

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 18 Issue 1 Wednesday, February 28, 2024



Conserving water with drip irrigation ... read on Page OH8

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Coming Alive!

By Cynthia Brian

Photos Cynthia Brian



A tree is filled with cerise-colored camellias.



Salvia-hot lips sage is stunning.



Blue muscari, also known as grape hyacinth, shines at night.

"I went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown. For going out, I found, was really going in." ~ John Muir

Walking around my property, I am in awe of how quickly my landscape has come to life. Within just a couple of weeks, the garden has awoken from its deep sleep blanketing the hillside with lush green grasses and fantastic flowers. The frogs are croaking, the birds are chirping, and the bees are buzzing. Despite the continuing rain, nature is waking up from its soggy slumber.

My garden is a living laboratory where I design borders to include a diverse mix of plants including bulbs, perennials, annuals, shrubs, trees, and vines. Originally my color palette was strictly pinks, purples, blues, and whites, but over the years I have acknowledged the beauty of all

color combinations. Daring forms and textures are welcome as I attempt to create a naturalistic style. Taking cues from Mother Nature, I encourage self-sowing specimens (thank you calendula and nigella) and I prefer my landscape to be full, a bit crowded, and wild. Rocks, stones, and gravel are incorporated into the scheme while vintage used bricks delineate the paths.

If you'd like to create a garden that respects the natural world, here are a few tips that may help.

1. Don't be afraid to mix and match. Shrubs and trees provide structure. Bulbs pop up as surprises, especially at this time of year. Perennials are the main attraction with annuals affording the colors you desire throughout the year.
2. Always plant in swaths or groups. Repeating the groups coalesces and unifies the look.

3. Invite specimens that you like to self-sow. Allow plants to grow as they would in nature without your assistance. Don't fret when stray flowers appear in an area where you didn't plan to have them grow. Whimsical is fun.

4. When it comes to coordinating colors, be open to the bold and beautiful. I never thought I'd like so much orange and yellow in my landscape, but the combination of daffodils, calendula, and poppies has changed my mind.

5. Strive for balance. A clipped hedge is wonderful surrounding a formal rose garden, or outlining a driveway, yet when a garden is too heavily manicured it appears almost fake. Allow for some spillers, fillers, and thrillers. Add elements of awe.

... continued on Page OH10

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Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	4	\$1,119,000	\$5,000,000
MORAGA	3	\$669,000	\$2,450,000
ORINDA	2	\$1,075,000	\$1,700,000

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

908 Brown Avenue, \$1,175,000, 2 Bdrms, 1439 SqFt, 2022 YrBlt, 01-19-24

11 Cherry Hills Court, \$1,119,000, 4 Bdrms, 1631 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 01-18-24

3338 Freeman Road, \$5,000,000, 7 Bdrms, 4852 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 01-18-24,

Previous Sale: \$3,188,500, 12-07-18

3268 Park Lane, \$1,160,000, 3 Bdrms, 2097 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 01-24-24

MORAGA

490 Rheem Boulevard, \$669,000, 2 Bdrms, 1126 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 01-17-24,

Previous Sale: \$445,000, 09-25-06

55 Sanders Ranch Road, \$2,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 3054 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt,

01-19-24, Previous Sale: \$1,270,000, 03-05-03

109 Westchester Street, \$1,660,000, 3 Bdrms, 2291 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 01-18-24,

Previous Sale: \$810,000, 03-19-14

ORINDA

35 Marston Road, \$1,700,000, 3 Bdrms, 2578 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 01-23-24

18 Vista Del Orinda, \$1,075,000, 2 Bdrms, 1501 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 01-26-24

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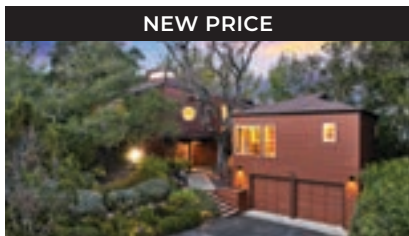


