

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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August Gardening Guide with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D12

## Home is where the hive is

By Cathy Dausman



After the wall had been opened, bees can be removed with a modified vacuum.

Photo Cathy Dausman

It's one thing to invite bees into your yard with bee-friendly flowers and trees or even host a hive or two; it's quite another to have the bees invite themselves over.

David Munson of Moraga knows firsthand what it's like to have "the girls" around (honey bees are overwhelmingly female). He jokes since they've had multiple bee hives lodged in and around their house they must be listed on some "bee B&B" vacation guide. "It started with the (front yard) olive tree," a couple years ago Munson says; and "they've been there at least two times."

This year the little stingers found a crack between the brick near the living room bay window and proceeded past the exterior wall into the insulation and built a comb up against the interior dry wall. From inside his house Munson could put his ear to the sheetrock, hear the noise, and feel a physical warmth. He called Lamorinda Weekly publisher Andy Scheck, himself a beekeeper, warning him "they're baaaaaaack!"

Munson also called a contractor who offered to take out a section of the interior wall or cut out a piece of exterior siding to access the hive, but he didn't like the cost. Instead he and Scheck devised a plan: they'd mask off the bees' various entry and exit routes and train them to inhabit a temporary hive. When the bees got used to the hive, they installed a one-way wire mesh for exit only. The box was left in place for about two weeks, while the bees made honey in the provided wax combs. Four days before its removal Munson said there was "no warmth, no buzzing" along his inside wall. ... continued on page D4