

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 4 Wednesday, April 14, 2021



The Real Estate Quarter in Review

read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Weeds, weeds, and more weeds



Photo Cynthia Brian

The hillside is lush with weeds, poppies, calendulas, geraniums, and other plants.

By Cynthia Brian

"You may know the world is a magical place when Mother Nature creates her own jewelry." ~ Maya Angelou

Spring is the most colorful season of the year with a cornucopia of bulbs, flowers, shrubs, and trees in bloom. It is also the time when Mother Nature shares the ornaments that most gardeners loathe ... weeds!

Although I am aware that a weed is just a plant growing where I don't want it, this year those plants are in profusion everywhere. My garden is bursting with blooms, blossoms and weeds. For the past month, I have spent hours on my knees pulling the roots of numerous unwanted characters to edit my beds to my definition of beauty. Three types of weeds in my landscape are the most egregious: black medic, Carolina geranium, and common grasses that have blown in

from the surrounding hills.

The best method to eradicate and control weeds organically involves several steps. First, it is essential to pull the weeds with the roots attached as they develop. The goal is to get rid of the weeds when they are sprouting and, definitely before they set and scatter seeds. Second, enrich the soil with compost. You will find more weeds will emerge because of the nutrient-rich soil.

Third, go back to step one and remove the second batch of weeds. Fourth, top-dress with three inches of organic mulch which can be bark, straw, cocoa chips, shredded leaves, or even grass clippings.

I am always experimenting with how best to accomplish a weed-free garden. Here are some things I discovered this year:

1. The most densely growing patches of weeds, especially Carolina geranium and hill grasses, were in areas where I had only amended with shredded leaves or had done nothing at all.
2. Where I added two inches of enriched soil without any top dressing, weeds grew lush and full but were easily pulled by hand.
3. In beds where I only added wood chips, a smattering of weeds emerged, mostly black medic.
4. In places where I had brought in new soil and topped it with wood chips, there were fewer weeds easily yanked by hand.
5. In areas where I did a two-step mulch of shredded newspaper and cardboard topped with bark, there were minimal to no weeds. My observations indicate that a two-step mulching procedure worked the best. It is more labor-intensive yet effective.

... continued on Page D16



A favorite of the April garden, wisteria springs into bloom.



Lafayette ~ 588 Silverado Drive ~ Burton Valley

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This charming single story rancher on a nicely landscaped flat lot offers new hardwood flooring, carpet, and interior and exterior paint. The used brick fireplaces and wood beamed ceilings in the living room and dining room are beautiful. Ideally located to overlook the backyard are the eat-in kitchen, dining room and living room. Get ready for



summer barbecues in this park-like yard - expansive lawn and flower beds await the green thumb in the family! Walk or ride your bike to the trails, school, and nearby swim clubs.



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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	18	\$849,000	\$3,800,000
MORAGA	10	\$720,000	\$2,200,000
ORINDA	11	\$640,000	\$3,415,000

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

967 4th Street, \$3,010,000, 5 Bdrms, 3255 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 02-26-21,

Previous Sale: \$457,000, 02-04-17

17 Attri Court, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2448 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 03-01-21,

Previous Sale: \$885,000, 04-04-12

3319 Beechwood Drive, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 1252 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 03-03-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,003,000, 08-24-18

3305 Berta Lane, \$1,477,000, 5 Bdrms, 2085 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 02-24-21

501 Florence Drive, \$849,000, 4 Bdrms, 1819 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 03-01-21

8 Foothill Park Terrace, \$1,775,000, 4 Bdrms, 2902 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 03-05-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,325,000, 08-15-18

3683 Happy Valley Road, \$3,465,000, 5 Bdrms, 4401 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 03-05-21,

Previous Sale: \$3,250,000, 02-26-16

936 Hough Avenue, \$1,425,000, 2 Bdrms, 1731 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 02-25-21

621 Lancaster Drive, \$1,900,500, 3 Bdrms, 1767 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 03-03-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,187,500, 05-07-13

1171 Monticello Road, \$3,925,000, 4 Bdrms, 3570 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 02-26-21

29 Sanford Lane, \$3,800,000, 5 Bdrms, 5150 SqFt, 2007 YrBlt, 03-02-21

612 St Marys Road, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2070 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 03-03-21

