

# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 13 Issue 1 Wednesday, March 6, 2019



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide

... read on Page D14

## Tidying up for spring



Photo Amanda Eck

### By Amanda Eck

Raise your hand if you are ready for sunshine and warmer days! I am so very grateful for all the rain we have had, but my body is craving some vitamin D. As we inch closer to longer, warmer days my focus begins to move toward good old-fashioned spring cleaning. This act has become more mainstream since the release of the book “The Life-changing Magic of Tidying Up” by Marie Kondo, as well as her new series on Netflix.

Kondo created a method of organization called KonMari, which is a system of

simplifying and organizing your home by getting rid of physical items that do not bring joy into your life. I thought I'd share some tips for implementing the KonMari method.

1. Tidy all at once
2. Visualize the destination
3. Determine if an item “sparks joy”
4. Tidy by category, not location
5. Tidy in order

#### 1. Tidy All at Once

Instead of cleaning one room a day, devote an entire day (or weekend) to tidying up. If you only tidy one room at a time over an extended period of time, it will wind up getting messy again in a matter of a few weeks or months.

This can feel overwhelming and many of us do not have the time to tackle our home all at once. But not to worry, Kondo encourages you to do what you can if you can't do it all in one day.

#### 2. Visualize the destination

Before you start tossing things, take the time to visualize what your ideal lifestyle would be. Create a list of what you want your home to look and feel like. How do you want to live in your home? How do you want others to feel when they enter your home. Instead of just wishing “I want an organized and clean house” set a more emotional goal such as “I want to walk through my home and feel inspired, energized” or “I want to live in a zone of creativity.”

It sounds silly, but KonMari teaches that the more emotion you can bring will help you accurately visualize the home and lifestyle you want.

#### 3. Determine if the item “sparks joy”

Kondo's lessons show that in focusing on what does not make you happy, you're only inviting unhappiness into your life. If you look around your home and focus on what you “don't” like in your home, you are only creating more negativity.

Instead, focus on what you love. What brings you joy? What makes you smile when you see it or what item brings about a positive memory when you look at it. By highlighting the items that bring you joy, the unenjoyed merely fall to the wayside.

Pick up an item, touch it and ask yourself if it “sparks joy” in your life. If not, set it aside.

KonMari states that you must touch every single item before you get rid of it. This is not the time to bring “rational thinking” into the mix.

... continued on Page D4

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**Lamorinda home sales recorded**

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	1	\$2,060,000	\$2,060,000
MORAGA	1	\$1,211,000	\$1,211,000
ORINDA	5	\$688,000	\$2,300,000

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**

3246 Park Lane, \$2,060,000, 4 Bdrms, 4422 SqFt, 2006 YrBlt, 01-23-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,866,000, 12-28-18

**MORAGA**

208 Sandringham Drive, \$1,211,000, 3 Bdrms, 1923 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 01-23-19

**ORINDA**

9 Abbott Court, \$1,503,000, 4 Bdrms, 2570 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 01-14-19

73 Brookwood Road #8, \$688,000, 2 Bdrms, 1020 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 01-24-19,  
Previous Sale: \$478,000, 07-01-14

429 El Toyonal, \$1,512,000, 5 Bdrms, 4159 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 01-24-19,  
Previous Sale: \$1,425,000, 10-04-17

5 La Noria, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 3309 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 01-23-19,  
Previous Sale: \$2,300,000, 12-17-18

22 Loma Vista Drive, \$980,000, 2 Bdrms, 1521 SqFt, 1934 YrBlt, 01-16-19,  
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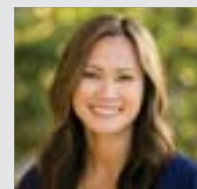
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# Market Pulse

As the calendar turns to March we hope that most of the Winter rain is behind us and the sun will start to shine. The weekend after super bowl is the unofficial start of the Spring selling season and initial results are in. So far there have been few surprises and the market has picked up from where it ended last Fall.

Recently remodeled, commute friendly homes with functional yards continue to push the market forward. With a strong economy and a shortage of quality contractors, home buyers are still willing to pay a premium for homes that are move-in ready. Evidence of this are two of our recent listings that each generated four strong offers above asking with minimal contingencies.

Homes that need updating or homes in less desirable locations are taking longer to sell and are experiencing price reductions. Rising interest rates, the new Tax Plan and stock market volatility has led home buyers to be cautious with homes that do not check all their boxes. We expect this trend to continue in 2019 as home preparation, professional staging and a personalized marketing plan are critical for those looking to sell their home.

A wild card factor for the market for the second half of the year could be the new wealth generation from certain San Francisco based tech companies that are rumored to IPO in the near future. With names like Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, Pinterest and Slack going public it would provide additional liquidity to potential home buyers.

