

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly

Volume 17

Issue 9

Wednesday, June 21, 2023



Handyman tips on caulking

... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Nature talks



A hedge of Bonica roses is vibrant with long-lasting blooms.



Passionflowers are delicate and fascinating. Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

“Stop, look, and listen. Nature is what you may be missing.” ~ Cynthia Brian

When I was telling my husband that I had deep watered one of our magnolia trees, his response, was “Why did you do that? Don’t you think the tree had plenty of water this past winter?” I retorted, “If you drink three glasses of water on Saturday, don’t you think you’d be thirsty by Thursday?” It was an “aha” moment because he really thought that just because we had experienced a very wet winter, the trees were sufficiently satiated and wouldn’t need additional moisture in the summer. “You better write about this in your garden column,” he said.

And so, I will.

Probably like many people, my husband doesn’t know much about gardening or beneficial natural practices. Although he appreciates a beautiful landscape, he prefers to fill the green

bin with leaves and grass clippings, while I’m an advocate for composting the matter. He’ll pull a “stick” out of the ground believing that it is dead, whereas the peony was just dormant. We are forever engaged in a battle of the bins.

Having grown up on a farm and ranch, I have the advantage because I was taught to listen to the calls of nature from babyhood. My mother told me that when I was only a few weeks old, she would put me on a blanket under an orange tree canopy as she worked in the orchard. Evidently, I was mesmerized by the rustling leaves, babbled at the birds, and cooed at the changing light. My formative years encompassed a deep connection to the land that has trained me to respect and admire the natural world throughout my life.

Nature doesn’t communicate with humans in our language. But nature does indeed talk to us with its own language. By observing and understanding the cues in nature, humans gain

insights, knowledge, and inspiration. We must learn to utilize all our senses. The sounds we hear from the buzzing bees, the chirping birds, the gurgling creek, or the whirling wind convey information about the environment, species interactions, and weather conditions. The scents we smell are plants and animals communicating with one another about mating, territory marking, food availability, or even danger.

Nature gives us signals when plants, trees, shrubs, or flowers require essential resources. There are visual cues, physiological changes, and even interactions with the surrounding environment.

When addressing the needs of your garden, be aware of these signs:

1. Wilting. When plants lack water, as an adaptive response, their leaves or stems will droop, fold under, go limp, and even drop.

... continued on Page D8

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

| City | Last reported | Lowest amount | Highest amount |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| LAFAYETTE | 6 | \$1,475,000 | \$3,000,000 |
| MORAGA | 3 | \$650,000 | \$2,355,000 |
| ORINDA | 5 | \$1,604,500 | \$3,850,000 |

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

23 Benthill Court, \$2,220,000, 5 Bdrms, 3437 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 05-03-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,385,000, 09-24-14

1294 Candy Court, \$1,805,000, 4 Bdrms, 1834 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 05-01-23,

Previous Sale: \$705,000, 07-21-02

644 Glorietta Boulevard, \$2,345,000, 4 Bdrms, 3675 SqFt,

1979 YrBlt, 05-09-23

3188 Lucas Circle, \$1,475,000, 3 Bdrms, 1198 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 05-09-23,

Previous Sale: \$925,000, 02-16-23

1108 Martino Road, \$2,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2409 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 05-11-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,525,000, 01-20-22

631 Murray Lane, \$3,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 3171 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 05-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,825,000, 04-08-15

MORAGA

2133 Donald Drive #3, \$650,000, 2 Bdrms, 1368 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 05-10-23,

Previous Sale: \$260,000, 01-19-09

12 Merrill Drive, \$2,355,000, 5 Bdrms, 2993 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 05-12-23

1056 Sanders Drive, \$2,058,500, 4 Bdrms, 2067 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 05-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$975,000, 07-01-14

ORINDA

28 Ardor Drive, \$1,604,500, 3 Bdrms, 2016 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 05-12-23,

Previous Sale: \$780,000, 02-17-04

75 Barbara Road, \$1,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1796 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 05-09-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,460,000, 05-29-19

35 El Toyonal, \$3,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3511 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 05-05-23,

Previous Sale: \$1,716,000, 04-23-04

61 Moraga Viax, \$1,705,000, 4 Bdrms, 2164 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 05-04-23,

Previous Sale: \$2,245,000, 03-08-22

53 Oak Drive, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 2416 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 05-09-23

25 Tappan Lane, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2644 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 05-10-23,

Previous Sale: \$750,000, 11-03-00

121 Van Ripper Lane, \$3,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 3653 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 05-09-23,

Previous Sale: \$2,850,000, 09-02-21

27 Wood Acres Court, \$2,275,000, 2 Bdrms, 1148 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 05-01-23,

Previous Sale: \$606,500, 09-01-87

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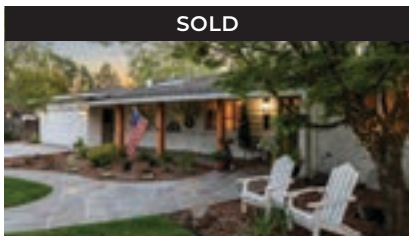


