

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 16 Issue 1 Wednesday, March 2, 2022



Handyman Jim Hurley's New Home Primer
read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Designing for drought



Red Chinese lantern is a perennial.

By Cynthia Brian

"That which surrounds you is within you." ~ Karl Schmidt

Days of heat followed by days of near-freezing cold! Out of nowhere, a beautiful hailstorm covers the ground in white pebbles. The weather forecasts sunshine or cloud cover, but no rain in future days. According to the New York Times, the seven hottest years on record globally were experienced in the last seven years. The atmospheric river of December provided a respite and a hopeful prospect for drought relief. January, February and March are traditionally the wettest months here in California, but this year, January and February were the driest in years and March isn't looking much better. Maybe the Irish leprechauns will exert their magical powers to make it rain on St. Patrick's Day!

Designing for drought:

As I gaze upon my peach tree blossoms intermingled with crabapple buds blooming much too early, I admit that I am basking in this



Calla lilies are perennial charmers.

Photos Cynthia Brian

early spring. Although I am an eternal optimist who imagines positive outcomes, if we want our gardens to survive and thrive, we need to design for the drought. Here's how to get started now to be ready for whatever transpires as the months warm.

1) Check for leaks. Make sure that your outside pipes are insulated against freezing. Water expands when it freezes causing pipes to burst. Even a tiny 1/8-inch crack could spew 250 gallons of water per day. If you witness wet spots, water running along driveways, or puddles, investigate for a leak. Check hose bibs for drips, replace washers, and routinely inspect automatic sprinklers and connections.

2) Amend the soil. The foundation of every garden is the soil. The ideal soil drains quickly while storing water. For drought toleration, add several inches of rich, organic compost to encourage deep root formation while trapping moisture. Make your compost by adding kitchen scraps, eggshells, coffee grinds, tea leaves, shredded newspaper, leaves, lawn clippings, fish bones, aged manure, non-diseased weeds, and other organic matter to a bin or pile.

... continued on Page D12

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	6	\$1,500,000	\$12,000,000
MORAGA	4	\$550,000	\$1,875,000
ORINDA	3	\$1,525,000	\$3,725,000

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

84 Bacon Court, \$1,885,000, 4 Bdrms, 2453 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 01-20-22,

Previous Sale: \$995,000, 10-27-05

3820 Happy Valley Road, \$12,000,000, 6 Bdrms, 9281 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 01-18-22

984 Hawthorne Drive, \$1,860,000, 3 Bdrms, 1580 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 01-12-22,

Previous Sale: \$1,054,000, 08-26-16

2858 Kinney Drive, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 1227 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 01-10-22,

Previous Sale: \$1,285,000, 05-06-21

3376 Las Huertas Road, \$1,800,000, 3 Bdrms, 1800 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 01-21-22

1330 Summit Road, \$2,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 2372 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 01-12-22,

Previous Sale: \$350,000, 11-01-87

MORAGA

1911 Ascot Drive, \$1,100,000, 2 Bdrms, 1455 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 01-21-22

2145 Donald Drive #1, \$550,000, 2 Bdrms, 1225 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 01-10-22,

Previous Sale: \$118,500, 03-01-88

6 Sparrow Court, \$1,720,000, 3 Bdrms, 1704 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 01-19-22,

Previous Sale: \$1,240,000, 09-16-21

38 Sullivan Drive, \$1,875,000, 3 Bdrms, 1734 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 01-13-22

ORINDA

58 Camino Del Diablo, \$3,725,000, 4 Bdrms, 4070 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 01-10-22,

Previous Sale: \$435,000, 05-01-86

158 La Espiral, \$1,525,000, 2 Bdrms, 1300 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 01-13-22,

Previous Sale: \$805,000, 06-18-13

8 Patricia Road, \$1,725,000, 4 Bdrms, 2513 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 01-19-22,

Previous Sale: \$650,000, 04-26-00



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New home primer, Part 2



On demand water heater

Photos Jim Hurley

By Jim Hurley

In Part 1 of the New Home Primer – or things that everyone should know about their house – we covered your water and gas main valves, so now let's go on to locating your water heater. Some homes may have two, which I typically see when a master suite was added as an extension.