745 St Marys Road, \$1,633,000, 4 Bdrms, 2713 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 02-26-21

1014 Sunrise Ridge Drive, \$1,745,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 03-05-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,415,000, 12-23-04

1311 Sunset Loop, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 1785 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 02-26-21,

Previous Sale: \$675,500, 06-07-12

3325 Walnut Lane, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2121 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 02-23-21,

Previous Sale: \$565,500, 03-31-99

3337 Walnut Lane, \$1,785,000, 6 Bdrms, 2942 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 02-26-21

1008 Woodbury Road #202, \$2,260,000, 3 Bdrms, 2468 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 03-02-21,

Previous Sale: \$2,300,000, 04-26-18

MORAGA

503 Augusta Drive, \$1,395,000, 4 Bdrms, 3713 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 03-05-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,395,000, 01-09-18

73 Buckingham Drive, \$1,255,000, 3 Bdrms, 1671 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 03-05-21

229 Corliss Drive, \$2,200,000, 5 Bdrms, 3204 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 02-22-21

29 Kazar Court, \$1,620,000, 4 Bdrms, 2418 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 02-22-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,315,000, 04-22-15

1304 Larch Avenue, \$1,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 2203 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 02-26-21

1727 Saint Andrews Drive, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 02-26-21,

Previous Sale: \$525,000, 01-28-10

268 Scofield Drive, \$1,588,000, 4 Bdrms, 2031 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 03-05-21,

Previous Sale: \$1,234,000, 06-29-15

... continued on Page D15



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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By **Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T**; Licensed Real Estate Broker

The first quarter of 2021 began with a continued fast pace in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate. The closings that occurred, for the most part, came from properties that went under contract in late November to late February – with no seasonal slowdown that often has accompanied the winter.

Where a year ago the first quarter closings were not affected by the pandemic, early second quarter supply went down as many people took their homes off the market not knowing what to expect. The average sales price has skyrocketed so far this year in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. The days on market remained short and the homes that had multiple offers were plentiful.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from Jan. 1 through April 14, 76 single-family homes closed in Lafayette – more than double the 35 in the first quarter of 2020 and far above the 40 that closed in the same quarter in 2019. Sales prices ranged from \$992,250 to \$5.25 million, with an average 25 days on the market. The average sales price was, for the first quarter ever, over \$2 million at \$2,062,932. A year ago, it was \$1,825,127 down from the 2019 average of \$1,984,125 but still exceeding the \$1,469,744 in 1Q2018. This change can be due to a larger sample size and more homes selling at the high end of the range.

The median sales price was \$1,849,450 – far exceeding last year's \$1.65 million.

In Moraga the number of single-family closings was 39, a 50% increase over the 26 in 1Q2020 and a huge increase from the 15 in the 2019 first quarter. Prices so far this year have ranged from \$1.06 million to \$3.9 million. The average sale price was \$1,800,433. In 1Q2020 it was \$1,578,476 and \$1,436,733 in 2019. The average marketing time was 15 days, versus 27 days a year ago.