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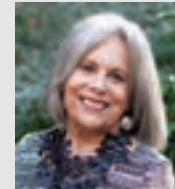
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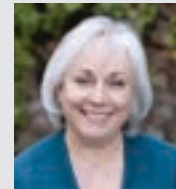
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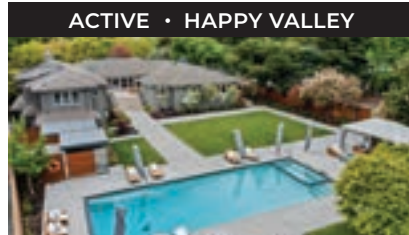


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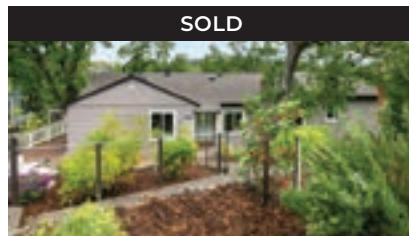
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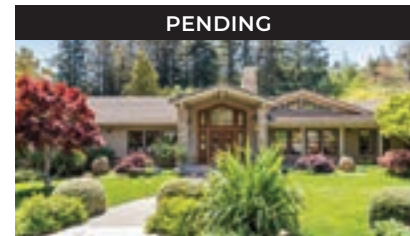
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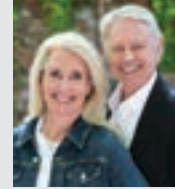
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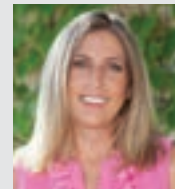
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Hints to help caulking go smoothly



bigstockimages

By **Jim Hurley**

Have you ever watched an artist work? I mean closely watch as they prepare the palette, carefully mix the color they need and then apply it so beautifully to their canvas in a smooth fluid stroke of the brush. Yeah, I can't do that. My real talent seems to be demolition, tearing out the wall of a room or removing tile floors. But, as a professional handyman, I am sometimes called upon to create a beautiful finish as well as smash things. That is where my love/hate relationship with caulking begins.

New construction ends with a perfect finish where there are no gaps or cracks in new tile or along the trim moulding. Over time though, things do move and shift and little cracks appear. One of the most frequent items on the "Handyman To-Do" list in homes is caulking. Caulking for the shower, around the tub, around the sink, or gaps around the house can be a DIY item for you, provided you want to try it. Here's what you need to know. Warning: there are some supplies to buy and it will take time.

First prepare the surface: Use a razor knife to cut away old caulking. A painter's tool or putty knife can also scrape off excess caulk. On tile or counter tops, a one-sided, safety razor blade (in the paint department of the hardware store) will also work to remove old caulk. After scraping away the old caulk, clean the surface with acetone to remove any remaining residue. The time and care you take to prepare the area is directly proportionate to the quality of your finish.

Next, choose the right caulk: You have two choices, Silicone or Latex caulk.

... continued on Page D6

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All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



Contra Costa Market Continued to Improve in May 2023

There have been multiple news articles about falling prices. It just isn't true in the East Bay, specifically central Contra Costa. Numbers don't lie (go to www.YourContraCostaRealtor.com for city specific data for May).

The numbers continue to trend in the upward direction. There are a couple of significant data points supporting the upward trend. Over the last 3 months, the Average Asking Price compared with the Average Sale price has been 1.94% (March), 4.25% (April) and 6% (May). Not a coincidence that the average sale price in the more affordable cities of Concord and Martinez has risen back into the high \$800K range. The month of May also saw a sharp increase in the number of sales in central County. It was up from 270 in April to 365 in May. There was even a positive increase (albeit slight) in Active Inventory from 354 in April to 365 in May. However, I don't expect the active inventory to keep up with buyer demand. That's why 66% of all sales in May had multiple offers. The minor negative trend was that days on the market marginally increased from 12 days in April to 13.73 days in May.

The increase in the number of sales, despite interest rates still being in the 7+% range, is indicative of an increasing number of buyers who believe rates will eventually come down by year end or early next year. With the Rate of Inflation continuing to drop each month (now 10 consecutive months), lower interest rates are likely. Remember, interest rates track directly with the Rate of Inflation. Better to buy now and refinance in 12 to 18 months than wait until the rates come down, buyer demand increases and prices continue to rise, but at a faster pace than today.

If you would like a private consultation regarding your current plans to either buy or sell, please reach out to me by phone or email.



