

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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*Cynthia Brian's December Gardening Guide ...read on page D8*

## Recent Rain Small Respite for Drought-Stressed Trees

By Chris Lavin



*Redwoods are especially suffering in the Lamorinda area with the drought. The upper branches and lower ones, like these, die off to conserve water, according to experts.*

*Photo Chris Lavin*

Mother Nature has been a tease. One good rainstorm – even a few claps of thunder – and she figures that is enough. She is even going to give us a few more little showers in the next couple of weeks, but

after four years of holding back, it is of little use to thousands of our most adored neighbors: the trees.

“Four years is a long time,” said Kenny Murakami, who runs the Moraga Garden Center. “I think all the

trees are hurting.”

Usually by conventional standards, rainy season starts Oct. 1. But for the past four years, Mother Nature has turned her back on the calendar and crossed her arms with a huff. The

brief showers that have been teasing the landscape here and there have not even begun to make a dent in the drought that has hit Northern California, and it is evidenced in the extreme stress on Lamorinda trees.

“I’ve never seen such mortality,” said Mark Silva, a ranger with the East Bay Municipal Utility District. “We’re seeing dead trees everywhere.” Redwoods and other trees are dying, or showing signs of stress that he has not experienced before. “I’ve never seen anything like it.”

Whether in yards or parks or natural areas throughout our neighborhoods, trees are showing signs of significant stress. Many have died, others are moving toward the nursing home. More dead branches are falling, more needles are raining down, and arborists are busy trimming branches and felling dead trees.

“It (the drought) is definitely not good for the trees,” said Abby Bill, a nursery worker at Moraga Garden Center.

“They’re just having a harder time reaching down to the water table,” her boss Murakami said.

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