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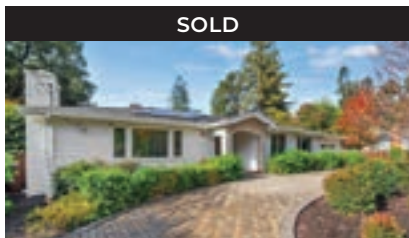
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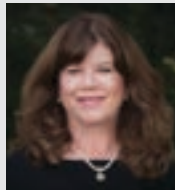
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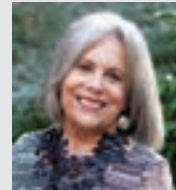
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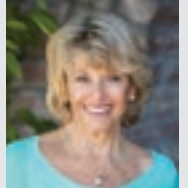
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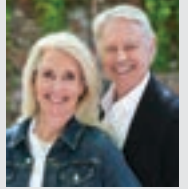
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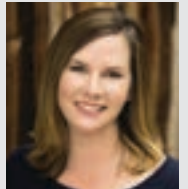
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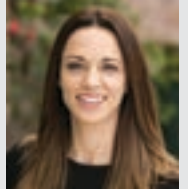
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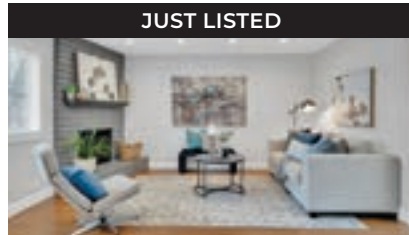


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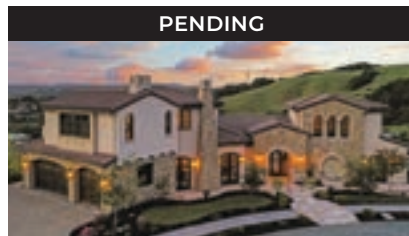


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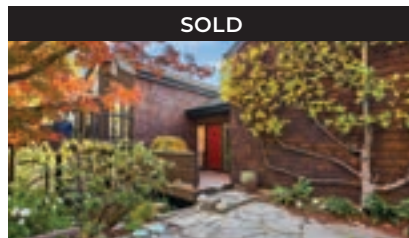
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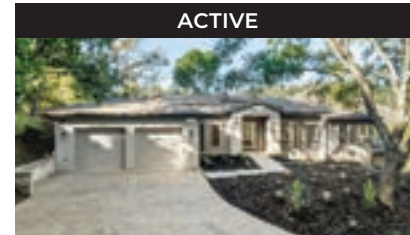
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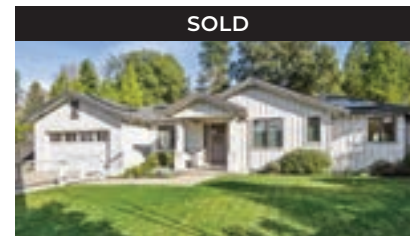
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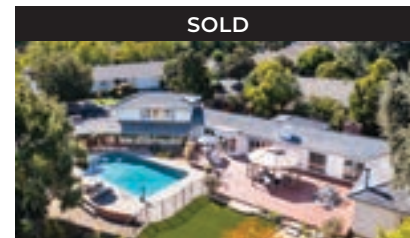
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TO OUR

LAFAYETTE OFFICE



Conserving water with a drip irrigation system

By Jim Hurley



Pressure regulator

Photo Jim Hurley

Who remembers word problems in math class? I was terrible at math but loved word problems like: If Steve has seven apples and Mary has fourteen oranges, how fast was the train from Boston going? (Wait, what train? Was Mary on the train? I'm so confused!) And what does this have to do with conserving water?

Water conservation is a huge issue in our area. Many people choose to conserve water by eliminating lawn areas. That's fine, but not entirely necessary. Grass lawns absorb and utilize all the water you provide. Recent studies have suggested that watering lawn areas benefits nature by replenishing the water table in the summer months. Of course, you want to water responsibly, making sure you are not sending water into the street and are only watering the grass. Modern lawn systems use pop-up spray heads that have directional spray nozzles. The pop-ups are installed to cover the configuration of the lawn using full circle, half circle, and quarter circle spray nozzles. Overhead

sprayer nozzles are rated by Gallons per Minute, or "GPM." The sprayer manufacturer tells us the amount of GPM for each nozzle type. So, let's do some lawn-watering math.

Question #1: How much water does a lawn take?

Let's say a medium-sized front lawn is 45 feet long and 30 feet wide, which is 1,350 square feet. It uses six half circle heads (6-halves times 2 GPM = 12 GPM) and two quarter circle heads (2-quarters times 1 GPM = 2 GPM) for a total of 14 gallons per minute. From late spring through the summer, the system may run for 15 minutes using 210 gallons per day (14 Gal. times 15 Minutes).

