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Residents gather to bid plant farewell after spiky sign of its demise arrives

By Jennifer Wake



Pam King Palitz stands in her front yard next to the agave plant on Aug. 27 where the center stalk now towers over her second story roofline. Photo J. Wake

Lafayette residents Pam King Palitz and Dr. Albert Palitz have had a large agave plant in their front yard for the past 15 to 20 years, but when a small spike emerged from the plant's center core in May, they knew the end was near. Called an "asparagus death spear" because of its similar features to an asparagus stalk and the fact that once the spear appears and blooms, the plant dies shortly thereafter, the center stalk grows quickly. In the three months since the stalk first emerged it had reached beyond the height of the couple's second story roofline. The plant also began to shed spools that have quickly germinated near the plant's base. The Palitzes decided to commemorate the plant's demise with tacos and tequila for friends and family on Sept. 5, "since tequila is made from agave," Pam Palitz pointed out. "My neighbor asked for the stalk in the hopes to make tequila out of it."



The agave plant on May 26 shows first signs of the center spike-like stalk. Photo provided

Reach the reporter at: jennifer@lamorindaweekly.com

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