

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 16 Issue 26 Wednesday, February 15, 2023



Irrigation system tips

... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Full house



Spathiphyllum, the peace lily or sail plant, boasts white flowers that resemble a boat sail.

By Cynthia Brian

"Having plants in your house is a natural way to continuously clear yourself!" ~ Doreen Virtue

With another four weeks to go before the start of spring, turning our yearnings for gardening chores to our indoor spaces is ripe with opportunities. For many years we relied on the debunked 1989 NASA report that claimed that houseplants cleaned up to 87% of dangerous VOCs (volatile organic compounds) in our interior air. We thought if we filled our homes with a jungle of plants, we'd breathe easier and even prevent colds. Many scientists still agree that plants do remove pollutants through a process called absorption, although how much is debatable. Recent studies indicate that while a few plants won't do much purification, a full wall of plants will.

The living walls that we witness at airports and fancy hotels are scenic and inspiring as they freshen the air for the numerous clientele that transit. Creating a living wall of plants and flowers in our homes is not feasible



Photos Cynthia Brian

For a bang of color and texture, plant croton and snake plants together.

for most of us. Yet, there are other benefits to including plants in our interior designs.

Benefits of Plants Indoors

Aesthetic Appeal: Plants add beauty to any room. Plants create a natural feeling, making the atmosphere more inviting and pleasant.

Elevate Moods: Being around plants helps to reduce stress, improve moods, and boost cognitive function. Plants make people happy.

Increased Oxygen Levels: Through the process of photosynthesis, plants convert carbon dioxide into oxygen.

Therapeutic Benefits: Tending to plants, whether outdoors or indoors, is calming and meditative. We create a healthier environment that is pleasing to the senses.

Enhanced Productivity and Creativity: Studies have shown that plants in a workplace or study area enrich concentration, sharpen attention, and reduce both physiological and psychological stress.

Healing Properties: Looking at greenery when recovering from an illness or surgery helps speed recuperation.

... continued on Page D12



Orinda | 22 El Toyonal

4 BD | 3 BA | 3,064 SF | .38 AC | \$1,795,000

Walk to Town, Park and More!

With approximate 3,064 square feet of living space on two levels, this four bedrooms, three bath home boasts both lovely vistas and a large flat yard filled with endless possibilities. The home is drenched in natural light, offers generous-sized rooms, hardwood floors, and dual paned windows. The grand living room and dining area is perfect for entertaining while the bonus/family room is the ideal spot to hangout and relax. Dual paned sliding glass doors open onto a large yard which offers abundant room to play along the trees that provide a canopy of shade and privacy for backyard entertaining. This convenient location is just a short distance from top-rated Orinda schools, Orinda Village, which offers a variety of restaurants and shops including Starbucks, Community Center, trails, BART & Hwy 24.



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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	5	\$1,110,000	\$1,700,000
MORAGA	5	\$410,000	\$1,873,000
ORINDA	8	\$1,000,000	\$2,900,000

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

- 3176 Bradena Lane, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2517 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 12-28-22
- 1210 El Curtola Boulevard, \$1,290,000, 3 Bdrms, 1607 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-29-22, Previous Sale: \$899,000, 02-28-06
- 766 Glenside Drive, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2490 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 01-05-23, Previous Sale: \$1,100,000, 06-20-16
- 996 Hawthorne Drive, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 1499 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 12-30-22, Previous Sale: \$1,300,000, 06-25-19
- 1062 Oak Hill Road, \$1,110,000, 3 Bdrms, 1137 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 01-06-23, Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 06-23-22

MORAGA

- 144 Ascot Court #3, \$467,000, 2 Bdrms, 945 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-28-22, Previous Sale: \$125,500, 08-01-89
- 2051 Ascot Drive #101, \$410,000, 1 Bdrms, 780 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 01-06-23, Previous Sale: \$95,500, 06-01-89
- 1519 Camino Peral #A, \$577,000, 2 Bdrms, 1272 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-30-22, Previous Sale: \$290,000, 09-11-01
- 28 Corte Mateo, \$1,873,000, 5 Bdrms, 2708 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-30-22
- 1229 Larch Avenue, \$1,715,000, 4 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 01-06-23

