

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 12 Issue 9 Wednesday, June 27, 2018



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

Home projects for younger hands

By Cathy Dausman



Matt Talbot (left) with an early woodworking project.

Photo provided

Whether mom or dad is a casual carpenter, an entry-level electrician, avid gardener or a full-time builder/contractor, chances are they'll be enlisted for some honey-do projects at home. The challenge becomes not just completing a project, possibly one for the kids, but completing a project (and saving your sanity) with the kids. Here are some tips when smaller hands want to work big tool jobs.

Safety first, cautions writer, editor, and woodworker A.J. Hamler. He specifies safety glasses, child-sized gloves and adequate protective clothing. "Eye protection is paramount," Hamler said, and

child-sized safety glasses are inexpensive and easy to find online. He buys his in bulk in bright colors kids love. A small apron is good. An old adult shirt over the child's clothes will also work as long as it's not big and baggy, Hamler said.

Hamler says children are naturally drawn to interesting activities, new gadgets or tools and doing things adults do, and home projects involve all three. Just two things will make the project a success: visible signs of progress (sawdust, wood scraps, etc.) and a finished object. Recently Hamler helped his 5-year-old grandson build his own step stool. "Even though I did almost everything, in his

mind his role was far more important."

Concentrate fully on the task at hand, Hamler advises. Turn off the TV, shoo the dog outside, and don't allow other children to play in your work space. Stop the project, he says, if a child becomes nervous, frustrated, tired or distracted. And once you start a project never, ever take your eyes off your child, Hamler said. "If you need to leave the room, take them with you – don't leave them by themselves with tools you want to supervise," he cautioned.

Demolition is any child's dream job. It is often more fun than construction itself because making a mess is part of the process. If there's sheetrock to be torn out or cabinets to be ripped up, just watch the hands go up to volunteer. Again, give everyone plenty of safety gear, including sturdy closed-toe shoes so stray nails don't end up in someone's foot.

When the weather gets sunny invite kids to join in your gardening and landscaping projects. They've learned a thing or two from their Lamorinda schools, where all grade levels have tilled the earth. Students and their parents owe a debt of thanks to the nonprofit Moraga Gardens Farm (www.Moragagardensfarm.org). "When my kids were in Moraga schools the gardens didn't exist," said Claire Curtin, a 10-year MGF member and current board member. Curtin and fellow MGF member Betty Cooper are rightfully proud of their organization's role in supplying plants for what she calls "the next generation of home gardeners."

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SALE PENDING

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	13	\$1,150,000	\$2,875,000
MORAGA	8	\$725,000	\$1,878,000
ORINDA	13	\$706,500	\$3,340,000

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

- 959 4th Street, \$1,305,000, 3 Bdrms, 1079 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 5-11-18;
Previous Sale: \$910,000, 02-11-14
- 3577 Boyer Circle, \$1,280,000, 3 Bdrms, 1662 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 5-11-18;
Previous Sale: \$520,000, 05-31-13
- 3253 Brookwood Drive, \$1,010,000, 3 Bdrms, 1803 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 5-11-18;
Previous Sale: \$849,000, 04-04-08
- 4008 Happy Valley Road, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 2327 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 5-11-18;
Previous Sale: \$810,000, 02-23-00
- 15 Julie Highlands Court, \$1,520,000, 4 Bdrms, 3539 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 5-17-18;
Previous Sale: \$664,000, 12-18-98
- 3274 La Canada, \$2,875,000, 5 Bdrms, 3078 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 5-15-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,950,000, 11-21-12
- 3305 Mildred Lane, \$1,447,500, 4 Bdrms, 1943 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 5-18-18;
Previous Sale: \$532,000, 08-19-99
- 428 Read Drive, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 2014 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 5-14-18
- 1619 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,845,000, 5 Bdrms, 3017 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 5-18-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,149,000, 06-14-11
- 1824 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 3061 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 5-14-18;
Previous Sale: \$765,000, 05-11-00
- 365 Shire Oaks Court, \$1,625,000, 4 Bdrms, 3031 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 5-14-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 08-31-07
- 506 Silverado Drive, \$1,435,000, 4 Bdrms, 2927 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 5-17-18
- 1053 Via Baja, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2512 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 5-18-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,140,000, 06-16-06

