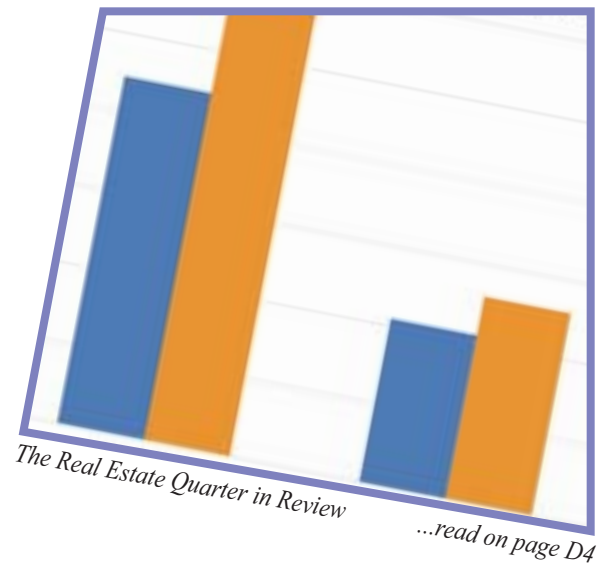


Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 10 Wednesday, July 12, 2017



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Talking Dirt

By Cynthia Brian

You're not a realist unless you believe in miracles. ~Anwar Sadat



Star jasmine cascading over a rock border gives dimension to a garden.

Photos Cynthia Brian

The singular American summer festivity of Independence Day is a time for people to gather, celebrate, travel, and spend treasured moments with family and friends. Picnics, barbecues, swim parties, parades, concerts, and, of course, fireworks are the highlights of the Fourth. As homeowners prepare their patios, porches and backyards for the forthcoming celebrations of the summer season, I've been busy consulting with clients on how to improve their landscaping.

The number one problem in the gardens that I visit is the quality of the soil. Long ago my Daddy told me there is a difference between dirt and soil. We can be dirt rich and soil poor. Unfortunately, many gardens are filled with lots of dirt and very poor soil.

Mother Nature is a miracle worker, yet it's up to those of us who till to create the vision and set the groundwork for her to do her real work. In order to grow a healthy and beautiful garden, the richness of our soil is paramount. Just as we wouldn't build a house without first constructing a solid foundation, we can't plant a garden unless healthy soil is in place. Over the years, times of droughts or seasons of heavy rainfall deplete the nutrients in our soil.

... continued on page D12



THE *Beaubelle* GROUP



NEW CONSTRUCTION - ORINDA
55 Donna Maria Way, Open Sunday 1-4pm
 Stunning inside and out! Walk to schools! \$2,950,000



SANDERS RANCH - MORAGA
 Spectacular double lot estate property. Main house,
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 TheBeaubelleGroup.com
 for more pictures and information



CABRE #01165322

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	16	\$689,000	\$3,830,000
MORAGA	3	\$1,150,000	\$2,000,000
ORINDA	16	\$425,000	\$3,900,000

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

- 989 Carol Lane, \$1,125,000, 5 Bdrms, 2235 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 5-30-17;
 Previous Sale: \$290,000, 09-19-96
- 391 Castello Road, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 1286 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 5-30-17
- 1018 Dyer Drive, \$820,000, 2 Bdrms, 1164 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 5-23-17
- 4111 Hidden Valley Road, \$895,000, 3 Bdrms, 1352 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 5-25-17;
 Previous Sale: \$32,500, 05-21-71
- 3398 La Caminita, \$1,800,000, 3 Bdrms, 2630 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 5-23-17;
 Previous Sale: \$880,000, 01-20-06
- 847 Las Trampas Road, \$1,185,000, 4 Bdrms, 1921 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 5-26-17;
 Previous Sale: \$775,000, 07-22-11
- 1042 Leland Drive, \$910,000, 3 Bdrms, 1582 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 5-25-17
- 561 Morecroft Road, \$1,775,000, 5 Bdrms, 3338 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 5-30-17;
 Previous Sale: \$1,330,000, 10-28-09
- 628 North Silverado Drive, \$1,210,000, 3 Bdrms, 2135 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 5-26-17
- 888 Paradise Court, \$1,075,000, 3 Bdrms, 2560 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 5-31-17;
 Previous Sale: \$217,000, 10-24-86
- 529 Silverado Drive, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 2044 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 5-25-17;
 Previous Sale: \$439,000, 06-24-92
- 595 Silverado Drive, \$1,615,000, 4 Bdrms, 2620 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 5-24-17
- 627 St. Marys Road, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1549 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 5-31-17;
 Previous Sale: \$278,000, 10-28-93
- 3744 Sundale Road, \$689,000, 2 Bdrms, 771 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 5-22-17;
 Previous Sale: \$382,000, 11-08-13
- 1201 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$3,830,000, 5 Bdrms, 4956 SqFt, 2006 YrBlt,
 5-25-17; Previous Sale: \$2,837,500, 09-15-10
- 3385 Woodview Drive, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2575 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 5-25-17;
 Previous Sale: \$1,090,000, 12-11-07

