



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ... read on Page D8

Alert: Protect yourself from yellowjackets on the rampage



By Cynthia Brian



Felipe from Contra Costa Vector Control dressed for eradication.

Photo Cynthia Brian

When we think of yellowjackets, we normally associate these pesky stingers with interrupting barbecues, picnics, and outdoor festivities during the summer months. What most people don't realize is that yellowjackets are the most aggressive during late autumn to mid-December. These wasp-like, six-legged, black and yellow flying pests are found anywhere throughout the United States wherever humans commune. Although they are pollinators, they eat meat, fish, and sugary foods. They are also attracted to perfumes and sweet smells.

At this time of year, larvae in the cells mature into males and females who mate. For this reason, the workers are diligently protecting the nest and will attack with a vengeance anyone that comes near. The nests are usually in a hole in the ground, in a bush or at the base of a tree, although they will build nests in attics or other living spaces. If you are raking leaves and inadvertently come close to an area where a yellowjacket nest resides, a swarm of stinging scavengers will chase you, stinging repeatedly, sometimes causing dire allergic reactions. When we brush off or kill these insects, they release a pheromone that signals other yellowjackets nearby to attack. They are extremely territorial and if the nest is not exterminated, the fertilized eggs that hatch into queens in the spring will create a new nuisance ... many more colonies of these pests. The workers will die when the weather turns extremely cold and the queen goes into hibernation.

If you detect a swarm of yellowjackets, call either an extermination company for a paid service or Vector Control for free extermination at (925) 685-9301.

Remedies for yellowjacket stings:

Because yellowjackets are defending their colony, they can be very aggressive and dangerous.

If you or your pet is allergic or are stung multiple times, seek medical assistance immediately. Besides the pain, swelling and itching, a large quantity of venom can cause nausea, fever, vomiting, fainting and anaphylactic shock. Delayed reactions, such as encephalitis, that occur weeks after a sting are rare but do occur. Contact your physician.

For immediate treatment of mild stings using a home remedy, make sure the stinger is not embedded in the skin. If you are outside, apply a compress of cold mud. As soon as possible do any of the following:

... continued on Page D4

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124 Fiesta Cir, Orinda
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27 Knickerbocker Ln, Orinda
1349 Camino Pablo, Moraga
12 Jack Tree Knoll, Orinda
6 Southwaite Ct, Orinda
86 Hillcrest Dr, Orinda
1 Culver Ct, Orinda -tenant
3 Lucille Way, Orinda
289 Camino Pablo, Orinda - tenant
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7 El Toyonal, Orinda
6 Camino Del Cielo, Orinda
12 Spring Rd, Orinda
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1 Culver Ct, Orinda - tenant
285 Camino Pablo, tenant

**Happy
Holidays****Lamorinda home sales recorded**

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	10	\$990,000	\$2,855,000
MORAGA	6	\$390,000	\$2,120,000
ORINDA	12	\$900,000	\$1,934,000

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

1191 Crestmont Drive, \$990,000, 4 Bdrms, 2966 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 10-22-19,
Previous Sale: \$626,000, 04-22-98
506 Mcbride Drive, \$1,189,000, 4 Bdrms, 2253 SqFt, 1965 YrBl, 10-25-19
3235 Mt Diablo Court #203, \$2,020,500, 41753 SqFt, 2017 YrBl, 10-23-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,750,000, 07-25-05
1261 Panorama Drive, \$2,855,000, 5 Bdrms, 5497 SqFt, 1989 YrBl, 10-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$2,700,000, 08-28-07
405 Read Drive, \$1,458,000, 4 Bdrms, 1918 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 11-01-19,
Previous Sale: \$345,000, 04-01-91
3366 Ridge Road, \$1,070,000, 2 Bdrms, 1561 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 10-31-19
3561 South Silver Springs Road, \$2,090,000, 4 Bdrms, 2104 SqFt,
1956 YrBl, 10-31-19, Previous Sale: \$315,000, 08-01-86
531 Silverado Drive, \$1,615,000, 5 Bdrms, 2152 SqFt, 1962 YrBl, 10-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$995,000, 06-26-08
3298 Sweet Drive, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 1375 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 11-01-19,
Previous Sale: \$850,000, 10-21-15
1226 Warner Court, \$1,385,000, 3 Bdrms, 2004 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 10-21-19,
Previous Sale: \$847,000, 04-16-14

MORAGA

122 Ascot Court #D, \$390,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBl, 10-23-19,
Previous Sale: \$214,000, 07-20-01
1939 Ascot Drive, \$811,500, 2 Bdrms, 1379 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 10-21-19,
Previous Sale: \$725,000, 05-11-15
35 Carr Drive, \$1,405,000, 4 Bdrms, 2419 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 10-21-19,
Previous Sale: \$433,000, 06-01-91
122 Danefield Place, \$1,400,000, 5 Bdrms, 2800 SqFt, 1978 YrBl, 10-21-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,420,000, 03-27-17
12 Josefa Place, \$890,000, 2 Bdrms, 1845 SqFt, 1984 YrBl, 10-22-19,
Previous Sale: \$505,000, 02-08-11
227 Los Santos Court, \$2,120,000, 3 Bdrms, 3408 SqFt, 2018 YrBl, 10-25-19