MORAGA

- 105 Alta Mesa Court, \$1,116,000, 3 Bdrms, 2606 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 5-16-18;
Previous Sale: \$645,000, 04-04-03
- 501 Fernwood Drive, \$1,878,000, 5 Bdrms, 2716 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 5-15-18;
Previous Sale: \$719,000, 08-31-99
- 144 Miramonte Drive, \$801,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 5-16-18;
Previous Sale: \$155,000, 05-08-86
- 1565 Moraga Way, \$680,000, 2 Bdrms, 1522 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 5-10-18
- 235 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 2435 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 5-15-18;
Previous Sale: \$93,000, - -
- 1822 St. Andrews Drive, \$1,115,000, 3 Bdrms, 2172 SqFt, 1981 YrBlt, 5-15-18;
Previous Sale: \$847,000, 07-06-15
- 17 Via Barcelona, \$975,000, 3 Bdrms, 2114 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 5-11-18;
Previous Sale: \$342,000, 06-15-95
- 112 Via Joaquin, \$725,000, 2 Bdrms, 1354 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 5-18-18;
Previous Sale: \$590,000, 02-27-15

... continued on page D11

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Home projects for younger hands

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A.J. Hamler's grandson is proud of the stepstool he made with his grandpa.

"My boys have helped with our vegetable garden since they were little," said Cheryl Collins of Orinda. This past year they planted new drought-resistant plants. Collins says her sons disliked the weeding chores but loved planting and harvesting. "They especially loved playing rotten tomato baseball with a shovel," Collins said.

Three generations of the Lamorinda Talbot family have passed down a love of woodworking projects. Al Talbot's father, George, had a workbench "littered with miniscule parts for the latest wooden ship or boat model," recalled Al's wife, Lucy.

She says Al's first apartment was filled with the end tables, stereo speakers and book cases he crafted in his spare time. Lucy and Al's son Matt picked up construction skills at age 5 by playing with a Brio MEC set. Later he built a cutting board and book shelves, and as a high schooler he rebuilt a service yard fence by himself as his father and grandpa looked on.

Stanley Middle School Wood Tech instructor Michele Murphy says her students often try out their new skills at home. "Parents tell me that their son or daughter now will go into their workshop and start tinkering with the tools or ask to help them with their projects," Murphy said. Parents and grandparents often want to build a second Adirondack chair to match the one their eighth-grader built. Murphy says parents at open houses tell her over and over what a valuable skill woodworking was for their child to learn.

The community at large offers work projects suitable for children. Some big box hardware stores teach free projects aimed at the grade school set, (<https://tinyurl.com/y9yloh65>), and parents can learn woodworking skills alongside their children as young as age two at San Francisco's Butterfly Joint (<http://thebutterflyjoint.com/>). Classes are taught by owner Danny Montoya, a credentialed early-childhood educator.

Once they reach 16, teens can swing a hammer alongside their parents while volunteering at Habitat for Humanity (<https://www.habitatbsv.org/get-involved>). This bonding time combines learning construction skills with life lessons.

So, grab your tools, your offspring, and get to work! You'll be building lifelong memories, and possibly completing projects that will last nearly as long.

Consult these websites before your home work begins:

<https://www.familyhandyman.com/tools/diy-for-kids/view-all/>

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Big Picture Market Update

Recently our clients have asked us more and more "Where are we in the current real estate cycle and do you foresee a correction in the near-future." This question is a valid considering the strong market that has persisted for years, rising interest rates and the new Tax Plan that reduced certain homeownership deductions.

Regarding interest rates, the Fed recently raised rates and signaled two more increases are coming before year-end. The latest rate increase was the second this year and the seventh since the end of the Great Recession. Another trend to keep an eye on is income growth rates and if they are keeping up with home price appreciation levels. According to Reuters, annual average income growth has remained below 3% even as home prices have risen on average more than 5% over the last few years. Historically and over the long-term housing growth moves in correlation to growth in income levels. In addition, the unemployment rate is now below 4% for the first time since 2000, stock markets are at or close to all-time highs, the Whitehouse is forecasting solid 4% GDP growth and political winds, while volatile, have recently calmed a bit.

