

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian*

*...read on page D16*

## Beyond the Garden Gate

*Moraga Juniors Garden Tour offers beautiful foliage and sweeping vistas*

By Cathy Dausman



*Cozy cooking: Graceful pillars, elevated carriage lights and even the standing heat lamp vertically extend the Sitzmann's garden skyward.*

*Photo Shari Sullivan, Enchanting Planting*

Moraga Junior Women's Club member Lena Cooper admits "this was a tough year" to recruit volunteers to show their home gardens. She blames the challenge on the rains falling in early 2016. But like new grass after the rain, the 11th annual Moraga Junior's Garden Tour on April 30 promises to be lush and colorful.

Proceeds from the fundraiser benefit Contra Costa County Shelter, Inc. this year. The self-guided tour features five Lamorinda gardens and offers an optional on-site luncheon. Here is a preview:

Heather Davis uses words like "whimsy" and "pretty magical" to describe the oversized lot with a view her family is lucky enough to inhabit in Moraga. The site is not flat, but "flat-ish," Davis said, and they've used that, and terracing, to their advantage.

"Families are a big deal to us," Davis said; she and husband Greg Davis have four children plus extended family nearby. The hillside was largely weeds when the family moved in four years ago, and an in-ground pool took up most of the flat backyard space. When the pool was removed it left a wide swath of grass where the sun and rain green it up. Davis explains that in deference to the drought, it has been nearly a year since they have watered that area.

"We lost a garden [due to the drought]," she said. So what's to see? An array of fruit trees — lime, lemon, peach, cherry, apricot, plum and nectarine, says Greg; a berry patch, a cutting garden, a raised garden set in oversized containers, roses with names like "hot chocolate," blueberries, strawberries, black raspberries and white raspberries; a chicken coop with five laying hens; and a 180-degree open vista sweeping from Mt. Diablo to Saint Mary's College and the Berkeley hills.

Orinda's Dixie Anderson readily admits she is not a gardener, but she certainly admires the extensive, long-term relandscaping project she and husband Chris undertook with professional guidance from Shari Sullivan at Orinda's Enchanting Planting. When they removed a large Monterey Pine and pulled the side yard fence forward it gave the couple what Dixie calls her "enchanted garden." Her yard, she says, is currently "exploding" with roses. ... continued on page D4