... continued on Page D12



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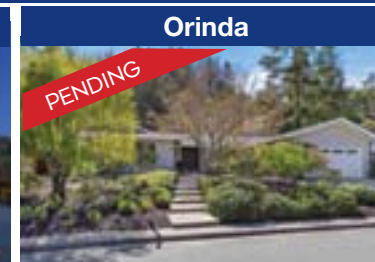
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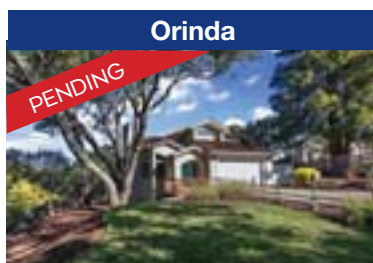
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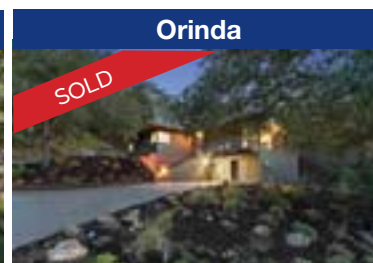
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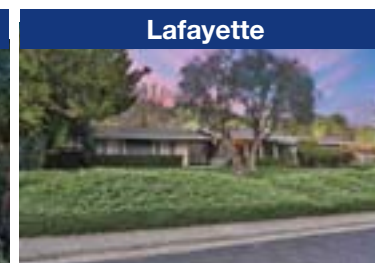
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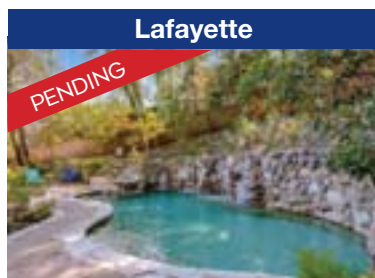
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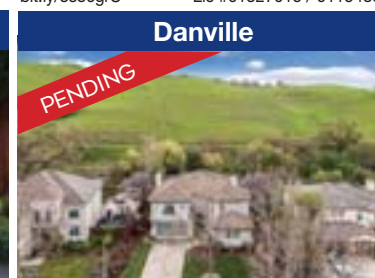
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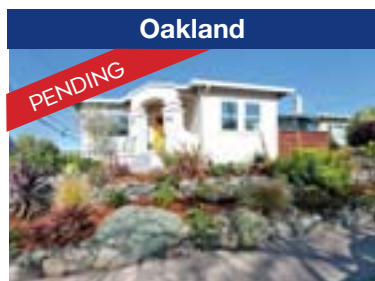
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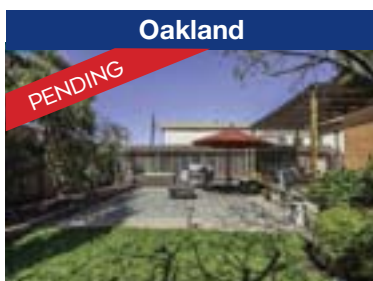
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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

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In Orinda, there were 54 single-family closings, compared to 44 in 2020. Sales prices ranged from \$1.3 million to \$3.7 million with an average price of \$2,021,192. It was \$1,783,674 a year ago and \$1,587,598 in the first quarter of 2019. It took an average of 28 days on the market to sell a home in Orinda, versus 37 days a year ago.

No single-family homes sold below \$1 million in Moraga, Orinda or Lafayette for the first time ever.

In the first quarter of 2020, Lafayette homes sold at an average of \$737.02 a square foot, a substantial increase from the \$648.43 per square foot in the first quarter of 2020. Moraga came in at 703.47 a whopping increase over a year ago when it was \$594.32. Orinda was at \$703.56 – up from \$635.02 in 1Q2020 and when it was \$617.12 in 2019.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had four closings reported to the MLS. They ranged from \$885,000 to \$1.1 million. Moraga again had 16 ranging from \$490,000 to \$1,171,536. This includes the sales

of some new construction on Wallace Circle and Country Club Drive. Orinda had one on Village Gate Road that traded at the price of \$1,411,100.

As of April 7, there were 132 homes under contract per the MLS in the three combined communities (a year ago it was 53 and 76 in 2019) with asking prices of \$434,950 to \$5.795 million.

Inventory is at 62, less than the 89 a year ago and less than the 103 in 2019.

There are 27 Lafayette properties currently on the market versus 30 properties on the market in April 2020. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$929,000 to \$3.995 million. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of 18 homes, down from 27 homes at this time in 2020. The price range is \$405,000 to \$2.795 million.

In Orinda there are 17 homes on the market. A year ago there were 40. The list prices range from \$525,000 for a condominium on Brookfield to \$5.25 million.

There are no distressed (bank-owned or a short sale) sales available in Lamorinda.

As is the case nearly every quarter, the most active price range is in the more “affordable” areas. At the high end, 72 homes sold above \$2 million in the three communities combined. One year ago there were 28 so the affordability factor is subject to a lot of interpretation. There are 33 currently available above this amount in Lamorinda.

Interest rates have bounced a lot in the last few weeks but have seemingly settled at very competitive rates. Relocation from the corporate side has slowed as many companies continue to have their people work remotely and as such, many of those buyers are on the sidelines at their departure locations before making housing decisions.

Lamorinda continues to be attractive with BART access and highly rated schools. The real estate markets in Oakland, Berkeley and Piedmont have continued to be active so there has been some spillover effect where buyers are willing to make longer commutes in order to find more “affordable housing.” Of course, Lamorinda and affordable housing is also subject to interpretation.

We also continue to see a lot of buyers in Lamorinda being represented by agents based in San Francisco and the Peninsula. Prices there have been higher for many years so many have sold there and bought more house for less money in Lamorinda.