In looking at the Lamorinda market, for homes below \$2M the market is as strong as ever due to limited inventory and rising incomes. For homes between \$2 – 3M the market remains unchanged as the strong economy and the demand for a remodeled home counter balances any negative impact from interest rates and tax ramifications. Homes above \$3M have recently shown some signs of softening as inventories are rising and switching costs are increasing for move-up buyers that currently have a \$1M tax basis and 3.5% mortgage on their existing home.

Given all this, we believe the Lamorinda market will remain strong for at least through 2019. While rising interest

rates are certainly something to watch, the gravitational pull of a strong economy, inventory shortages, and a robust stock market will likely offset any negative ramifications of rising interest rates.

For a more comprehensive discussion see the Insight section of our website at MartinHomesTeam.com.



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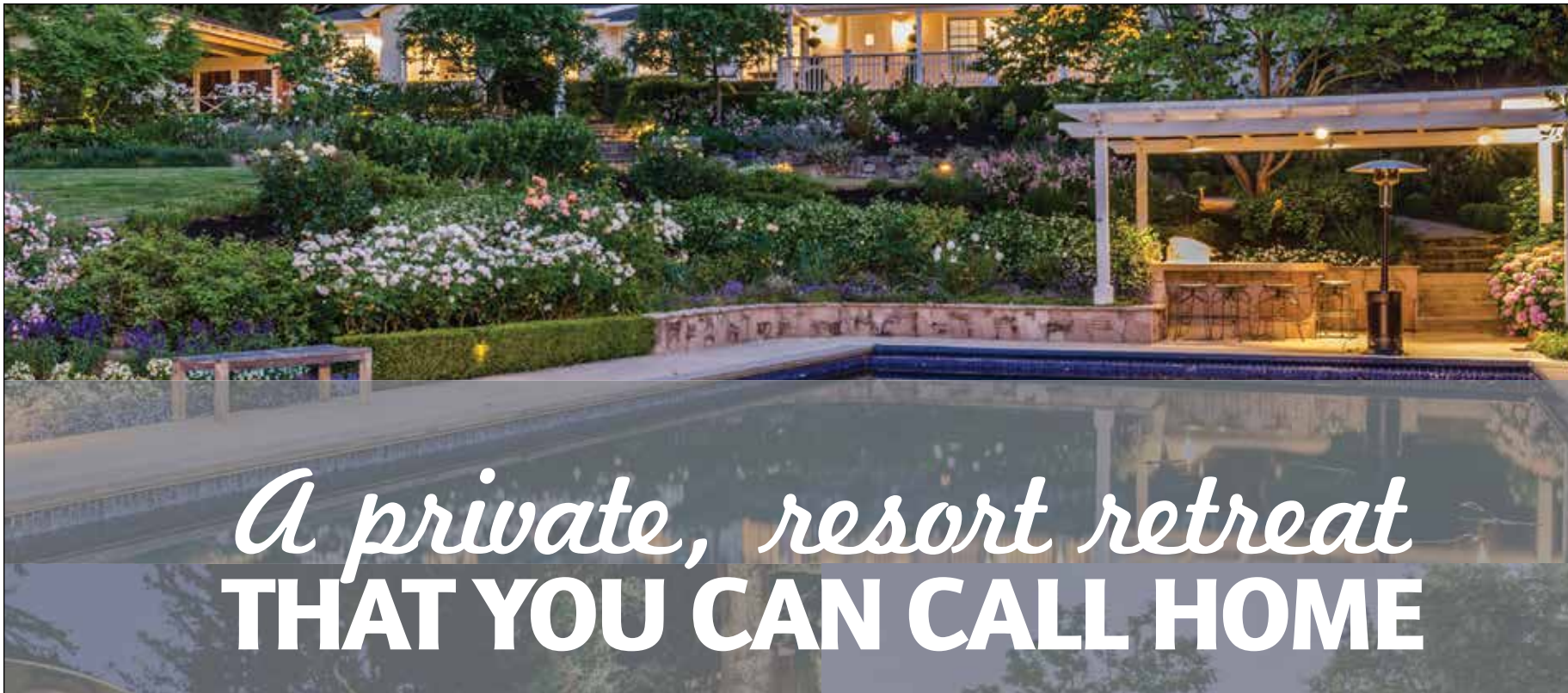
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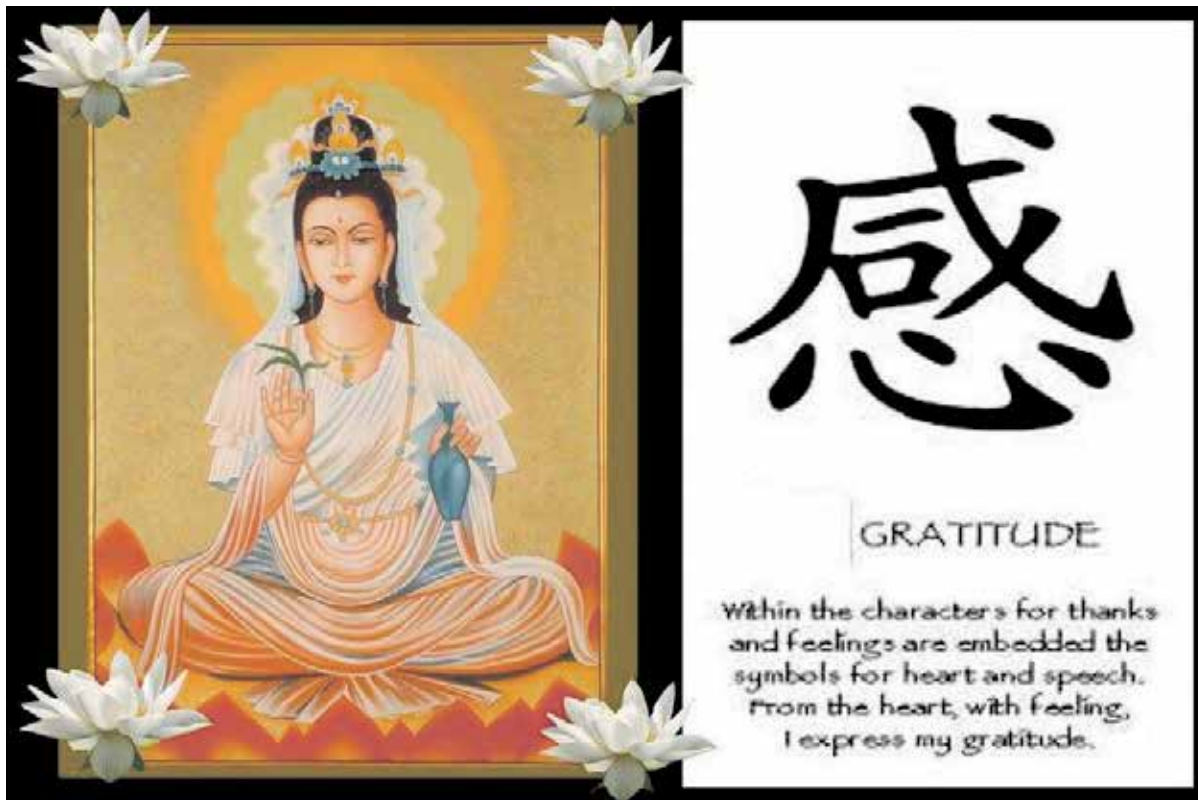
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Feng Shui

