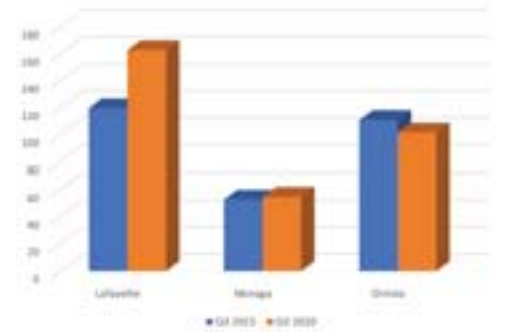


# Lamorinda

# OUR HOMES

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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

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## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Grass roots



Photo Cynthia Brian

Plant red or white clover for a greener, nitrogen-rich lawn.

By Cynthia Brian

*“Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.” ~ F. Scott Fitzgerald*

The earth trembled. The fires raged. The stock market crashed. October has notoriously become a month when disasters great and small occur. No matter what transpires, life goes on and nature always prevails.

After a summer of extreme heat, cooler weather is a welcome gift. The benefit for gardeners is that the soil is warm making it perfect for rooting, especially when we receive a bit of precipitation.

The next weeks are the optimum time to grow grass. Many lawns died during our heatwave and water shortages. Green areas were replaced with succulents, rocks, and, most sadly, pavement. If you want to seed, re-seed, or install turf, fall is the time to do it. Since I prefer a ver-

dant lawn all year, this season I plan on adding more clover to my grass.

Throughout the hot weather, I sparingly watered, providing just enough H<sub>2</sub>O to keep the lawn alive. What I observed during this drought was that the clover interspersed in my grass was always green, even when I didn't water. Clover is a nitrogen fixer. Like all legumes, it takes nitrogen from the air and through a chemical reaction, deposits it in the ground as an absorbable fertilizer. It is constantly providing fertilizer to itself and the surrounding grass, making the entire lawn healthier. Because my clover is spread throughout my lawn, the entire lawn appears to be greener.

Besides providing nutrients to the soil, clover is also resistant to pet urine. If you are a pet owner, you probably have brown spots on your lawn from the urine of your dog. If you add clover, you'll have a more uniform green.

A positive and a negative of planting clover is that the flowers attract honeybees. As a gardener, I welcome honeybees to my landscape, but honeybees on a lawn can result in unwanted stings if you happen to cartwheel on a bee! Be aware that bees are hovering to avoid a confrontation.

If you've been to the Oakland or Mumbai airports, you may have witnessed the beautiful walls of plants. Vertical gardening is a mixture of plants that grow up and out as a living wall. As our lawns and lot sizes decrease, many people are discovering that embracing vertical gardens is a way to enjoy nature in a smaller space. Try it out this season.

In preparation for Halloween, there are many traditional endeavors to experience.

- It is time to harvest the pumpkins, gourds, and winter squash. If you don't grow your own, you'll find funky as well as colorful pumpkins at the local Farmers' Market and grocery stores.

- Apples and Asian pears are still hanging from the trees awaiting their reaper. Did you enjoy candied or caramel apples as a child during October? There are easy and fun recipes online to enjoy an old-fashioned treat.

- Cut your corn stalks to use in decorations and buy a hay bale to add to the décor. You can later use the hay to cover your newly planted vegetable patch. The hay mulch will keep most weeds from emerging as the ghosts, ghouls, and goblins begin their rampage.

- Build a scarecrow to hang in your front yard for the season, then use it in your vegetable garden when the winter vegetable seeds sprout.