MORAGA

- 1084 Baitx Drive, \$1,775,000, 2 Bdrms, 2596 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 5-31-17;
 Previous Sale: \$1,135,000, 01-25-16
- 1324 Rimer Drive, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 1840 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 5-31-17
- 2180 Sky View Court, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 4433 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 5-31-17;
 Previous Sale: \$748,000, 02-14-97

... continued on page D10



NEW LISTING!



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28 Dos Encinas, Orinda

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for summer time fun | Large deck perfect for entertaining
New Price | \$1,595,000

1982 Reliez Valley Road, Lafayette

Home completed 2001 | Main house is 4000± sq. ft. | 4 Bedrooms and 4.5 Bathrooms Guest
house is 750+ sq. ft. | 1.12± acre lot | 3-car garage is 770± sq. ft. | Stunning European-style
manor with exquisite finishes | State of the Art smart-house systems | Incredible grounds
New Price | \$2,995,000



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925.818.8000
Kurt@KurtPiperGroup.com
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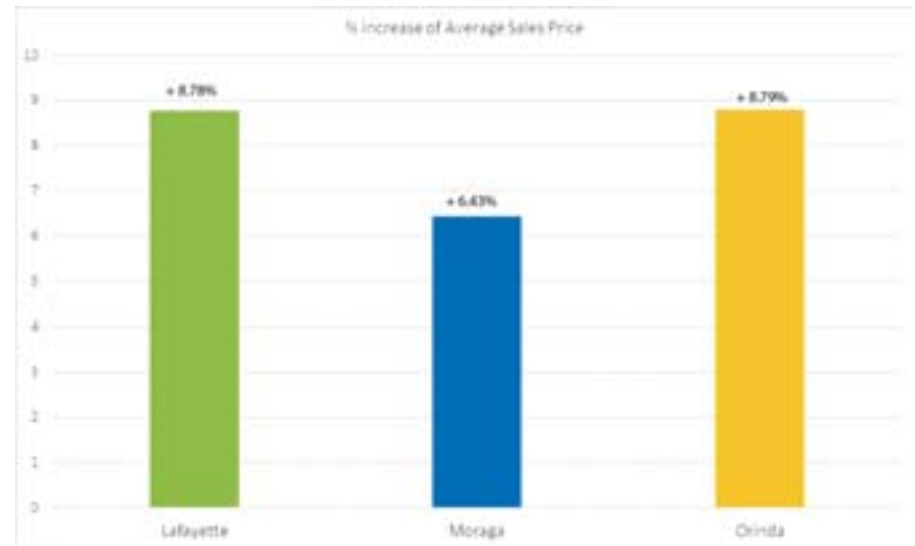
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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

Spring home sales bloom in Lamorinda

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T



The second quarter of 2017 was again seasonally strong with an increase in year over year closed sale activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate. Supply continued to be low, pending were sales up, and the average sales price remained high in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from April 1 through June 30, 2017, 114 single family homes closed in Lafayette. This was an increase from the 89 single family homes closed in the same period one year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$740,000 to “\$6.3 million and the average number of days on market was 19. In the year ago second quarter it was also 19 days, the same as in 2014 and 2015. The average sales price was \$1,684,206 up from a year ago when it was \$1,548,262. In the second quarter of 2015 it was \$1,670,209. In the second quarter of 2014 it was \$1,396,941. Previous second quarter averages were \$1,226,216 for 2013 and 2012 when it was \$1,053,173.