Activate the Helpful People & Travel Area this summer

By Michele Duffy



The Helpful People area includes gratitude, especially for the Divine, the most helpful of all.

Photos provided

Summer is upon us and while backyard “staycations” are a popular alternative to boarding passes, the warmer temperatures can beckon, inviting us to parts unknown where personal learning adventures await.

Summer travel fills our senses with memories of Ferris wheels on boardwalks along with salt water taffy storefronts and festive balloons floating up, up, up and away. We remember as long as water was in abundance for swimming, water fights, or a relaxing hot tub under a canopy of glittery stars: all was well in the world.

The Taoist animal sign of the Dog rules the Bagua area that includes travel, helpful people and heaven. In this 2018 Dog year, especially, travel is most definitely a favored activity, but remember to be generous and kind on the journey and express gratitude to all you meet along the way. Other Earth Dog qualities will serve you well, such as being honest, fair-minded, friendly, gentle, grounded and balanced.

I felt a close-to-home certain sadness after the world recently lost a wonderful travel journalist (although he

didn't consider himself a writer) – CNN's relevant Jersey Boy and travel cuisine king, Anthony Bourdain. Like many of his fans, he intimately welcomed you into his world, and I borrowed the show's many culinary secrets. Watching the last episode of his show about Buddhist Burma was beyond words for me and so may he be swiftly carried to a place of peace. We will miss him in our home and certainly, along with the world who knew him.

