe, which works to keep family decorating help happy while hanging garland. For information, visit <http://couturechateau.com/holiday/>.



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



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

MORAGA

- 9 Fleuti Drive, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 8-26-15;
Previous Sale: \$375,000, 06-28-94
- 18 Hammond Place, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1467 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$751,500, 08-16-12
- 21 Miramonte Drive, \$560,000, 2 Bdrms, 1344 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 8-28-15;
Previous Sale: \$479,000, 09-23-04
- 1079 Sanders Drive, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1512 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 8-27-15
- 70 Shuey Drive, \$1,275,000, 4 Bdrms, 2471 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$689,000, 11-06-01
- 1707 St. Andrews Drive, \$905,000, 2 Bdrms, 1464 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$770,000, 09-19-14
- 137 Whitethorne Drive, \$1,020,000, 3 Bdrms, 1887 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 8-26-15;
Previous Sale: \$420,000, 04-30-98
- 424 Woodminster Drive, \$700,500, 3 Bdrms, 1800 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 8-21-15

ORINDA

- 11 Altamount Drive, \$1,055,000, 3 Bdrms, 1502 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 8-27-15
- 20 Austin Court, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2529 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 8-26-15;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 03-25-04
- 207 Crestview Drive, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2311 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 8-21-15
- 180 Ivy Drive, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 1289 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 8-21-15
- 224 La Espiral, \$1,508,000, 3 Bdrms, 2540 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$710,000, 05-28-99
- 12 Meadow Court, \$2,047,500, 4 Bdrms, 3456 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 8-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,595,000, 12-05-03
- 19 Totterdell Court, \$1,085,000, 4 Bdrms, 1832 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 8-20-15
- 52 Underhill Road, \$865,000, 2 Bdrms, 1114 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 8-28-15;
Previous Sale: \$507,000, 02-02-15
- 39 Zander Drive, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2930 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 8-20-15;
Previous Sale: \$875,000, 05-18-00

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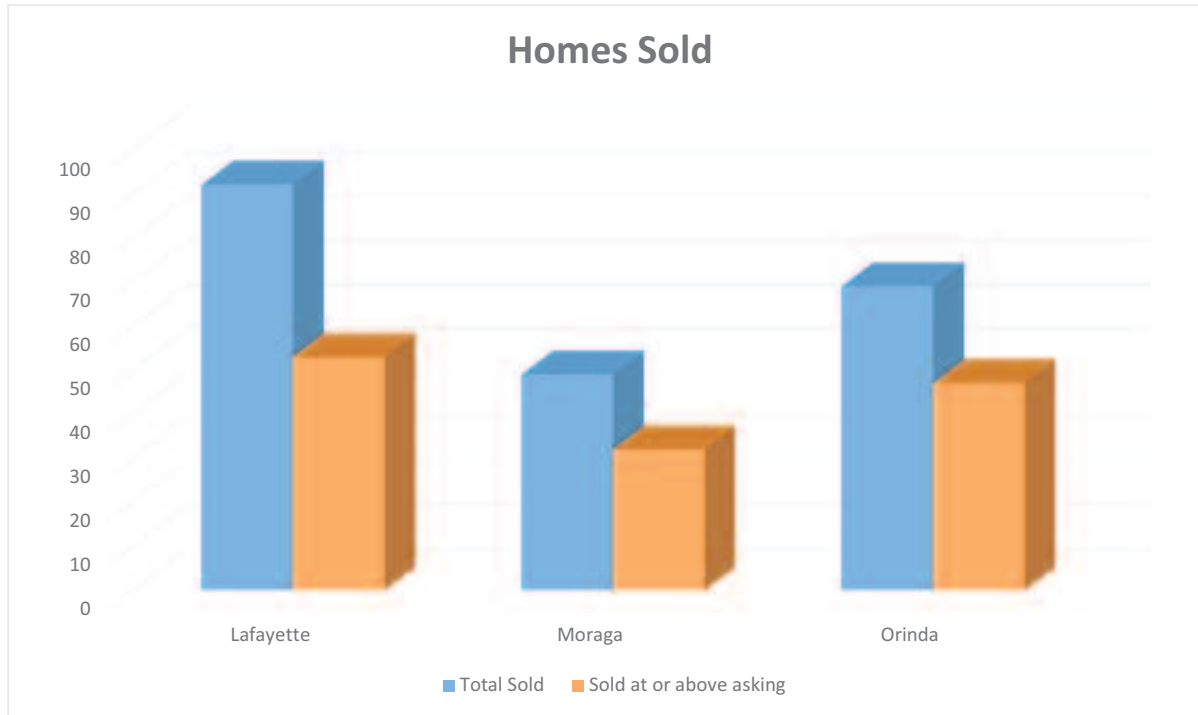
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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS



The third quarter of 2015 again showed very good activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate and inventory continues to remain low when looking at available homes: In Lafayette there were 32 on the market as of Oct. 6 and there were 39 at this time one year ago; in Moraga buyers have their choice of only 10 properties down from 22 properties a year ago; and Orinda inventory has fallen to 37 currently available from 46 last year.

Current asking prices range from \$450,000 for a condominium in Moraga to \$7 million for an Orinda property. At the high end, 29 homes closed above \$2 million in the three communities combined during the quarter, compared to 23 in this quarter a year ago and only 12 homes in 2013. There are currently 28 homes available above this amount – nine in Lafayette, 16 in Orinda, and three in Moraga.

Of the 67 pending sales in the area, 58 have received acceptable offers since Sept. 1. That is an average of about two per day. Usually many of the sales are completed prior to the start of school. Depending upon how many of the homes are being purchased by families with children who are new to Lamorinda, these sales may impact certain grades at the elementary level.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics

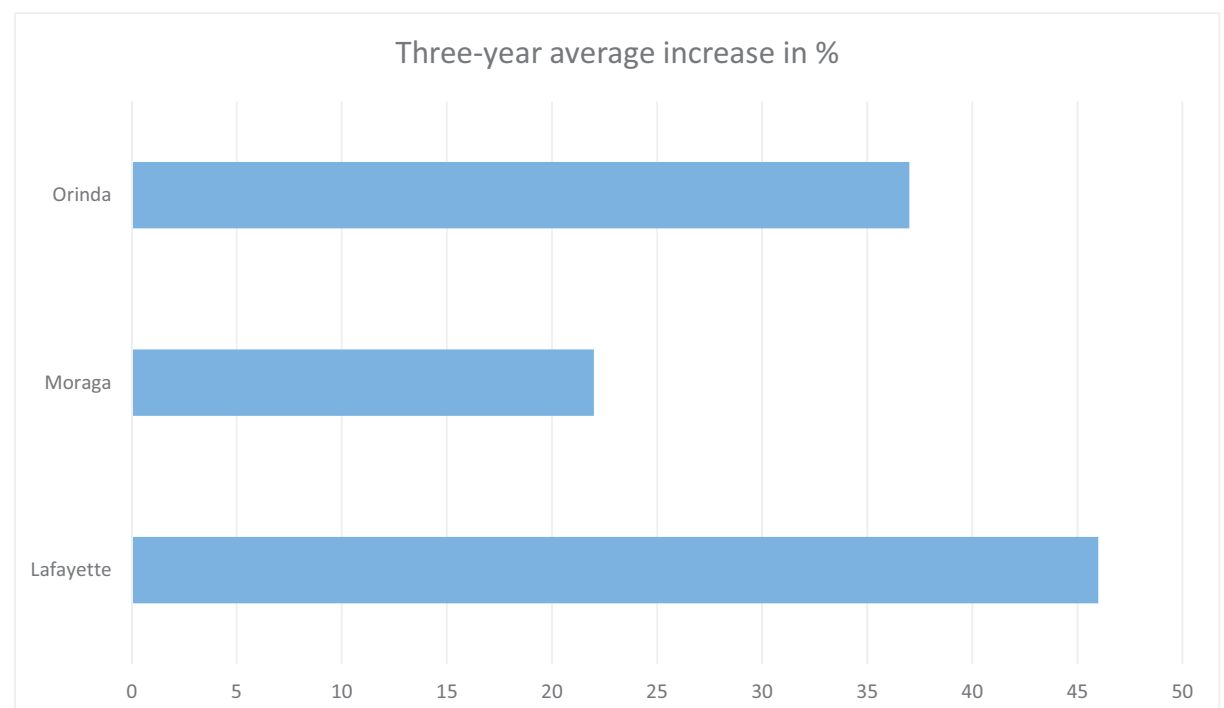
reported from July 1 through Sept. 30, 92 single-family homes closed in Lafayette, which was a slight increase from the 84 that closed in the third quarter of 2014. Sales prices ranged from \$745,000 to \$3.2 million. The