There are two types of water heaters: Tank or On Demand.

Tank heaters have a pilot light which must be lit for them to stay hot. If your hot water is running cold, your pilot light is out. How to relight the pilot? I found several videos on YouTube regarding this

process. Also, PG&E provides a pilot light service, if you can't get it lit yourself, but you will have to wait until they get there.

Old tanks eventually wear out, and usually the first sign of this is water dripping from the bottom. If there is water dripping from your tank heater, turn off the filler valve above it and get a new heater before the leak becomes a flood.

The tankless, or On Demand water heater is becoming more popular in homes. They are literally high-powered burners that heat the water as it flows through the line when the tap is opened. It never runs out of hot water (unless you forget to pay your gas bill). There is no pilot light because they use electronic ignition, but must have electricity to run. If your On Demand hot water is cold, make sure it's plugged in and there is power at the outlet.

Our last stop in the New Home Primer is your electrical panel, or panels. Find the electrical meter on your home. Open the cover to the box under or beside the meter and look at the breaker switches.

... continued on Page D10



Electrical panel




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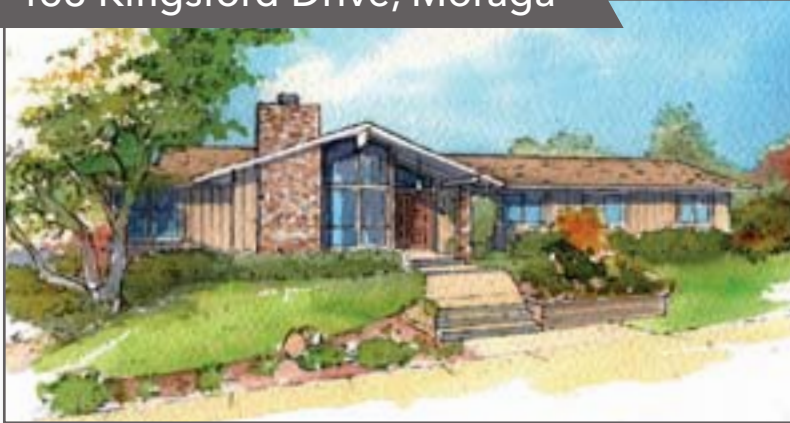




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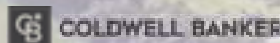
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Located on one of Moraga's most desirable streets, this single-story home has a flat yard with a gorgeous pool, sport court and large undeveloped area. The living room has a vaulted ceiling, fireplace and floor-to-ceiling windows. There is a formal dining room and an eat-in kitchen with maple cabinetry and granite countertops, as well as a 3-car garage and laundry room. Updates include dual-paned windows, newer furnace and air conditioning and plantation shutters. Centrally located near the Lafayette-Moraga Trail, Moraga Commons Park, shops and top-rated schools.

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This Gorgeous Mid-Century home boasts walls of glass, stunning views and an edible garden featured in Sunset Magazine. As you step into the home, you are drawn into the formal living room with vaulted ceilings, walls of glass and breathtaking views. The open floor plan allows for a comfortable flow between the kitchen, family room, dining room and bar. This 2,991 sq ft home lives primarily on a single level with 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on the first floor. Up a flight of stairs, you will find the office/bonus room with floor-to-ceiling windows and gorgeous views.