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Hints to help caulking go smoothly

... continued from Page D4

Use 100% Silicone caulk for areas that need a 100% waterproof seal; bathroom tubs and tile, kitchen counter tops and backsplashes, and gaps around sinks and counters are prime examples. The one thing to remember is that 100% Silicone caulk cannot be painted. Paint just beads up and runs off Silicone caulk. Silicone caulk comes in a few colors. Besides clear and white, you can find black, tan or almond at better hardware suppliers. Silicone caulk is challenging because it requires mineral spirits (paint thinner) to clean up any excess. Be sure to have some paint thinner and disposable rags on hand. Wrap the thinner rags in newspaper and seal them airtight in a baggie for disposal. Let's not have any spontaneous combustion.

For projects next to a wall or trim that requires paint, use Latex caulk. I use Latex caulk around doors, windows, baseboards and for small cracks in walls. I love this caulk because it is water soluble for cleanup. It is also paintable, so color does not matter as much, but it does come in clear or white.

Purchase a good caulking gun. With the cheaper guns you must remember to release the piston whenever you set the gun down. Better caulk guns come with a little spring-loaded tab which will release that pressure without having to reset the piston.

Applying the caulk: Here we go with the artistic part. When I was a beginner, it seemed like the caulk would randomly squirt out of the gun and smear itself all over me. Before you start caulking, be sure you have clear access to the area.

Nothing spoils a line of caulk like bumping into things as you move the gun down the line.


You want to cut the tip of the caulking tube at an angle so that the caulk comes out of the tube in a flat line. You also want to cut open the tip just enough to give you the size of line you need. Cut off a big chunk if you need to fill big gaps, cut off a small amount if you just need a thin line. Be prepared to waste caulk. Lay down the line of caulk and use your finger to gently smooth the line. Wipe the excess caulk off your finger frequently to minimize clean up on the surface.

Bottom line: Caulk is cheap! That tube you've been saving for years in the garage, (especially if it was opened), is probably not going to work as well as a new tube that costs around \$5. Be sure to use fresh caulk.

That's about all the info I can share. I love a smooth, clean line of caulk but it takes care and effort to achieve that. As with learning any new skill, be prepared to have some adventures with lots of restarts, you will improve with practice. Don't be afraid to try though, it all cleans up in the end and you can check a project off your to-do list.

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

Nature talks



A salmon-hued geranium complements the pool setting.



Close-up of pink single-petal peony.



Bing cherries are being harvested early as the birds are feasting on them daily.

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

2. **Color and Texture changes:** When plants experience a deficit of nutrients, they will exhibit distinct changes in the leaves. Nitrogen loss results in yellow or very pale green leaves. Iron and manganese deficiency will show yellowing between the veins of leaves, called interveinal chlorosis. Chlorosis means a lack of chlorophyll which is the pigment responsible for a healthy plant's green color.
3. **Slow growth:** When plants have insufficient nutrients, minerals, and food, plant growth is stunted.
4. **Flower and fruiting patterns:** Again, nutrient deficiencies or water stress affect flowering and fruiting. There could be a reduction in production, smaller flowers or fruit, or even lower quality.
5. **Root development:** Roots provide valuable insights into the needs of a plant. If roots are

shallow, brown, mushy, too dry, or lack fine feeder roots, this could indicate poor soil conditions, too much water or waterlogging, lack of moisture, or the necessity for fertilizer.

6. **Interaction with pollinators and wildlife:** When plants lack resources, their normal characteristics may be modified to attract pollinators or seed-dispersing animals. They may produce additional fruit, pollen, or nectar to entice animals and insects to stop by to help with reproduction. If you've ever walked through a patch of forget-me-nots after flowering, you'll remember how your socks or pants were covered with sticky seeds ready to be deposited elsewhere.

The more time we spend outdoors in nature, the deeper sense of connection and knowledge we will acquire. Our association with the natural environment is a direct source of stress relief, inspiration, peace, and reflection. This leads to greater understanding and

appreciation for our earth while cultivating a harmonious relationship with nature. We become intuitive to the needs of our plants and trees.

This past year at the Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, more than 190 countries committed to protecting 30% of their lands, oceans, and inland waters by the year 2030. Biodiversity loss is one of the top threats to humanity. Humans have the ability and the responsibility to assist the health and longevity of our planet.

The leaves on my magnolia tree were drooping, furling, wilting, and dropping. All it took for it to bounce back to its elegant beauty was a deep soaking.

Nature is talking to all of us. We need to stop, look, and listen.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Happy Summer!

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Cynthia Brian's June Digging Deep Gardening Tips

EMPTY vessels of water to eliminate mosquito larvae from hatching. Add DUNKS or a few drops of bleach to any standing water such as a bird bath or non-recirculating fountain. Do not add bleach where fish or frogs reside.

ADD brilliance to your porch or patio with containers filled with petunias, geraniums, or other summer bloomers.