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. We also are seeing more homes listed well below true values so that it may encourage bidding wars that sellers hope might generate a higher overall sales price. In the first quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 76 single-family home sales that closed in Lafayette in the first quarter of 2020, 53 sold at or above the list price. In Moraga, 30 of the 39 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 37 of the 54 sold at or above the final listing price.

... continued on Page D14

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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

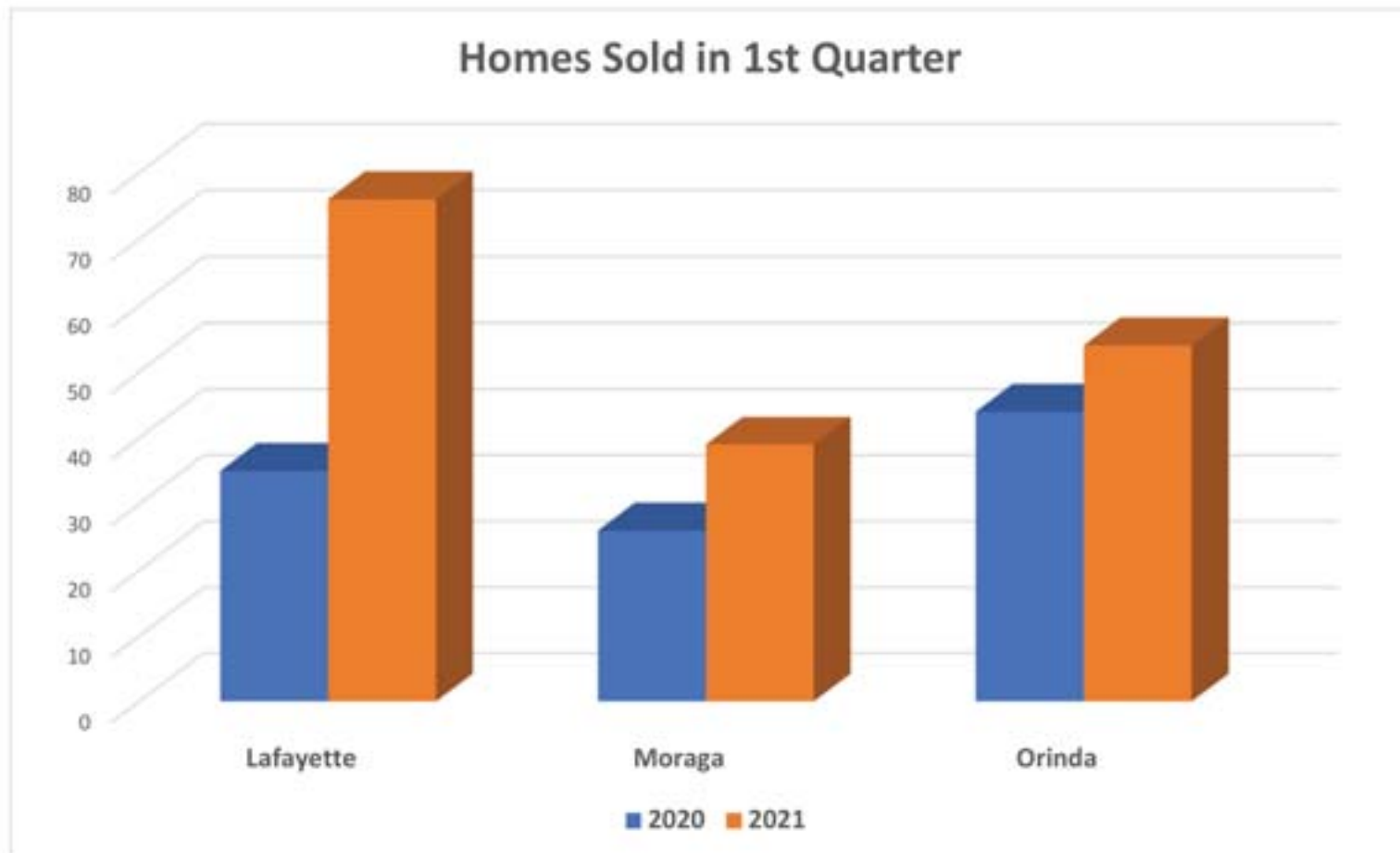
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This will typically happen when a house goes pending in the first two weeks on the market. Of the 132 currently pending sales in the three Lamorinda communities combined, 103 went pending in 21 days or less. The actual average days on the market would be markedly lower but many agents are setting up marketing plans where they market the home to the public and to brokers and follow with an offer date in a week or so after exposing the property to the market—pointing to a high likelihood

of a continued trend in homes selling above the asking price.