ORINDA

- 19 Bates Boulevard, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1891 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-29-22
- 96 Camino Encinas, \$1,800,000, 5 Bdrms, 4091 SqFt, 2018 YrBlt, 12-30-22
- 30 Crescent Drive, \$1,125,000, 3 Bdrms, 1918 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 01-04-23
- 20 El Gavilan Road, \$2,800,000, 3 Bdrms, 3268 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 12-28-22, Previous Sale: \$1,808,000, 08-11-04
- 34 Moraga Viax, \$2,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1641 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-28-22, Previous Sale: \$1,550,000, 03-25-22
- 81 Muth Drive, \$1,643,500, 4 Bdrms, 2088 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 01-05-23, Previous Sale: \$920,000, 02-24-15
- 120 Ravenhill Road, \$1,730,000, 3 Bdrms, 2231 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-29-22, Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 06-01-21
- 5 Sleepy Hollow Court, \$2,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2857 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 01-06-23, Previous Sale: \$725,000, 03-16-98



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Simple tips to handle irrigation line drips



Photo Jim Hurley

By Jim Hurley

“She could see the valley barbecues; From her window sill; See the blue pools in the squinting sun; Hear the hissing of summer lawns.” ~ Joni Mitchell

Joni Mitchell’s amazing lyrics invoke a compelling image from the sound of sprinklers, as she sings about life in a suburban home. The title track of her album “Hissing of Summer Lawns” (1975) elevates the mundane irrigation system to represent “the good life.”

Even as we Californians recover from what one meteorologist called a “Conga Line of atmospheric rivers” that just blew across our state, it is now time to think about your irrigation system and the hissing of your summer lawn.

Automated irrigation systems (we used to call them sprinklers) need routine maintenance to keep the system running as intended. If you have a gardening service, do not assume they are handling this task for

you. Ask them if they are doing this maintenance. If not, you might ask them how much to include it or hire a new service that does. If you have a couple of hours to spare a couple times per year and enjoy working in your garden, you could do this task yourself.

Modern irrigation systems consist of programmable timers (clocks) which automatically run valves that supply water to dripper and sprayer nozzles. Doing your own maintenance means understanding each of these components. You must know how to operate and program your clock, know how to cycle and test your valves, and know how to inspect and discover malfunctioning lines and emitter heads. Bottom line: Learning this now will help immensely when problems do occur.

I usually start by checking the irrigation valves. Is your water bill high? One of the valves may not be shutting off completely. How will you know? One sure indication is at your water meter. Somewhere in front of your house is a box in the ground that says “water” on it. The water meter resides in there. You may need to move some accumulated dirt out of the way and there may also be a flap covering the meter that you must flip open. Once you can see the meter dial, you will see a gear or wheel that spins when water is flowing. Turn on your garden hose and watch the wheel spin like crazy. Shut off all the water at your house main and make sure the wheel completely stops spinning. If you have separate shutoffs for the house and the irrigation valves, turn off the house and turn on the irrigation system. Check the wheel again, if the irrigation valves are off and the wheel is turning, one of the valves is leaking.

Next, locate your irrigation clock (or clocks) and learn how to operate it. Some clocks are in the garage. Some are outside on a wall near the valves. Run each valve (station) manually and note which sprayers or drippers are running. Make sure each valve shuts off completely. Just like hissing lawns, valves make noises. When you turn one on, it goes “whoosh” and sometimes you can hear the water running through the pipe. When you shut it off, it goes “slurp – clunk” as the valve diaphragm drops back

into place. These sounds are good. Sometimes, if it is not shutting completely off, you’ll hear a slight hissing or humming as water continues to run through the valve. Drip irrigation lines operate under pressure, so be patient and let the back pressure dissipate before you decide the drip line valve is not working.