ORINDA

73 Ardilla Road, \$1,335,000, 4 Bdrms, 2350 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 10-29-19,
Previous Sale: \$910,000, 04-03-18
65 California Avenue, \$1,340,000, 4 Bdrms, 1365 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 10-21-19,
Previous Sale: \$850,000, 03-20-18
78 Coral Drive, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2023 SqFt, 1961 YrBl, 11-01-19,
Previous Sale: \$675,000, 10-13-00
23 Crestview Drive, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 1830 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 10-24-19
41 Diablo View Drive, \$1,570,000, 3 Bdrms, 2764 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 10-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$700,000, 04-13-00
15 Easton Court, \$1,365,000, 4 Bdrms, 2115 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 10-31-19,
Previous Sale: \$236,500, 04-01-88
36 Heather Lane, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 2923 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 10-31-19,
Previous Sale: \$570,000, 11-17-98
59 Stanton Avenue, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1611 SqFt, 1940 YrBl, 10-23-19,
Previous Sale: \$820,000, 10-29-04
9 Valley Court, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2875 SqFt, 1984 YrBl, 10-24-19
10 Van Ripper Lane, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 1928 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 10-28-19,
Previous Sale: \$1,145,000, 05-29-08
5 Wanda Lane, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 3101 SqFt, 1987 YrBl, 11-01-19,
Previous Sale: \$630,000, 09-06-11
21 West Hill Way, \$1,934,000, 4 Bdrms, 3016 SqFt, 2017 YrBl, 10-30-19,
Previous Sale: \$24,440,000, 12-23-15

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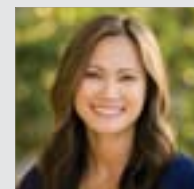
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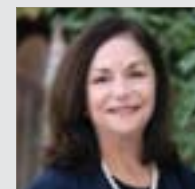
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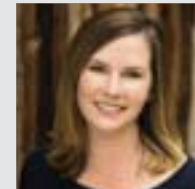
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Alert: Protect yourself from yellowjackets on the rampage



Photo Cynthia Brian

Yellowjacket stings caused swelling in this reporter's hand.

... continued from Page D1

1. Take an antihistamine according to package directions.
2. Hold an ice pack covered in a thin cloth on the area.
3. Make a paste of baking soda and water and apply to affected areas. The alkalinity in the baking soda neutralizes the venom.

4. A cotton ball application of undiluted ammonia, vinegar or toothpaste works in the same manner. The acid in vinegar reduces swelling and inflammation.

5. Two or three aspirins can be crushed and mixed with water to make a paste to apply to the stings. The anti-inflammatory properties will assist in the control of swelling and pain.

6. Spread honey on the stings to reduce pain and itching. Leave on the skin for 30 minutes before rinsing with warm water. Reapply as necessary.

Remember that yellowjackets are not bees. They are wasps. Don't confuse the two.

Cynthia Brian is the author of Growing with the Goddess Gardener and the Digging Deep columnist for the Lamorinda Weekly. www.CynthiaBrian.com



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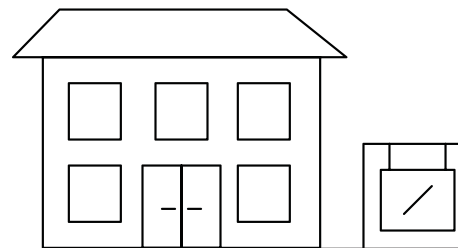


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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian 'Tis the Season



Photo Cynthia Brian

As the temperatures drop, the colors become more intense with a grand finale of fall foliage on the Japanese maples.

By Cynthia Brian

"Down came the rain and washed the spider out!" - Toddler song

Halleluiah! It is raining ... and raining, and raining. It was indeed a blessed Thanksgiving weekend as the heavens finally opened and lifegiving tears spilled from the sky. Our grounds have been so parched that even the amended clay soil is as hard as cement. The start of the rainy season means it is time to get garden work completed.

On the first day of rain, I donned my rain gear to fertilize the lawn and reseed the grass with my homemade "lawn patch." The recipe is simple: In a wheelbarrow or 5-gallon bucket, mix potting soil with lawn seed. Sprinkle the combination in areas where your lawn is bare, making sure that there are at least 20 seeds per handful. Since the patch needs to remain moist to stimulate growth, doing this chore when it is raining is optimum.

On the second day of rain, I realized that this was not a light shower, but the beginning of a deluge. As soon as there was a break in the weather, I cleaned patio furniture, moved lounge pads to storage and wrapped the furniture in plastic to endure the winter under a patio cover. Large containers of birds of paradise and palms that are frost tender were transported to protected areas.

After three days of continual downfall, it was time to plant my bulbs and transplant perennials. The bulbs had begun to sprout and as I dug holes, I realized that about 5 inches down, the earth was still very hard and dry. Rain ... we will need so much more.