We look forward to hearing from you with your real estate questions.



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# COMPASS

## Tidying up for spring



Photo Amanda Eck

... continued from Page D1

Focus on how you “feel” about the item. Let your emotions guide you on determining if you are going to keep an item or not.

#### 4. Tidy by category, not location

Most people store items that fall into the same “category” in various locations. For example, you probably have clothes in your closet, under your bed and in your dresser. So instead of tackling a closet or a dresser, tackle your clothes first. Pull out every single piece of clothing you own and lay it out in another room on the floor.

#### 5. Tidy In Order

Kondo has come up with the ideal order in which you should tidy up. Start with clothes, then books/magazines, then papers, next Komono (misc. stuff), and finally sentimental items.

Separate everything out from each category and then into subcategories, which will make the process even easier. For example clothes can be subdivided into seasons. Books and magazines divided into “read” and “not yet read.” And if you are anything like me, the magazine piles are larger than the clothing piles! (It’s a sickness, for sure).

... continued on Page D12

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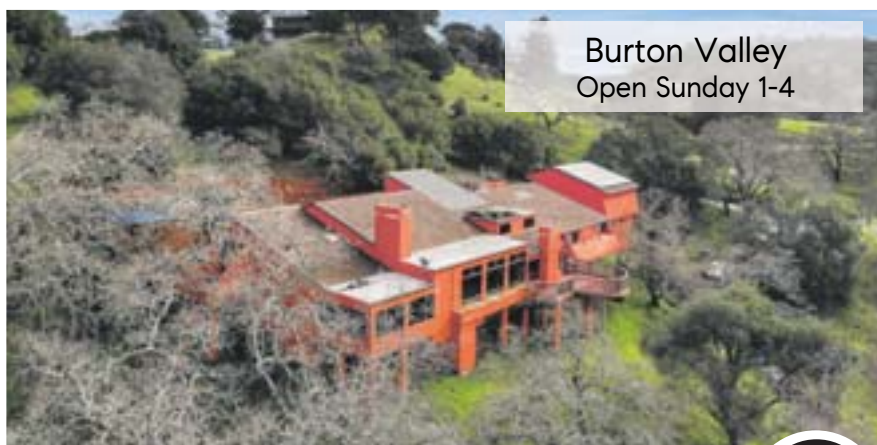


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## Tidying up for spring



... continued from Page D4

As you are sorting and “feeling” items make sure to have a trash bag handy to toss items to keep you from hanging onto them “just in case.” If you struggle with an item, set it aside and come back to it. If you still wrestle with getting rid of an item because “it’s still good” or “Great Aunt Myrtle gave me that,” why not consider passing it onto someone else who might enjoy it. Shhh! We won’t tell Aunt Myrtle!

Hopefully these tips inspired you to get your KonMari on this weekend! And if not, do what I do; watch a few episodes of “Hoarders” on A&E to get you in the mood!

As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home's interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, "Beauty is a necessity."

With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art.

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## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

# Petal power

*"Blossom by blossom the spring begins." – AC Shinburne*



Rosemary in bloom cascades from a border.

Photos Cynthia Brian

### By Cynthia Brian

Even on the darkest, dreariest, rainiest day, looking out my dining room window to my ever-blooming hillside garden gives me great joy. For the past two months, the daffodils and cyclamen have been in full bloom, now joined by the radiant pink blossoms of the Italian white peach tree, the purple fronds of lavender, and the delicate periwinkle flowers of vinca minor. My Meyer lemon tree is bursting with bright yellow fruit complementing the happy throats of the narcissi. Shamrocks are preparing their performance for St. Patrick's Day while the crocus and hyacinths are already popping. The petals are powered!

Spring is just around the corner, making this a great time to start thinking about sprucing up your garden. With just a little effort, you can make your entire property bloom! Even if you think you don't have a green thumb, try these quick and affordable gardening tips with easy ideas to suit every budget.

- Continue to pull weeds as they sprout. If you have a steep hillside, it is probably best to leave the weeds in place until the rains have halted to prevent erosion and mudslides.

... continued on Page D16



Purple spires of Pride of Madeira.



A simple birdbath accents a winter garden.

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## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

### Petal power



**Although some people are allergic, Acacia trees explode with color.**

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D14

- Clean up existing plant beds by removing overgrown plants. Rake the leaves, adding them to your compost pile. This will make everything look neat and organized, and will allow your beautiful bushes and colorful petals to bask in all of their glory.
- Prune shrubs. Keep to a natural shape, avoiding turning them into a ball or square shape. Overgrown shrubs can invade walkways and patios as my boxwoods were doing. When pruned and tamed they look

classic and sophisticated, making a simple dressing for your yard and garden.