What always struck me as so necessary about how Bourdain traveled is more than just a curiosity for adventure but the importance of having a solid crew of travel partners. The world opens up to us through cuisine, film, music, language, art and literature, and for many world travelers, especially in summer, food is a major inspiration for leaving home comforts and getting onto the road.

The Feng Shui Bagua Area that rules travel also includes helpful people and also heaven, source, and universal values. Helpful people include benefactors, mentors, guides, teachers, helpers, supporters, fans, and any person

you meet along your journey who shares great grace. Not having this ease with the cheery help of others can clearly make one's life dreary and challenging, to say the very least, and so cultivate a fresh tribe of those you help this year, and ensure the help you receive in kind is abundant. When you are traveling, those friends you haven't met yet are on energetic standby to be of service to you. It's balanced karma, to a degree.

Heaven is more than just divine intervention, although that in itself is truly marvelous to experience and to have on one's side, but heaven in the feng shui sense is more of a quality. Heaven creates clarity and a lifting of uncertainty and confusion and chaos. So, especially as the 2018 Earth Dog year continues to progress into summer, clarity can assist our personal choice for a summer travel destination.

The Travel, Helpful People and Heaven area of the feng shui Bagua is located along the front entrance door wall, on the near wall as you look into the space. This is often overlooked area, which is relevant for a healthy life area of the Bagua map, is governed by the metal element, which can be activated with colors like white, silver, grey and metallic, or inspirational, helpful or grateful sculptures made of bronze, like of Ghandi, Buddha or Arch Angel Michael. Place a photo gallery of your family or friends who are also helpful to you in this area, but avoid placing any reminders of people here who made your life difficult. Place symbols of who and what you feel gives you a sense of deep gratitude. ... continued on page D10



Traveling often involves stopping and smelling the flowers. Placing a photo like these colorful poppies enjoyed on a trip to Big Sur recently can help activate the Travel, Helpful People and Heaven Bagua area.

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Feng Shui

Activate the Helpful People & Travel Area

... continued from page D8

Helpful people regularly improve your quality of life and are the ones you care about – and can even be dogs and other pets. Placing travel art or a photo gallery of places where we love to travel is also an excellent activator of this Bagua area.

The earth element “creates” or produces the metal element, so by placing the earth element in this area, we strengthen the metal governing travel, helpful people and heaven. To keep the feng shui strong and vibrant, minimize the fire element in this area, such as the color red, since it melts or destroys the metal element.

Remember that this Bagua area also rules gratitude. As we gather our helpful people together for a trip around the globe this summer and intermingle with other cultures, cuisines, music or art, many miles away from home, remember to be humble and travel gently as our souls experience the unexpected moment. This is made all the more sweet when we return home to where our heart is, feeling grateful for the good in the world and the good we have also created inside our welcoming homes.

May all travel in 2018 be safe journeys!



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Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating “Space as Medicine” Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2018 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for July

Independence Daze

By Cynthia Brian

"Independence now and forever." – Daniel Webster



Pelargonium citrosolum, also known as the mosquito plant, doesn't keep the mosquitoes away.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Anticipating the celebration of the Fourth of July was a huge deal when I was a kid. Those were the days when three weeks before the big day, stands selling fireworks, rockets, sparklers, fountains and more would line country roads and highways. Our station wagon filled with kids would pull up to these pop-up booths as we begged our parents for our favorite explosive entertainment. Our dad and uncles would buy boxes of various items to ignite on my grandparent's ranch to the thrilling ooh's and ah's of our large Italian family. Safety was always a major concern as we often read in the newspaper about people who lost a hand or started a fire while being less cautious. My dad was a captain in our county's volunteer fire department and he made sure that our Independence Day fun was safely executed.

Our morning would begin with us marching with our farm animals decorated in ribbons of red, white and blue in

a local parade, where there were always more participants than spectators. A delicious picnic with produce harvested fresh that morning followed. A bounty of salads of tender greens, juicy tomatoes, crunchy beans, and tangy cucumbers flavored with garlic, olive oil and wine vinegar remain in my memory. But it was the first bite of roasted white sweet corn slathered with butter and basil for the pre-fireworks barbecue that still to this day makes my mouth water.