average number of days on market was 24, similar to 22 for the same period in 2014. The average sales price was \$1,462,872, up around 11 percent from the same quarter last year. Average prices have increased over 46 percent in the last three years!

In Moraga, there were 49 single-family closings, about the same in the third quarter of 2014. Prices ranged from \$750,000 to \$2.2 million. The average sale price was up nearly 9 percent from the \$1,178,956 in the same quarter last year and the average increase was 22 percent in the last three years. The average marketing time was 14 days, down from 24 days a year ago.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings was down to 69 from 90 in 3Q2014. Sales prices ranged from \$740,000 to \$3.3 million, with an average price of \$1,520,904 versus \$1,420,663 a year ago, a 37 percent three-year average increase in Orinda.

In the third quarter of this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$573.91 versus \$560.50 per square foot a year ago and a continued large increase over the same quarter in 2012 when it was \$419.49 per square foot. Moraga homes sold for \$526.77, an increase over a year ago when it was \$504.10. In Orinda it was \$566.29. A year ago it was \$518.49. ... continued on next page





The Real Estate Quarter in Review

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In Lafayette, the average sales price was 101.5 percent of the final asking price. In Moraga it was also 101.5 percent and in Orinda it was 102.6 percent. In many cases, there were multiple offers on homes and the result was a closing price above the asking price.

In Lafayette, 53 of the 92 closings sold at the list price or above. In Moraga, 32 of the 49 sold at or above asking and in Orinda it was 47 of 69.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had two closings. They were priced at \$555,000 and \$805,000; Moraga had 40, almost double the 22 a year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$255,000 to \$900,000. Moraga Country Club attached home sales ran from \$745,000 to \$950,000. Orinda had one condominium sale in Orindawoods at \$950,000.

As of Oct. 6, there were 67 pending sales in the

three communities combined, compared to 77 pending sales per the MLS a year ago. The asking prices for the pending single-family detached homes range from \$430,000 to \$3.295 million. It should be noted that there are only two "Potential Short Sales" that are currently pending and were subject to lender approval. None of the pending sales are an REO (bank owned property).



3187 Lucas Circle, Lafayette - SOLD
\$1,285,000 (multiple offers)



7100 Marlborough Terrace
Berkeley/Grizzly Peak
Represented Buyer \$950,000



170 Stewart Circle, Pleasant Hill
Represented Buyer \$785,000



54 Vista Lane, Alamo
Represented Buyer \$1,657,000



7217 Skyline, Oakland Hills - SOLD
\$1,340,000



6051 Margarido Dr. Oakland/Rockridge
SOLD \$1,975,000

Hey Now!

Join us on November 6th & 7th for a "Gathering of the Tribal Knowledge," a two night event celebrating the Grateful Dead's 50th Anniversary. Each evening will feature a panel discussion featuring long time members of the Grateful Dead family including former band member Donna Jean Godchaux-MacKay. The Golden Rose will then play two sets of music. Silent auction items include a signed guitar from Bob Weir, posters, concert tickets, historic and rare photographs and much more. Tickets available NOW at www.TownHallTheatre.com

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Digging Deep - Gardening with Cynthia Brian

Living, Growing, and Totally Spooky

By Cynthia Brian

"To the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself." –William Blake



Jack-o'-lanterns light up the landscape.

Photos Cynthia Brian

The season of screams and scares is officially here! Halloween is right around the corner, and it's time to embrace your inner ghoul. With only a few days left until a haunted eve, a walk in the park or around your personal garden will spark your spooktacular spirit as you encounter everyday species that ignite eerie imaginings, yet are friendly visitors. It's time to put out our mystical welcome mat.