In Moraga the number of single-family closings was 52, an increase of 10 from the year-ago period. Prices ranged from \$725,000 to \$2,650,000. The average sale price was \$1,401,392 which was an increase from \$1,316,655 in the second quarter of 2016. In 2015 it was \$1,368,425. In 2014 it was \$1,301,236 for the same period and \$1,144,668 in 2013 and \$983,785 in 2012. The average marketing time was down slightly to 27 from 31 days a year ago.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings was at 84, an increase from the

second quarter of 2016 when it was 74. Sales prices ranged from \$885,000 to \$3.9 million with an average price of \$1,723,552. A year ago it was \$1,584,174. In the spring of 2015 it was \$1,532,761. In the same period in 2014 it was \$1,434,930. The 2013 average was \$1,282,236. It took an average of just 18 days on the market to sell which was a little higher than the 15 days on the market a year ago.

The average sales price figures in all three communities were the highest for any quarter ever.

In the quarter ending June 30, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$660 per square foot versus \$598 per square foot in 2016. It was \$594 in 2015. It was \$537 per square foot in the second quarter of 2014 and \$495 per square foot in the same time in 2013. Moraga homes sold for \$588 per square foot this last quarter and Orinda was at \$626.18. In 2016, in the same calendar quarter, these amounts were \$566 and \$600 respectively.

In Lafayette, the average sales price was 102.7 percent of the final asking price, the same as last spring. In Moraga it was 102.4 percent and in Orinda it was 103.3 percent.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had five resale closings between \$689,000 and \$860,000, Moraga had 17 ranging from \$350,000 to \$952,500 and Orinda had three that ranged from \$425,000 to “\$1 million.

... continued on page D8

Corrections

In the June 14 issue of the Lamorinda Weekly, David Mazaika was improperly identified in the article “Where there’s smoke there’s barbecue.” In the July 12 article “Outdoor living, great schools, and accessibility keep Lamorinda real estate hot,” realtor Jim Colhoun’s name was misspelled. The Lamorinda Weekly regrets the errors.



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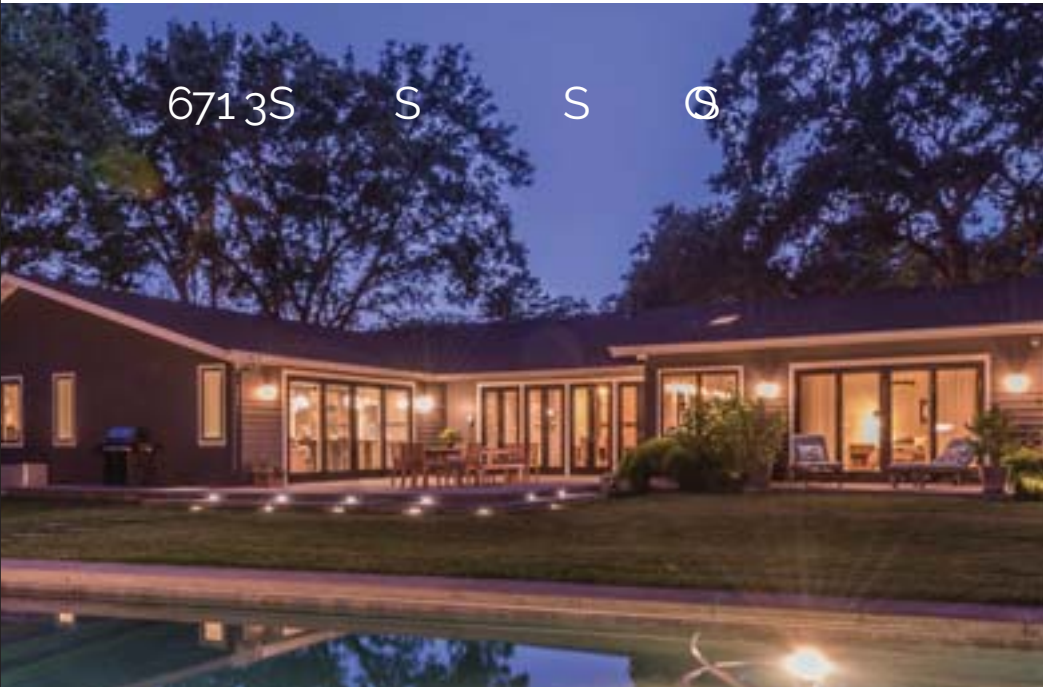