CUT all grasses surrounding your home to three inches or less and remove junk and debris from the perimeter to create a defensible space from fires.

MAKE a rich potting mix by mixing equal parts of good soil, compost and sand. Add leaf matter and liquid fertilizer.

NET your fruit trees or pick the fruit early to prevent hungry birds from devouring your summer crops of cherries, peaches, apricots and apples.

CELEBRATE the summer solstice by creating an upscale, yet casual table arrangement with a variety of roses.

PLANT a passionflower vine to climb a pole for a fascinating futuristic flowering showstopper.

DEEP SOAK any trees with wilting, drooping, or dropping leaves. If you have magnolias, the large creamy white flowers dazzle after a deep soak.

ATTRACT butterflies and honeybees by planting nectar-rich specimens including zinnias, butterfly bush, and scarlet runner beans.

SUPPORT your sprouting tomatoes with wire cages or teepees to prevent them from toppling over to sprawling on the ground. The fruit will rot when in contact with soil.



The leaves of potatoes resemble tomato plants. Both are in the Nightshade family.



The magnolia tree bursts into flower after a deep soaking.



The containers of colorful petunias add charm to the view from the deck.



Support sprouting tomatoes with wire cages.

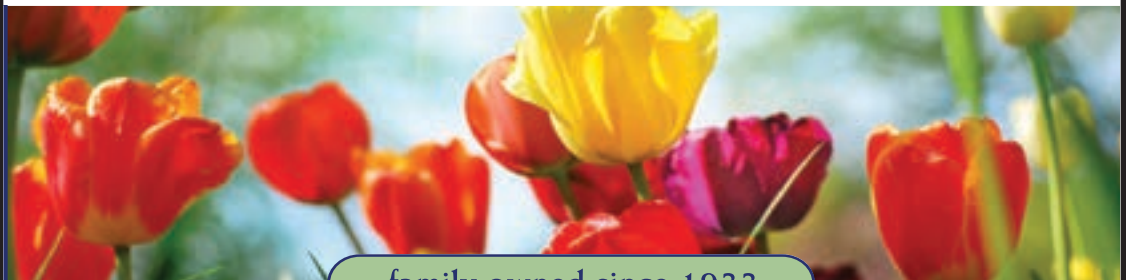
PS: Shoe Drive for Be the Star You Are!® extended to July 30th as our goal is 2,500 pairs. Shoes may be dropped off at <https://5aspace.com/>, 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga or www.TeamHoogs.com, 629 Moraga Road (next to 7/11), Moraga. For more information, visit <https://www.bethestaryouare.org/shoedrive>



Cynthia Brian relaxes amongst carpet roses.

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 <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store>. Hire Cynthia for writing projects, garden consults, and inspirational lectures. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com <http://www.GoddessGardener.com>

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ORINDA



1 Valley Court
Quiet 5 bd/ 3 ba single level Glorietta ranch on a .55-acre cul de sac!

Pending!

\$2,595,000

ORINDA



710 Miner Road
Peaceful 1.15 acre knoll setting w/ sunset views! 5 bd/ 3 ba, 3088 sqft home w/ spacious open floor plan & exceptional separation of space!

\$2,295,000

ORINDA



14 Hacienda Circle
Fully remodeled, light-filled 4 bd/ 2.5 ba, contemporary home w/ soaring ceilings, walls of windows & truly amazing outdoor spaces!

\$2,195,000

New Listing!

ORINDA



631 Watchwood Road
Impressive, detached 3 bd/ 2.5 ba Orindawoods home with stunning spaces and gorgeous views!

\$1,595,000

New Price!

LAFAYETTE



3732 Happy Valley Road
Treasured Happy Valley Estate, premier loc, 5 bd/ 4.5 ba, coveted, flat lot. Stunning pool, cabana & views!

\$4,750,000

New Listing!

LAFAYETTE



3158 Withers Avenue
Charming ranch style 4 bd/ 2 ba home on wonderful private lot ready for pool, gardens, play yard, or ADU!

\$1,288,000

Pending!

LAFAYETTE



9 Redwood Circle
Situated down a private lane, surrounded by majestic redwood trees is this spectacular 5 bd/ 3 ba home!

\$12,000/mo.

MORAGA



35 San Pablo Court
Beautiful 5 bd/ 3 ba traditional home w/ great views, large grassy backyard & sparkling pool!

\$2,249,000

PLEASANT HILL



1411 Stonehedge Drive
Stunning 3 bd/ 3 ba tri-level w/ fabulous curb appeal is located in the desirable Valley High neighborhood!

\$1,749,000

The Village Associates:

Ashley Battersby
Shannon Conner
Meara Dunsmore

Linda Ehrich
Emily Estrada

Joan Evans

Linda Friedman

Liz Gallagher

Claudia Gohler

Ari Hatton

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

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Alexis Thompson

Clark Thompson

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