When you’ve determined that a valve is not behaving, you have a couple of options. Sometimes the leak is caused by tiny bits of debris caught in the diaphragm of the valve. First option, take the valve apart, clean it, and reassemble it to fix this problem. If you are good at mechanical repairs, you might try this. Be careful not to lose any screws or the spring inside the valve, and note which side is up for the diaphragm. Unfortunately, older valves are cranky and tend not to come apart or go back together, so you may need a new valve.

Option two is replacing the valve. Many systems have the valves above ground, and they are pretty easy to replace. Some are in valve boxes below the ground and will require some digging to replace. Make a note of the size of the pipe connecting the valve. On homes, it is typically ¾ inch or 1 inch. You will need to get a new valve and fittings at the hardware store or irrigation supply. Take a couple of very clear photos from different angles with you.

With routine maintenance your system should continue to run smoothly for many years. You can relax and enjoy the beauty of your garden and the hissing of summer lawns.

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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 , WALNUT CREEK, CA 94597 218 ALDERBROOK PLACE,
 233 VILLAGE GATE ROAD, ORINDA, CA
 AFAYETTE, CA 94549 36 GREENFIELD DRIVE. MORAGA CA
 DA LANE, LAFAYETTE, CA 94549 121 PASEO DEL RIO, M
 CA 94556 23 CORTE MATEO, MORAGA,
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*2022 MLS Sales Volume Data

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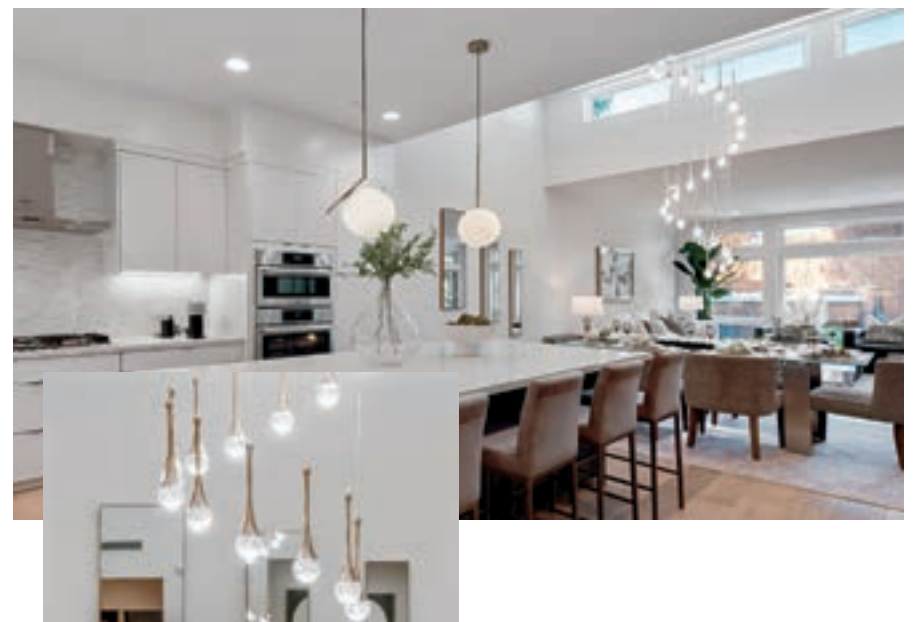
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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Full house



Pothos is one of the easiest indoor vining plants to grow in any indoor condition.



A parlor palm brings a tropical flair to the library.



This fifteen-foot-tall fiddle leaf fig is over 30 years old and still thriving.

... continued from Page D1

Research has focused on patients in hospitals, not in homes, but my personal experience demonstrates that transporting nature to the sickbed speeds the healing process.

Before you bring plants into your home, make sure to choose varieties that are safe for children and pets. For a list of toxic plants, connect with the resources of the ASPCA and the National Poison Control Center. Some plants could be toxic if ingested, and others may cause skin reactions.