5 Bedrooms | 5 Baths | Library | Bonus Room 3653 sq ft* | 1.10 +/- Acre*

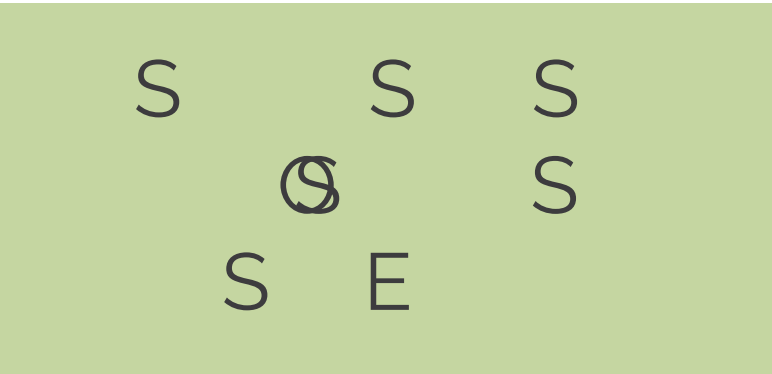
- € Updated Kitchen with Stainless Appliances
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- € Spacious Rooms, Open Floor Plan
- € Newly refinished Hardwood Floors
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- € Close to BART and Freeway, Easy Access to Town
- € 12 Years of Top-Rated Schools
- € Desirable Happy Valley Glen Neighborhood



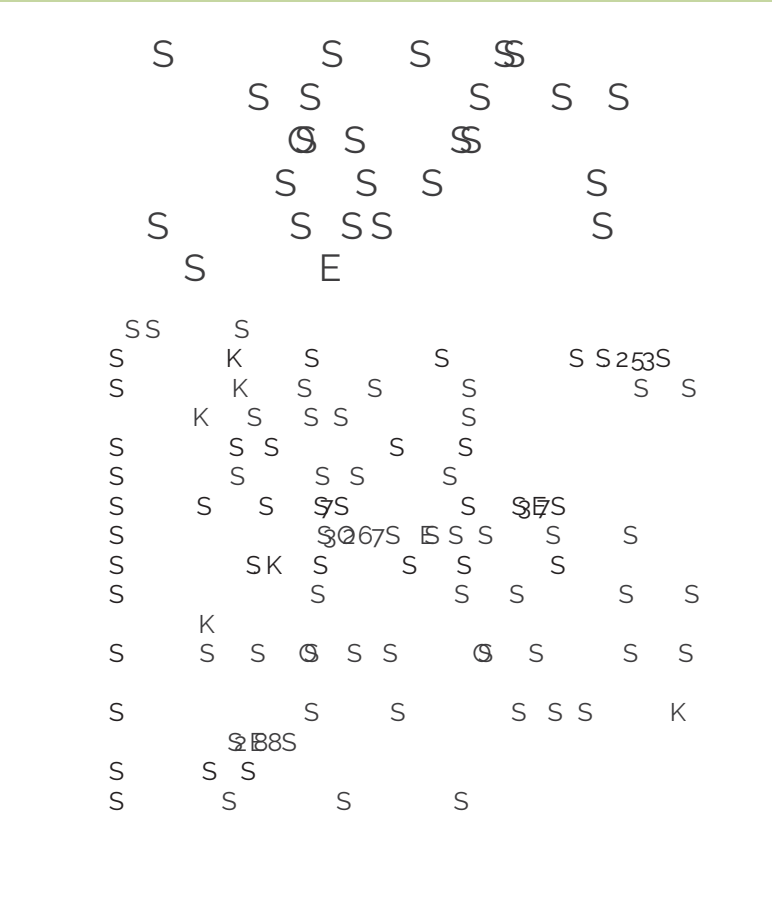
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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

Spring home sales bloom in Lamorinda

... continued from page D4

As of July 7, 2017, there were 97 homes under contract in the MLS in the three communities combined with asking prices of \$419,000 to \$4,995,000. A year ago there were 71 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined with asking prices of \$435,000 to \$3,625,000. It should be pointed out that there is only one “Potential Short Sale” that is currently pending and subject to lender approval. At this same time a year ago there were none. There are no pending REO (bank owned) sales.

This is due to property values continuing to increase versus four years ago and many of those sellers are no longer “under water” or have been able to refinance their homes and are no longer at the point of foreclosure.