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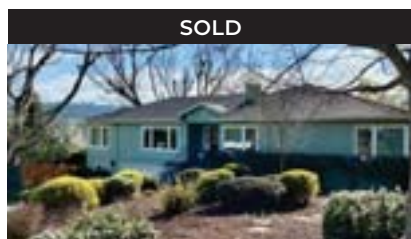
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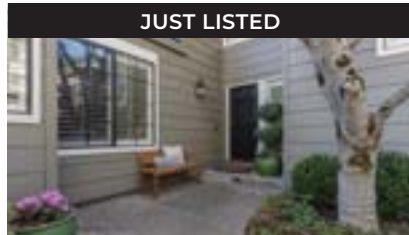
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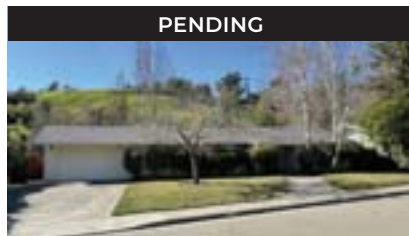
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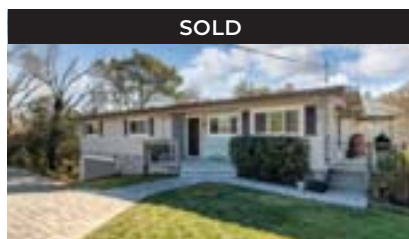
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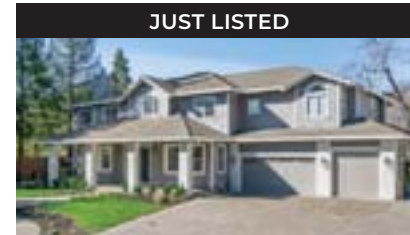
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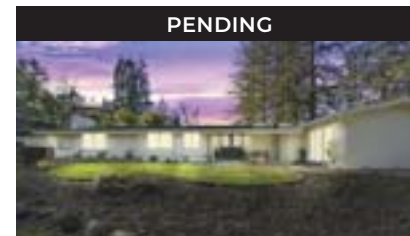
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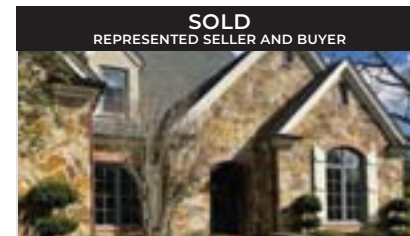
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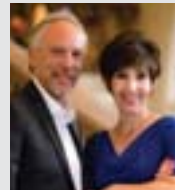
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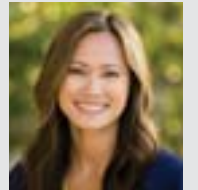
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New home primer, Part 2

... continued from Page D4

One will say “Main.” That is the one to switch off if you see sparks, smell smoke, or someone throws a toaster in a bathtub full of water. Depending on your electrical layout, the main breaker panel may have a multitude of additional switches marked with their purpose, or a few larger switches marked as Sub A, Sub B and AC (Air Conditioner). These larger breakers mean you have another (Sub) panel somewhere inside the house with smaller breakers inside. It is very good to locate these boxes, and make sure you can access them when the power goes out in one area of the house.

The important thing to know about breaker switches is how to reset them. Most of the time the breaker switch will indicate it has popped when the switch is centered between On and Off. To reset the breaker, move the switch all the way to the Off position then back to On. If it pops again, go back into the house, and unplug any appliances that are near the outlet that is not working. Then try the switch again. If it continues to pop, leave it off until you or your handyman/electrician can locate the short in the circuit. Occasionally an older breaker will pop but the switch will not move back to center. If the power is out in one area of the house, and none of the breaker switches are at center, you will need to click each switch off and then back on to find the one that popped.

The electrical code requires that circuit breakers be labeled by purpose, (Lights, Plugs, Refrigerator, Disposal, Etc.). Some but not all electricians will conscientiously identify which switch controls what area of the house. However, you should never assume that the labels are correct. If you are working on circuit, always verify that the power is off at the junction box, despite what the breaker label says.

My fervent wish is for everyone to enjoy many trouble-free years in their new homes. But the dad in me says it doesn't hurt to be prepared for emergencies. You never know.

Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.



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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Designing for drought



Sedum illuminates with mustard yellow flowers. Photo Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

Do not use human, dog, or cat feces. Don't disturb the lower levels of the ground to allow worms and micro-bacteria to do their jobs of aerating and feeding the earth. In a drought, double and triple digging techniques are not recommended.

3) Water well. To stay healthy, most plants need at least one inch of moisture per week. The best way to save your plants as well as conserve water is to water deeply and infrequently.

The penetration of the water encourages deeper roots that are more resistant to drought conditions. A good rule of thumb is to water until the dirt has a hint of shine. Lawns and bedding plants require a

drink to a depth of six inches while perennials, trees, and shrubs need closer to 12. Plan to irrigate either early in the morning or evening when absorption will be maximized, and evaporation minimized. Just as humans rejuvenate from a good night's rest, plants do most of their growing at night. Traditional overhead sprinklers can lose half of their effectiveness to evaporation, run-off, and overspray. Drip and soaker hoses are the best bets for deep soaking to the root zone. Soaker hoses may be covered with mulch making them invisible. When water is restricted prioritize rationing by watering, in this order, newly planted trees, shrubs, and perennials; newly seeded or repaired lawns; plants with exposure on windy sites or in sandy soils; and flowering vegetables.

4) Mulch. Three inches of mulch will insulate your plants from the heat, cold, and elements. Mulch keeps the ground cooler, maximizes water retention, reduces evaporation, and improves the appearance of your landscape. Mulch includes pine needles, straw, leaves, wood chips, bark, and even gravel. As it decomposes it becomes compost and enriches the soil. When that happens, it is time for a new top layer of the mulch of your choice.

5) Weed. Weeds steal moisture and nutrition from neighboring plants. Pull or cut down unwanted weeds.

6) Stop fertilizing. If you plan to fertilize this season, do it now while the weather is still cool, and dew is apparent. Feeding while it is raining is the best prescription for plant wellness. If you fertilize without sufficient water, the roots will burn, and the plants will die. Fertilizing encourages new growth and new growth will stress your already stressed specimens. As the weather warms, refrain from fertilizing again until rain is forthcoming.

7) Plant for drought. I'm a big believer in bulbs. In our temperate climate, you dig a hole, plant, forget, then be awed when bulbs pop up and bloom. Daffodils, calla lilies, freesia, hyacinths, Dutch iris, and many others are all excellent spring-blooming bulbs that require minimal care and reap huge bloom benefits. For summer flowering, plant gladiolus, Naked ladies, agapanthus, Asian lilies, tuberous begonias, dahlias, iris, and canna. Succulents offer a magnificent maintenance-free drought investment. Succulents come in many shapes, sizes, and colors with beautiful blooms and little water requirements. Sedums are spectacular as groundcovers or upright attracting bees and butterflies. Jade, echeveria, senecio, haworthias, aconium, and ice plant all have varied textures and attractive flowers. Unlike cactus, succulents don't have thorns, making them a favorite for rock gardens.

Don't forget to plant edibles. A small 4-foot by 8-foot bed can be planted with plenty of nutritious vegetables and herbs to feed a family of four. Decide what you enjoy eating and plant only those to avoid watering vegetables that you won't consume.

Surrounding me now is plenty of sunshine and within I feel sunny and bright. Yet, I'm counting on the luck of the Irish to bring a bit of Emerald Isle precipitation to the shores of California this St. Paddy's Day! In case there isn't that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, I'm designing for drought.



Peach blossoms mingle with crabapple buds.



Succulents and fountain grass.

Photos Cynthia Brian

Goddess Gardener Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

FERTILIZE hungry lawns to strengthen roots, resist cold, heat, and high traffic when weather is wet. This feeding will help combat the stress of drought.

AERATE your lawn. The soil is compacted from winter rains and foot traffic. Leave the plugs to add nutrients back into the grass.