ASPCA website:

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants/a>

National Poison Control website:

<https://www.poison.org/articles/plant>

This phalaenopsis, the moth orchid reblooms throughout the year in normal house temperatures.



Photos Cynthia Brian

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Goddess Gardener Recommended House Plants

Sadly, two of my favorite indoor plants that are easy to grow, attractive, and flourish for years are on the poisonous list: Peace Lily (known to be an air cleaner) and pothos (a great climber or trailer). Below I'm listing houseplant suggestions that I grow. I leave it to you to double-check for toxicity that would affect your family or animals.

Orchid: I've never met an orchid that I didn't love. The bad rap that orchids receive as being fussy is a myth. Basically, read the plant tag for best results, provide a few drops of water weekly, and ignore them. Mine are continuously reblooming.

Bromeliad: Super simple to grow, long-lasting, low maintenance, and minimal watering needs. Before the flower dies, the plant will produce offsets, called pups, around the base.

Snake Plant: Referred to as "Mother-in-Law's Tongue" tolerates low light and minimal moisture. This plant is almost impossible to kill.

Spider Plant: Known as the "Airplane Plant," this plant is perfect for beginners. It's easy to care for, produces long, cascading stems, and is great for hanging baskets or trained to a trellis.

Philodendron: Foliage comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. Prefers moist soil and vines to eight feet or more.

Parlor Palm: Add a bit of the tropics to your office. Great in dim light. Only prune dead fronds. Don't overwater.

Fiddle Leaf Fig: Slow growing to 15 feet or more. This plant prefers east-facing windows. Water only when the top inch of the soil is dry and never feed during the winter months.

Aloe: Every home needs an aloe plant for medicinal purposes. If you get a burn or a cut, snip a piece of aloe to soothe the area. Aloes prefer to be root-bound in sandy soil and require very little water.

Croton: Growing in warm, humid climates outdoors, crotons may reach 8 feet, but indoors, they offer an explosion of color in a small pot when ideal temperatures above 60 degrees are maintained. Place pebbles with water under the pot to increase humidity.

These favorites are all relatively low maintenance and will thrive in a variety of environments. They are terrific choices for beginner indoor gardeners as well as those with more experience. As always, when you make a purchase, carefully read the plant instructions tag and follow directions. The number one cause of house plants failing to succeed is overwatering.

No matter what your lifestyle, add a touch of hassle-free greenery to your home and enjoy a full house of indoor nature to keep you happy, healthy, and gardening rain or shine.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



These are the pups and their flower of a variegated bromeliad.



Take cuttings of spider plants to make more pots of plants.



Aloe is a must-have succulent in every household.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Camellias are in full bloom at Cynthia Brian's home.

Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia Brian 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. Her newest children's picture book, No Barnyard Bullies, from the series, Stella Bella's Barnyard Adventures is available now at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. For an invitation to hang out with Cynthia for fun virtual events, activities, conversations, and exclusive experiences, buy StarStyle® NFTs at <https://StarStyleCommunity.com>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <https://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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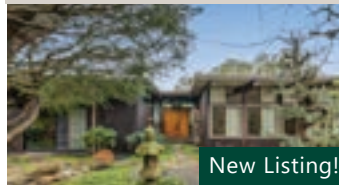
160/162 Camino Don Miguel
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ORINDA



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ORINDA



147 Overhill Road
4 bd/ 2.5 ba w/ office provides light-filled spaces w/ sunset views across the valley & award winning
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ORINDA



18 Nelson Lane
3 bd/ 2.5 ba home featuring a sun-drenched living room w/ soaring ceilings, walls of glass & French doors out to a brick patio!
\$1,050,000

ORINDA



2 Orchard Court
Home sweet home! 3 bd/2 ba home needs lots of TLC now & is awaiting the next generation!
\$999,000

ORINDA



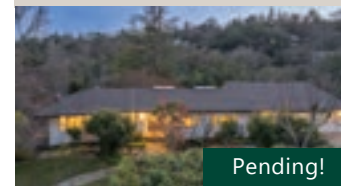
0 Camino Del Monte
Come see this desirable lot located minutes from Hwy 24/BART, top rated schools, downtown, regional parks & views!
\$199,000