Inventory, however, remains low. There are 118 properties on the market and a year ago there were 107 available properties in the three communities combined. Two years ago there were 110. This is quite a change from July, 2011 when the inventory was at 219 homes.

There are “only” 50 properties on the market in Lafayette — about the same as the 44 at this same time a year ago. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$699,000 to “\$25 million. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 27 homes or condominiums listed between \$399,000 and \$3,050,000. A year ago at this time there were 18. So supply is up in Moraga.

In Orinda there are 41, nearly the same as the 45 on the market at the same time a year ago. The list prices range from \$875,000 to \$16.5 million.

There are no bank-owned or short sales currently in the MLS available in any of the three communities.

At the high end, 54 homes sold above \$2 million in the three communities combined. A year ago there were 25. There are 40 currently available above this amount in the three communities combined.

Interest rates continue to be at very attractive levels and many corporations have expanded their businesses and continue to relocate families both into and out of the area.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices.

Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices, and they do not sell, but in the second quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

We are also seeing many buyers having to make offers without the traditional contingencies of obtaining financing or having a home appraise or even having the home inspected. Many sellers are now opting to obtain presale inspections in order to understand the condition of their homes and to also prevent a buyer from trying to renegotiate a lower price or repairs.

Of the 114 single-family sales that closed in Lafayette in the second quarter of 2017, 79 sold at or above the final list price.

In Moraga, 36 of the 52 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 60 of the 84 sold at or above the final listing price.

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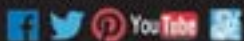
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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Talking Dirt

... continued from page D1

When our fruit trees are not producing or our flowers aren't blooming we question why this is happening. My first response is to gaze at the ground. When was the last time you added compost? Do you mulch regularly and fertilize when needed? Have you had your soil tested? Do you need to purchase clean soil?

I am a big proponent of having new fresh enriched soil delivered every few years to enhance the condition of the dirt. Home gardeners can have their dirt tested for a fee from a variety of labs across the United States to find out about the physical contents, contaminants and chemicals. With this information, you'll be able to optimize the growth of your plants and diagnosis any soil-related issues. Here is a sampling of places in California that you can contact. Visit their websites for more information or call to find out what is required.

A & L Western Laboratories, Inc. Modesto, CA 95351 www.al-labs-west.com 209-529-4080	Harmony Farm Supply and Nursery Sebastopol, CA 95472 www.harmonyfarm.com 707-823-9125
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Control Laboratories Watsonville, CA 95076 www.compostlab.com 831-724-5422	Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply Grass Valley, CA 95945 www.groworganic.com/soil-health.html
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Dellavalle Laboratory, Inc. Fresno, CA 93728 www.dellavallelab.com 800-228-9896	Soil and Plant Laboratory, Inc. San Jose, CA 95128 www.soilandplantlaboratory.com 408-727-0330
--	---

Fruit Growers Laboratory, Inc. Stockton, CA 95215 www.fglinc.com 209-942-0182
--

Test results of soil samples may indicate an excess of salts, improper nutrient levels, too high or low pH, or problems with the soil itself. With the guidance provided by soil testing, gardeners will be able to fertilize properly and amend your dirt, creating the soil for optimum growing.

Dig in the dirt! Amend the soil. Miracles will appear.

... continued on page D14



The magnificence of the magenta hydrangea.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Swallowtail Butterfly pursuing Jupiter's Beard

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Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Gardening Guide

HARVEST garlic. Dig the heads out with a spade. Don't just pull on the stems. Move the garlic out of sunlight immediately to a shady, dry area such as a porch or a garage where circulation is good. (My garage smells like a delicious Italian kitchen!) Garlic cures best with the leaves on. Don't wash your garlic or scrape the dirt off of the bulb. Either lay flat or gather the stems into bunches to hang upside down to dry. Braiding works with softneck garlic. Curing will allow you to enjoy your garlic into winter. You can eat the garlic immediately as well. Save a few of your biggest heads to use as seed garlic for planting in the fall.

PLAY a lawn game that is new to you. How about the beanbag toss game or the ring toss similar to horseshoes called Quoit? If you are not too adventurous, stick to croquet and bocce!

PROLONG the life of lemons by filling a jar with water, adding the citrus, and covering tightly. The fruit will last longer than in the refrigerator and the jar makes a pretty counter display. Limes work the same except they require refrigeration.