The sound of weed whackers, lawn mowers, chain saws, blowers, and giggling children indicates that summer has arrived. In the heat of the day, swimming pools become our refuge while our patios are the place to kick back after a long day at work. Our gardens are resplendent with the colors of the rainbow as nature's annuals and perennials burst into bloom. Hydrangeas, Oriental lilies, daylilies, roses, gladioli, kalanchoe, clematis – and my favorite for this sea-

son, godetia. Godetia is not only brilliantly beautiful but also deer resistant. Swallowtails are fluttering throughout the landscape and finches have taken up residence in my favorite birdhouse perch. My garden is a living, breathing firecracker!

We must temper this marvelous warm weather excitement with our distressing recollections of the recent destructive wildfires. Heed the checklist from our local fire departments to create a defensible space around your home. To reiterate fire district recommendations:

- Prevent embers from igniting your home by clearing leaves, needles, and debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks.
- Trim grasses and weeds.
- Prune tree limbs to keep the lowest branches 6-10 feet from the ground.
- Reduce "fire fuel laddering" by not allowing bushes or trees to touch one another.
- Keep combustible materials 15 feet away from structures.
- Maintain your property and be alert for any fire danger.

For further safety tips visit <http://www.mofd.org/fire-prevention/abatement>.

Whether you march in a parade, hike, bike, eat pancakes, picnic, barbecue or dance to your favorite beats, may you make your own memories this Independence Day while watching fireworks sponsored by our localities. Let freedom ring!



A delicate swallowtail butterfly feeds on a pink geranium.



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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for July

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BE SAFE on the Fourth of July. Only 295 communities throughout California allow for the "safe and sane" use of individual fireworks. For more information visit: <http://ca-fireworks.presskit247.com/>.

WATER your orchids with an ice cube weekly. This is a simple way to monitor the moisture and keep your orchids hydrated and healthy.

BUY-A-ROCKET to support the Fourth of July fireworks in Moraga: <https://secure.rec1.com/CA/moraga-parks-recreation/catalog/index?search=rocket>.

MOW lawns more frequently, cutting no more than one-third of the grass height at each mowing to keep your lawns healthy. Water deeply and infrequently!

HARVEST plums and apricots. Pick up fallen fruit to prevent disease to the trees.

FIRE up the barbecue to grill your favorite veggies and sweet stone fruits.

PLANT squash now to use their blossoms for cooking in 30 to 40 days. Sowing okra, dill and cilantro will add to your garden's bounty later in the summer.

ENJOY containers or pathways of citronella geraniums, also called the Mosquito Plant or Pelargonium citrosum, in areas where you walk. The citrusy scent is pleasant when brushed up against, however, despite mass perception, my experience informs me that this plant, which does not contain citronella, does not deter the pesky biters. Empty all vessels with standing water daily to avoid an aquatic mosquito-breeding field. Turn on a fan and light a citronella candle.

Be grateful that we live in this beautiful land of spacious skies, fruited plains and purple mountain majesties. Proud to be an American!

Celebrate with glee our Independence this Fourth of July. Hurry, it is summer!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



Armenian cucumbers are delicious sliced for snacks or salads.

Photos Cynthia Brian



A field of corn will be ready for the 4th.



Fresh greens tossed with oil and vinegar.



Cynthia Brian's new favorite deer resistant annual, Godetia sits amongst the carpet roses.



Cynthia Brian is proud to be an American.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, 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!® S01 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com.

Buy a copy of the new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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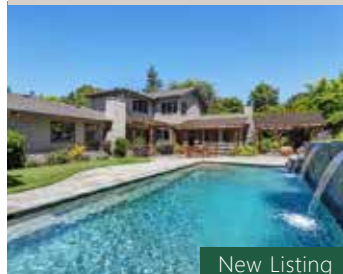
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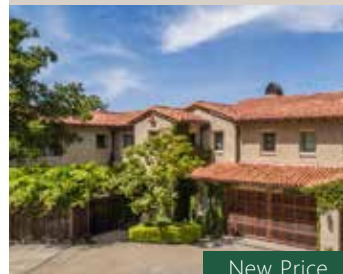
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