... continued on Page D11

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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December

SAVOR the final days of fall foliage on your deciduous trees. As the temperatures drop, the colors become more intense, especially on maples, crape myrtles, liquid ambers and pistache.

STOMP mole runs to encourage those burrowers to move on.

PRUNE euphorbia to the ground or if it has become invasive, dig out the roots.

BE ALERT for yellowjacket nests in the ground. Call Vector Control for eradication. (925) 685-9301.

REPURPOSE Thanksgiving gourds by spray painting them in metallic colors of gold silver, bronze, copper, red, green or blue. Use in your holiday décor.

MAKE your own Christmas wreaths and garlands with boughs from your redwood, cedar, pine, or other conifer trees. Add berries of holly, cotoneaster, Chinese pistache or pyracantha for a homemade creation.

DON'T mow your lawns when it is raining. Wet grass bends over and you'll end up with uneven cuts. Also, mowing when your lawn is soaked will cause ruts, compaction, and even uproot the grass.

SEASON wood for at least a year before burning in fireplaces or wood-burning stoves. Green wood is heavy and smokes, doesn't provide heat, and can build up large quantities of creosote which can cause a fire in your chimney. Have your fireplace and chimney inspected and swept at least once per year. Enjoy a fire only on safe days, never on spare-the-air notifications.

NEVER burn oleander wood. The smoke is toxic and poisonous. Never use oleander as skewers for meat as this practice can be deadly. Place cut oleander branches in a plastic bag and put it in your trash bin. Remember that all parts of the oleander can be fatal to humans and animals.

ADD a whimsical statue to your garden to bring a smile to your guests during inclement weather.

PLANT bulbs for spring.

CLEAN rain gutters. Add the debris to your compost pile.

SCATTER poppy and lupine seeds.

COME to 5A Rent-A-Space in Moraga on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with your children for a Visit with Santa. Be the Star You Are!® volunteers will be on hand to help kids write a letter, and take their photo with St. Nick. Crafts and treats included at this free event. For more information visit: <https://www.bethestaryouare.org/events>

PICK Meyer lemons to add zest to your celebratory menus.

COMBINE containers of Christmas cactus and cyclamen for a pretty holiday display.



Let firewood and kindling dry for several months before burning.



Christmas cactus and cyclamen make festive holiday bedfellows.



As beautiful as the flowers of oleanders are, the entire plant is poisonous.



Freshly picked Meyer lemons will add zest to holiday menus.

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

'Tis the Season



Decorate with cuttings of cotoneaster, magnolia, and redwood leaves.

... continued from Page D8

On day four, I was raking the piles of colorful liquid amber leaves when I felt a sting in my leg. Then another shot of pain whisked through my jacket to my arm, followed by

my neck feeling on fire. Before I knew what had transpired, I was attacked by a swarm of yellowjackets. What? Yellowjackets in December? After tending to the painful and swollen sites with ice, a paste of baking soda and water, vinegar, and imbibing antihistamines, I called Vector Control. The rain needed to stop to effectively treat and destroy the nest. What I learned is that yellowjackets are the most aggressive at this time of year because the queen is laying eggs that will become more queens in the spring (see story on Page D1). Be cautious when raking, digging or pruning.

When day five arrived, I was ready to start my Christmas decorating. I cut branches from my redwood trees, clipped Chinese pistache, cotoneaster and pyracantha berries, sprayed painted my autumn gourds, and started creating holiday arrangements.

We had a morning of sunshine on day six so I pruned the deadwood from my fence perimeter oleanders. Don't let the pretty

flowers fool you. Although these Mediterranean specimens are easy to grow in almost any climate, every part of the oleander is poisonous to both animals and humans. Wear leather gloves when working with oleanders as the sap can cause severe allergic reactions and clean shears with bleach. Do not add the flowers, leaves, or branches to compost piles. Dispose of them to your trash secured in a plastic bag.

Day seven dawned dark, dreary, cold and wet. It was time to bring in my weathered wood, make a cup of hot cocoa, light a fire and read a book. Growing up on the farm without central heat, our only source of warmth in winter was a roaring fire. 'Tis the season to be jolly and cozy!

The rain continues to wash the spiders out!

Happy Holidays! Happy gardening!
Happy Growing!

Santa
Cynthia is
ready to
celebrate
the season.



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 StarStyle® Radio Broadcast at www.StarStyleRadio.com.

Buy a copy of her books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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ORINDA

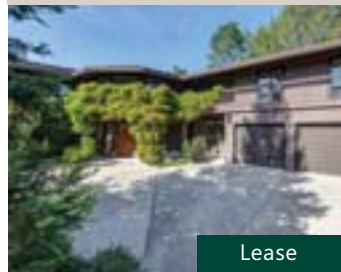


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WALNUT CREEK

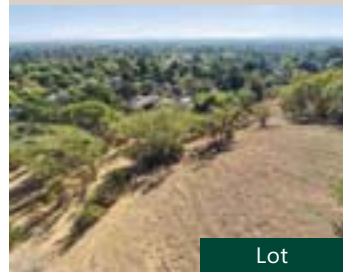


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