In the detached home category in the first quarter of 2020, the average sale price in Lafayette was 103% of the asking price. In Moraga it was 105.6% and in Orinda it was 104% of the final asking price.

Of course, the ability to market homes at this time has changed as Open Houses are not allowed and there are limitations on how homes can be shown other than “virtually.” Local real estate boards as well as state groups have put limitations on the number of people who can be in a home to see it at one time as well as how the agent can show the house.



Lamorinda home sales recorded

... continued from Page D2

MORAGA ... continued

- 112 Via Joaquin, \$720,000, 2 Bdrms, 1354 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 03-05-21,
Previous Sale: \$742,500, 03-02-20
- 113 Wallace Circle, \$1,186,500, 4 Bdrms, 2309 SqFt, 2019 YrBlt, 03-02-21
- 27 Wimpole Street, \$1,605,000, 4 Bdrms, 1987 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 02-22-21,
Previous Sale: \$700,000, 09-10-03

ORINDA

- 77 Bates Boulevard, \$2,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2879 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 03-04-21,
Previous Sale: \$979,000, 12-09-02
- 5 Berrybrook Hollow, \$1,915,000, 3 Bdrms, 3332 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 03-03-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,150,000, 05-27-05
- 2 Camino Del Cielo, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 4083 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 02-25-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 05-19-06
- 34 Donald Drive, \$2,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 3251 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 03-03-21,
Previous Sale: \$851,000, 11-12-03
- 255 El Toyonal, \$640,000, 3 Bdrms, 1230 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 03-04-21
- 130 Fiesta Circle, \$1,776,000, 4 Bdrms, 2837 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 02-24-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,488,000, 03-23-15
- 28 Ivy Drive, \$1,880,000, 6 Bdrms, 3009 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 02-24-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,240,000, 07-20-04
- 330 Miller Court, \$3,415,000, 5 Bdrms, 4355 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 02-24-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,296,000, 02-10-15
- 28 Sunnyside Court, \$1,560,000, 4 Bdrms, 2129 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 02-24-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,225,000, 10-31-17
- 13 Valley View Road, \$2,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 3949 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 02-26-21
- 10 Whitehall Drive, \$1,650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1848 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 03-05-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,258,000, 02-25-16

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Weeds, weeds, and more weeds



After the wind, the camellia blooms carpet the ground and must be removed.

... continued from Page D1

Carolina geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*), also known as cranesbill because of its profusion of half-inch beaks after flowering, is a very dainty and pretty weed when it is young. The palmate leaves are lacy, fern-like, with hairy petiole stalks and tiny five-petaled pink flowers.

For the first month, after it sprouts, it resembles a ground cover. As the weather warms, it seeks the sunlight while branching out two feet or more. The seed has a hard core which allows it to withstand a long dormancy in the soil. Carolina geranium is not edible, but its roots, considered anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and astringent, are used as an external medicinal herb to stop bleeding and as a gargle for sore throats. Hand pulling while it is still young is the best control method.

Black medic (*Medicago lupulina*), also known as yellow trefoil or hop medic, is a broadleaf plant that looks like clover with yellow flowers. It establishes itself in areas that have endured drought, in disturbed soils, or those in need of increased irrigation. As a legume, it fixes its own nitrogen which helps it to overcome lawn grasses in nutrient-poor soils. When the flowers mature, they form a black seedpod which lends itself to the name. A friend of mine informed me about its nutritional value as an herb. In Mexico, black medic is highly desired as an edible green and is expensive to buy.

... continued on Page D17



The pretty palmate leaves and pink buds of Carolina geranium weed look like a ground cover.



The hillside is a bit barren after the weeds have been pulled.

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Weeds, weeds, and more weeds



The clover-like tendrils of Black medic weed entwine around the Naked Lady fronds.

... continued from Page D14

The leaves are bitter when eaten raw, but when cooked, taste like spinach or collards with a high amount of protein and fiber. It does have antibacterial qualities and is also considered a mild laxative. Bees are attracted to this plant. It makes marvelous green manure. To control black medic, it is critical to hand-weed making sure to pull out the taproot.