REHYDRATE wilted vegetables by placing them for 15 minutes in a large bowl of cold water.

PICK carrots at their prime when they are still young, thin and sweet. The bigger they get, the stringier and tougher. Carrots don't need to be peeled. Scrub and go.

GATHER seeds from faded nasturtiums and four o'clocks to replant wherever you want more plants. Nasturtiums are beautiful camera lens.

PICK plums and prunes. Large crops may cause branches to break. Food banks welcome fresh fruit when you have extra.

ENJOY the bounty of fruits and flowering trees and shrubs of July.

SWIM and have fun in the sun this summer. Don't forget your sunscreen!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Harvest garlic. Don't wash until using.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Yellow plums

Drying roses for potpourri is easy.



Rose of Sharon Hibiscus is a beautiful addition to any garden

Cynthia Brian with her favorite fragrant lily-Lillium Speciosum

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is a New York Times best selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3.

Tune into Cynthia's Radio show at www.StarStyleRadio.com

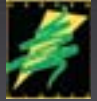
Her new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener will be available soon!

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Lamorinda's Leading Independent Real Estate Firm

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51 Valencia Road Magical home & setting w/stylish updates, spacious & open floor-plan & wonderful in/out living. Enjoy wood floors, updated kitchen & baths, & numerous upgrades. Convenient to town, schools, BART.

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90 Hillcrest Drive Charming remodel with awesome views on a favorite Glorietta street in heart of Orinda! Canadian maple hardwoods, Anderson windows, stainless steel appliances, marble counter tops, all new decking & landscaping.

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429 El Toyonal Located in the Orinda hills amongst the trees, this private home is near trails, open space & a short distance to Tilden Park. Updated kitchen, French doors to balconies, hrdwd flrs thruout, built-ins, .92 acre.

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188 Hall Drive Beautiful Craftsman style single level home on private 1 acre. Natural wood vaulted ceilings, walls of windows & spacious open floor plan. 4 beds, 3 baths in apx. 2548 sq. ft., hardwood floors, large level patio & lawn.

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5 Hilary Way Beautiful apx. 2854 sq. ft. home, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths. Highlights include updated kitchen with stainless appliances. Close to elementary school and Rim Trail.

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12 Crestview Court Contemporary inspired home on priv. cul de sac with pano. views of Orinda hills. Spacious home, 2 master suites, family rm/kitchen combo. Pool, pool house & full size water slide. Easy commute to BART,

ORINDA



9 Las Piedras Gorgeous recently remodeled gated estate, minutes from downtown Orinda. Apx. 3,850 sq. ft. custom 5bd/3ba home on .48 park like acres. Level lawn, pool, views of Briones Reservoir, Mt. Diablo.

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22 Van Tassel Lane Quality crafted 5bd/4.5ba Mediterranean style w/ideal inside/ outside living spaces. Over-sized rooms offer great light & elegant spaces to entertain. Atrium, guest cottage, sauna, wine cellar, pool & spa.

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160 Camino Don Miguel One of a kind estate overlooking Orinda Country Club. Rebuilt from the ground up in 1996 by the finest craftsmen to preserve the original elements of the home. Resort quality pool & spa, gardens, views & guest house.

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102 Brookline Street Modern elegance, vaulted ceilings, custom finishes & abundant light are some of the wonderful features of this detached 3 bedroom, 2 bath, apx. 2098 sq. ft. renovated Moraga Country Club home.

MORAGA



3564 Silver Springs Road Sought after Silver Springs neighborhood! Totally remodeled in 2014 with outstanding quality and taste this apx. 4025 sq. ft. 5 bedroom, 4.5 bath with a .77 level lot is a must see and a dream come true.

LAFAYETTE



115 Bando Court Spacious 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath home, new kitchen, updated baths, hardwood floors, sparkling pool on cul-de-sac.

ALAMO



110 Montclair Place 3 bedroom, 2 bath home, apx. 1479 sq. ft. situated on an apx. 7000 sq. ft. lot in prime location!

SAN RAMON



1121 Studebaker Road Live in the heart of Walnut Creek's charming Saranap neighborhood. Apx. 1922 sq. ft. home with 4 bedrooms, 2 baths and office. Expansive yard with pool. Great commute location with Lafayette schools.

WALNUT CREEK



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