Children have feared spiders since the days of learning the nursery rhyme "Little Miss Muffet." We may not want them living in our homes, but in the garden spiders are considered beneficial bugs. There are generally two types of spiders: the weavers and the hunters. The big, beautiful, yet scary looking yellow and black argiope spider (Golden orb weaver) spins a web that catches garden predators twice her size while the hunters, the wolf spider and the crab spider, ambush

their prey. Even their names evoke Halloween myths. These helpful arthropods (meaning eight legs) are considered more efficient eaters than our feathered friends eradicating aphids, spider mites, leafhoppers, armyworms, caterpillars, beetles, thrips and other nuisances. Don't squish the spiders nor destroy their webs because spiders are positive pest patrollers of our secret oasis.

Allium sativum is renowned for repelling vampires. But the next time you witness darting dive-bombers of the dark, hide the garlic to usher in the bats. Contrary to common thought, these North American "vampires" do not attack people. Mosquitoes bite people and bats eat more than 600 mosquitoes per hour. Their droppings are rich in nitrogen and they guard gardens from invasive insects. If you have a pool, you'll witness them skimming the water at twilight.

Many people are frightened of snakes, but finding

a snake in the grass is a good omen. Most snakes are not poisonous and the most common snakes we find in our gardens are the garter or king snake. Rattlesnakes are venomous and like all pit vipers have thick triangular heads, easily distinguishable from their docile, non-poisonous relatives. Snakes eat mice, rats, and other rodents as well as snails and slugs.

Do you have lizards in your landscape? Congratulations, you are gardening organically. A healthy garden boasts plenty of these small, fast moving reptiles. Without chewing, lizards swallow moths, grubs, flies, grasshoppers, beetles and crickets whole. When you see a lizard with a missing tail, it's not an ingredient in a witches' brew, but probably digesting in the belly of a bird. Tails do grow back. Lizards are excellent neighbors. Encourage them to stay.

To attract any of these beneficial creepy crawlies or flying friends, make sure to offer hiding places, water, and eliminate all pesticides, herbicides and non-organic fertilizers. Allow them admittance to your hunting grounds as they pursue, chase, and stalk plant destroyers.

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Adorn your skeletons in your garden and weave a web on your palm tree.

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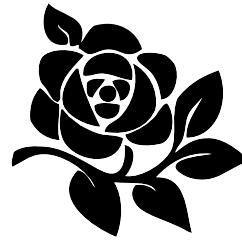
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Living, Growing, and Totally Spooky ... continued from page D12

How else can we be scared in our own backyards this Halloween?

- Trees can be frightening. Get up close to check out the bark of a eucalypts tree or recline under a pepper tree swaying in the wind. Let your imagination run wild. Do you see skeletons, witches, ghosts or faces of the walking dead?
- Investigate the babies of a spider plant or be spooked by a hanging snake plant.
- Admire the beautiful blooms and intoxicating fragrance of the sweetly named Angel Trumpet but don't be tempted to taste it. As a member of the Nightshade family, it is highly toxic, even deadly. Wear gloves!
- Why is the fox by the fountain in the backyard? Or is the fox a shape shifter?
- Are the coyotes howling at the moon or an evil eye wandering in the darkness?
- Do you hear the hooting of the owls and the cawing of the crows? They too are hunting ... and not for humans.

And, finally, a gardener's Halloween quiz. (Answers at the bottom)

- What is a vampire's favorite flower?
- What is a werewolf's favorite legume?

Carve your pumpkins, light the jack-o'-lanterns, weave your webs, and dress up the skeletons you have been hiding in the closet. Nature provides the imagination for your supernatural trick-or-treat decor.

Happy Halloween to all the witches, warlords, pirates, princesses, paupers, pumpkins and pilgrims!



A Hansel and Gretel path to the deadly Angel Trumpet Bush



An argiope spider weaves its web to catch its prey.



Recline under a pepper tree – boo!