Many of the hillsides are experiencing a super bloom of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) mixed with purple vetch. Having grown up with these beautiful orange globes and vetch, when I witness them growing as natives, I am overjoyed by nature's jewelry. California poppies are the state flower of California. Purple vetch, also known as American vetch (*Vicia americana*) or hairy vetch, is a native nitrogen-fixing cover crop that our family used to feed our cattle on our ranch. It is considered a weed, but I think of it as a valuable wildflower because it is great fodder for wildlife while adding biomass to the soil. The plant attracts beneficial insects to the garden and the flowers entice bees. Growing alongside vegetables, it acts as a living mulch. Vetch is a climber to about two feet and spreads through rhizomes. To control it, cut and leave on the surface of the soil to suppress other weeds. Native Americans consumed vetch as a food and used it for poultices.

Make sure to consult a medical professional before consuming or externally applying any plant that you are unfamiliar with. Although many plants are herbs and helpful, individuals could have conditions



Without enriched soil, thistles and other weeds thrive.

that could make ingesting or topically using the plant reactive and dangerous.

Once you've managed the weeds, you will enjoy the bounty of blooms erupting in our neighborhoods.

... continued on Page D18



A hillside of California poppies and purple vetch look like Impressionistic art.

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Weeds, weeds, and more weeds



Gorgeous lilacs perfume the garden.

... continued from Page D14

Lilacs, wisteria, hyacinths, tulips, bluebells, calendulas, freesias, Chinese fringe flowers, Dutch iris, bearded iris, Santa Barbara daisies, osteospermum, azaleas, camellias, jasmine, redbud, and even roses are bursting with color. (Make sure to pick up fallen camellias to maintain the health of your shrub.) Fruit trees continue their parade of blossoms including cherry, apple, pear, crabapple and Asian pear.

The grass is green, the weather is mild, and our gardens are the place where we can unwind and connect with the magical natural world. Celebrate Earth Day on April 22 and nurture our planet by protecting and appreciating our natural environment. Recycle, reuse, repurpose, reduce. Weed, seed, feed.

Your home will shine with Mother Nature's colorful plant jewelry.

PLANT SALE: The Orinda Garden Club is holding a plant sale on April 17 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Orinda Library Plaza with members propagated plants plus over 30 varieties of tomato seeds, a Firewise demonstration table, and a garden marketplace. The event will be socially distanced and well-spaced outdoors throughout the Orinda Library Plaza. Look for your special seedlings at this local plant sale. Proceeds will benefit educational projects. Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



The delicate orange petals of a California poppy are elegant.



Cynthia Brian reminds gardeners to pick up fallen camellia flowers to avoid disease to the mother tree.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia 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 copies of her best-selling books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD.

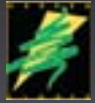
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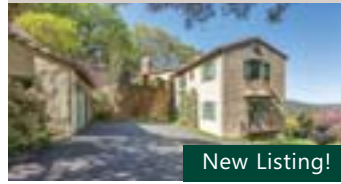
ORINDA



21 El Patio

Custom 5 bed/ 4 bath/ 2 half bath home at end of a private cul-de-sac. Views of OCC golf course & the Berkeley Hills. **\$3,695,000**

ORINDA



63 La Cuesta

Majestic 3 bed/ 2.5 bath home designed by William Avery Rich overlooking the Orinda Country Club on .54 acres. **\$2,895,000**

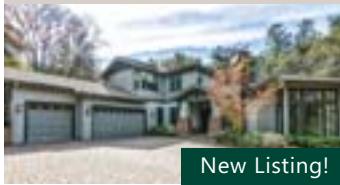
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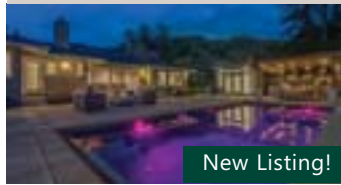
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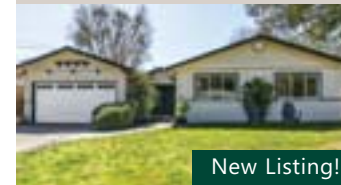
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9 Sleepy Hollow Lane

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MORAGA



20 Tia Place

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MORAGA



241 Rheem Boulevard

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