CONTINUE to protect frost tender plants

POUR chamomile tea around the base of newly planted seedlings to eliminate fungus growth.

CUT boughs of camellias to use in a bowl or arrangement.

PAMPER yourself with an exfoliating and moisturizing facial from your garden. Squeeze lemon juice from your Meyer lemon tree into a bowl and mix with lavender petals and 1/4 cup olive oil. Home brewed spa experience in 20 minutes.

CONTINUE to compost, compost, and compost. This is the single most important ingredient of growing a great garden. Buy an inexpensive compost bin from your local waste service.

SPADE six inches of rich compost into your vegetable garden in preparation for the next season's plantings.

SCATTER a canister of California poppy seeds for a carefree, drought-tolerant golden showstopper.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy St. Patrick's Day!



Cream and yellow daffodils will multiply.



Rosemary bush with blue blooms.



Cynthia Brian sits on a green hillside.

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 books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com



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Rare 3 bed/ 3.5 bath on 1.17 acres w/ gorgeous level lawns & patios. Gracious 3826 sqft home - create your dream!

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Single level 4 bed/ 3 bath home on .71 private acre lot w/ updated kitchen & family room, pool, & outdoor kitchen!

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8445 Wildcat Drive

Incredible 3 bed/ 3 bath w/ bonus loft, formal office, soaring ceilings & picturesque windows to capture the amazing views!

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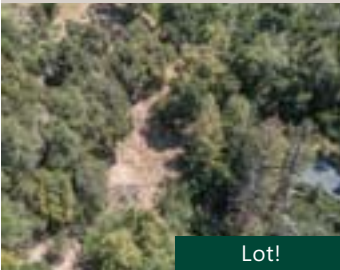
Sold!

22 Valencia Road

Special 4 bed/ 3 bath home located in desirable Del Ray neighborhood w/ bonus room & close distance to schools!

\$1,870,000

ORINDA



Lot!

23 Kittiwake Road

Private residential .43 acre lot in one of Bay Area's most sought after neighborhoods. Close to Highway 24 & downtown!

\$575,000

LAFAYETTE



Sold!

651 Evelyn Court

Gorgeous 2958 sqft 4 bed/ 3.5 bath rancher. Gourmet kitchen. Solar w/battery. CA Closets. Ethernet. Large cul-de-sac lot!

\$2,800,000

LAFAYETTE



Sold!

3172 Stanley Blvd

Charming 4 bed/ 2.5 bath home conveniently close to freeway & BART w/ great outdoor living & entertaining!

\$2,200,000

LAFAYETTE



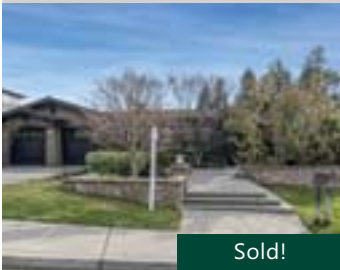
Leased!

3235 Mt. Diablo Court #102

Single level luxury 2 bed/ 2 bath condo located on cul-de-sac w/ open floor plan & exquisite designer finishes!

\$5,500/mo

MORAGA



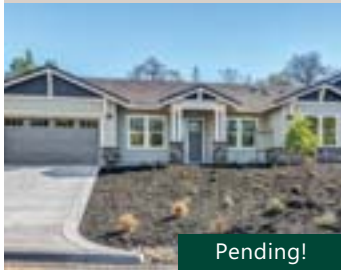
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2 Moraga Valley Lane

Beautifully updated 2793 sqft single story home. 3 bed + office/ 2.5 bath situated on .28 acre lot w/ golf course views!

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WALNUT CREEK



Pending!

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\$2,695,000

PLEASANT HILL



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241 Western Hills Drive

Lovely 2 story 3 bed/ 2.5 bath duet on .23 acres in the heart of Pleasant Hill! Light & bright w/ many upgrades!

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