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminder



I'm sounding like a broken record, but remember to chill your bulbs for a minimum of six to 10 weeks before planting. Keep them in the dark at 38-45 degrees Fahrenheit before putting in the ground as we live in a warm zone and many bulbs, including tulips native to colder Holland, will not thrive. Make sure that no fruits or vegetables are in the refrigerator, as they will emit harmful ethylene gas. In November and December when ready to plant, make sure the soil has been properly prepared before removing your bulbs from refrigeration. Plant promptly.

Quiz answers

A: Bleeding Hearts

B. Human Beans



Pirate Cynthia Brian lectures

Happy Gardening, Happy Growing!

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Cynthia Brian

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43 Ivy Drive Super location near 12 yrs of top schools. Well-maintained home. Family, living & dining rms w/hdwd flrs, modern kitchen, updated baths. Double pane wndws. Grt yard, priv. & quiet. **\$950,000**

ORINDA



12 Tara Road Unique Frank Lloyd Wright style home with great opportunity for additions. 2388sf home with 3bd/2ba. Fabulous 7/10th acre. Walking distance to town. **\$989,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

19 La Campana Rarely found on market! Old Spanish Country Club Hacienda on premier lot. Brick entry crtyd. Nanny unit completes 3rd bed, 2nd bath. Views, privacy, lovely gardens, towering oaks. **\$1,395,000**

ORINDA



8 Camino Del Diablo Stunning Contemporary rebuilt in 2002 by MGHG Designs. Impeccable design & architectural finishes. Chef's kitchen w/top of the line appliances, Carrera marble counters, radiant flrs. **\$2,100,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

1223 Rimer Drive Updated kitchen, hardwood floors, new landscaping, fresh paint. 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Steps from Intermediate & Elementary schools. **\$1,285,000**

LAFAYETTE



Pending

3 Shreve Lane Fabulous sun flooded 2 year old twnhm! Open flr pln w/granite & stainless kitchen, 4 well appointed bdrms incl. gorgeous master ste, 3.5 baths. Walk to shops, library, restaurants & Trail. **\$949,000**

LAFAYETTE



Pending

3160 Plymouth Road Remodeled & expanded 3bd/2ba in Acalanes Valley. Eat in kitchen, dining area, formal living & fam rm. Expansive bkyd. Walk to Springbrook pool, Springhill Elementary & Acalanes HS. **\$970,000**

LAFAYETTE



Pending

348 Shire Oaks Court Burton Valley cul-de-sac charmer. 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 1545 square feet., meticulously maintained & top schools! **\$1,025,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

1100 Rahara Drive Custom Upper Happy Valley home. 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, hardwood floors, resort-like yard, lush landscaping & beautiful views. **\$2,195,000**

LAFAYETTE



23 Sessions Road Gated English Manor 12.18 acre 5bd/6ba Estate. Grand foyer, living, family rms + "Club" rm, deluxe kitchen, dramatic solarium + executive office. Gorgeous grounds w/lap pool/lawns, views. **\$3,550,000**

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, frplc & level lawn w/views. Detached guest house. **\$3,900,000**

LAFAYETTE



5 Burton Vista Court Spectacular 7bd/9+ba, 8986sf Estate w/luxury amenities in grand oversized spaces. Premium 2.25ac parcel w/sport court, sun-drenched pool, pavilion w/kitchen, dressing rms & showers. **\$6,595,000**

EL SOBRANTE



New Listing

5050 Hilltop Drive NOT TO MISS! Great location. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, 1088sf with views of Mt. Tam. from backyard. Spacious eat-in kitchen, hdwd flrs & lots of storage. Probate sale, sold "as-is". **\$310,000**

PLEASANT HILL



20 Whitfield Court Great 2.58 acre parcel at top of knoll w/views of Mount Diablo & ideal privacy. Truly special setting sites for development zoned R-10 & R-15. Wonderful opportunity for investment. **\$1,750,000**

WALNUT CREEK



3311 Rossmoor Pkwy #4 A rarity! Fantastic, level in (no steps) Cascade model on golf course w/views of hills & course from most living spaces. Granite kitchen w/breakfast nook, plantation shutters, view deck. **\$629,000**



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