ORINDA



88 Starkville Court
Vacant land .015 acre on the border of Orinda/Oakland hills.
\$70,000

LAFAYETTE



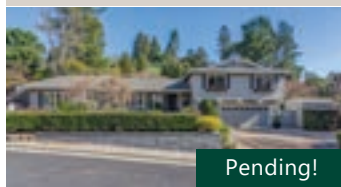
3259 La Canada
Updated 4 bd/2.5 ba home on a serene .89 acre lot in Lafayette's desirable Trail Neighborhood!
\$2,895,000

LAFAYETTE



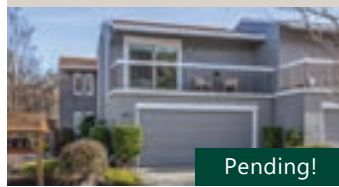
3015 Bradbury Drive
Nestled among majestic oaks 3 bd/ 2.5 ba plus loft sits on 3.2 acres w/ panoramic views, multiple decks & pool!
\$1,695,000

MORAGA



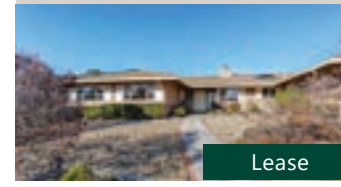
422 Fernwood Drive
Spacious 4 bd/3 ba featuring formal Living & Dining rooms, great eat-in kitchen, & overlooks the pool & back yard.
\$2,525,000

MORAGA



815 Augusta Drive
Stunning 3 bd/ 3.5 ba in awesome Moraga Country Club. Soaring ceilings, 2 fireplaces. Golf, tennis, swim!
\$1,395,000

MORAGA



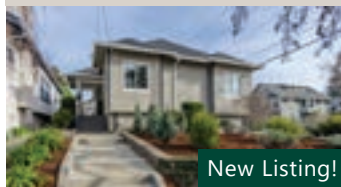
61 Hardie Drive
Great floor plan w/ a lrg backyard. This single level home features 4 bd/2.5 ba w/ views of the Orinda/Moraga hills.
\$6,000/mo.

BERKELEY



7164 Buckingham Blvd
Sophisticated contemporary 3 bd/ 3 ba set in the Claremont Hills featuring lovely canyon views!
\$1,775,000

OAKLAND



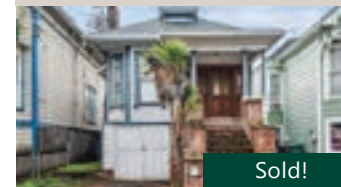
3802 Randolph Avenue
Beautifully updated home providing all level living w/ 3 bd/ 2 ba, an open floor plan, & a peek of San Francisco!
\$1,098,000

OAKLAND



6061 Westover Drive
Stellar Bay views from this spacious 4 bd/3 ba home in the lovely Piedmont Pines neighborhood!
\$5,950/mo.

ALAMEDA



2114 Bueno Vista
Permitted duplex in Central Alameda! Unit A: 2bd/ 1 ba, w/ formal dining room. Unit B: 1 bd/ 1 ba, w/ lg living space!
\$850,000

The Village Associates:

Ashley Battersby
Patricia Battersby
Shannon Conner
Meara Dunsmore

Linda Ehrich
Emily Estrada

Joan Evans
Linda Friedman
Liz Gallagher
Claudia Gohler

Gillian Judge Hogan

Dexter Honens II

Christina Linezo

April Matthews

Hillary Murphy

Karen Murphy

John Nash

Altie Schmitt

Judy Schoenrock

Ann Sharf

Amy Rose Smith

Molly Smith

Jeff Snell

Lynda Snell

Clark Thompson

Angie Evans Traxinger

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ASSOCIATES

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