- Trim tree branches that hang too low and create hazards. A low tree branch not only gets in the way of walkways, it also poses the risk of falling, hitting or scratching someone. Low tree branches also serve as fire ladders helping to flame a blaze.
- Create a welcoming entrance with a couple of large containers filled with multihued plants. One of my peach trees is in a pot and it is blooming now. Bright colors

are fun and inviting, and having them placed at the entrance makes guests feel welcome. Containers filled with living greens create the statement that your home is well kept and cared for.

- Herbs cascading from a raised bed or a pot located outside your kitchen are utilitarian. My rosemary spills over a nearby wall and I have parsley, sage, and chervil ready for snipping to add to my culinary concoctions.

... continued on Page D18





**Oxalis or shamrocks grow between the rows of vines.**



**Last chance to prune your grapes.**

Photos Cynthia Brian

## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

... continued from Page D16

- If you plan to stay in your home for at least five years, consider adding a tree or two for significant impact. Bright saffron colored Acacia trees are blooming now and when their blooms are finished, the gray leaves offer intense interest. Trees keep homes cooler in the summer and offer you a place to rest in the shade. Before you purchase a tree, do your homework. Know how large the tree will get at maturity. Ask about its growing habits, root system, water consumption, flowers and/or fruits. You don't want to block views or have too much shadow for you or your neighbors. If you like to grow your own fruit, you can create a personal orchard with all of your favorites. With fruiting trees, you'll enjoy both flowers in spring and a crop to harvest. Plums and peach bloom this month. Cherry trees are filled with swollen buds.

- Check out seed packets at your local nursery. Do you want to have a wildflower garden? Attract pollinators like butterflies and bees? Plant a cutting garden? Seeds are relatively inexpensive and by scattering you'll breathe excitement into your landscape. Make sure to read the instructions carefully as some seeds must soak overnight or be scratched before planting, a step you can't afford to miss.

- On steep slopes, planting Pride of Madeira is a smart choice. It likes full sun, needs minimal water, if any, grows tall and wide, and produces beautiful clusters of purple-blue spikes inviting pollinators to visit. This Mediterranean favorite is deer resistant and does reseed. Plant at the back of your garden and make sure you have enough space for it as it matures into a very large specimen. Wear gloves when handling as the leaves can irritate skin.

- Install mulch to prevent weeds, retain moisture, and regulate temperature. A cool product that is worth investigating is called Landscape Rubber Mulch.

- Dress your landscape with ornamental grasses, bulbs and colorful annuals for a designer's touch. Primroses and pansies mixed into a border are especially pretty. I tuck bulbs into my beds all year long in anticipation of a stellar surprise every month of the year.

- Add a bench, table, and loungers to key areas. As the sun rises and crosses the horizon, I like knowing that I can relax in different areas of my garden or enjoy a picnic outside in nature. Sitting spots make a garden more inviting and friendly.

- Birdbaths and fountains are essential elements to a balanced landscape offering a place to drink and splash for our feathered friends. If you have room, a pond with a recirculating pump adds an atmosphere of Zen.

- For additional elegance and privacy, install a trellis, gazebo, gate, or pergola and plant climbers such as the trumpet vine, clematis or a fragrant climbing rose.

- Last chance to prune grapevines and fall bearing fruit trees such as apple and pears.

- With rain showers still on the horizon, be prepared for blossoms and petals to be knocked to the ground. I collect the stalks and blooms that have been pummeled to create fashionable and pretty indoor arrangements.

- Continue to pick up the fallen camellia blossoms until there are no camellias left on your shrub or tree.

- Get ready for St. Patrick's Day on March 17 by going green and buying a pot of shamrocks (Oxalis) for the table.

Gardens are set to explode with color as petals open to engage us in the forthcoming season of rebirth. The final days of winter have arrived and soon the warm breath of spring will empower us to start digging deeper.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing,



Close up of wild plum tree blossoms in a winter landscape.



**Cynthia Brian continues to pick up fallen camellia blossoms.**

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!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com). Buy a copy of her new books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at [www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store](http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store). Hire Cynthia for projects, consults, and lectures. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com) Donate to Fire Disaster Relief via Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3 at [www.BethestarYouAre.org](http://www.BethestarYouAre.org)

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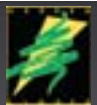
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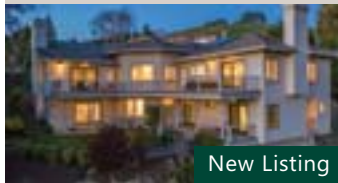


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