Old-fashioned garden shrub areas before the 1990s typically used spray nozzles that are measured in gallons per minute and are attached to risers (tall pipes) or extra tall (12-inch) pop-up heads. In contrast to lawns which absorb and utilize the water sprayed from above, planting areas lose water to evaporation when it is sprayed over open areas of ground. Modern drip systems target water just where the plant needs it, allowing us to have beautiful landscapes AND conserve water. Explaining drip systems also requires some irrigation math; get ready for another word problem.

Question #2: How little water can I use and still have an attractive landscape?

Drip Irrigation emitters are rated by Gallons per Hour, "GPH." A rose bed which has six rose bushes with one two-GPH emitter at each bush uses 12 gallons per hour, (6 emitters times 2 GPH = 12 GPH). If that system runs for only 30 minutes (0.5 hours) per day, it uses six gallons (12 GPH times 0.5 hours = 6 gallons) of water to keep the roses beautiful. A bonus feature of using drip emitters to target water at the base of each plant is that the weeds are discouraged from growing in the dry areas in between the plants.

Replacing old-style shrub sprinklers will require some setup. The first, and most crucial, step is to install a combination filter/pressure regulator in the line just after the irrigation valve. The pressure regulator reduces the house water pressure to 30 pounds per square inch (30 PSI) to prevent blasting the lines loose from the connectors.

The filter keeps minuscule bits of sediment from clogging your emitters; make sure you have one before installing your drip lines. You may not need to run your irrigation system every day. Discuss your clock settings -- watering days, times, and duration with your gardener. Drip systems do require some maintenance, as at times the tubing connections come undone. They may get pulled loose by someone raking the yard or accidentally cut by someone digging. Don't worry, as they are easily reconnected. The soft, flexible drip lines are pushed over hard, barbed connectors. If the tubing has pulled off the connector, just snip a bit (1/2-inch) off the tip of the tube and stick it securely back on the connector. Hardware stores and nurseries sell couplers that will reconnect the tubing.

Another method of maintenance is to listen to your irrigation valves when they are running. If it sounds like a lot of water is flowing, you might have a disconnect somewhere in the line. Leave the valve on and walk around the yard looking and listening for spraying water. A wet spot on the fence or in the gutter is a dead giveaway that you have a gusher nearby. Find the problem and fix it or put a marker next to it and mention it to your landscape maintenance team the next time they visit.

Do the math! Sensible watering of your lawn, upgrading your garden sprinklers to drip irrigation, and periodically monitoring the lines as they run will conserve water and save you big bucks in the long run.

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

Coming Alive!

... continued from Page OH1

6. Use containers for a variety of plants, including small trees. I have an Italian white peach growing in a container that boasts beautiful bright pink blossoms with fluorescent yellow oxalis underplanted. It is quite the unexpected showstopper. As a bonus, when the peaches are ripe, they are easy to harvest.

7. Orchestrate seasonal displays with plenty of colorful and textural annuals, perennials, grasses, and bulbs. Natives and carefully chosen non-natives will thrive happily together. With a plentiful variety of plants, pollinators will call your garden home and become your trusted helpers.

What's Blooming Now?

*Bradford pear,
plum, and
peach trees
*Azaleas and
camellias
*Daffodils
*Tulips
*Calla lilies
*Bergenia
*Calendula

*Cyclamen
*Salvia Hot Lips
*Muscari
*Iris
*Primrose
*Lilies of the
Valley
*Christmas
cactus
*Periwinkle

*Oxalis
*Freesia
*Viburnum
*Hellebore
*Jade
*Potato Vine
*Chinese Fringe
*Mustard

Numerous other plants are budding and will be gracing our gardens soon. Stay tuned!.



Cerise blossoms of a peach tree grow in a container.

The Goddess Gardener's March Garden Guide

- **DEFINE** property boundaries and create curb appeal with flowering shrubs. Numerous new varieties of hydrangea are a good choice.

- **SPRAY** roses, crepe myrtles, pittosporum, iris, boxwood, rhododendron, laurel, fruit, and citrus trees with organic dormant oil and copper fungicide. This treatment will help to protect the trees and shrubs from overwintering insects and fungal diseases. Wash the citrus before consumption.

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

- **DISPLAY** fallen camellias on a hedge, ledge, or pathway for outside interest that are not pretty enough to float in a vase, but not rotten enough to toss in the compost bin. As the camellias wilt, dispose of them.

- **FERTILIZE** hungry lawns anytime in March to strengthen roots, and resist cold, heat, and high traffic when the weather is wet.

- **PRUNE** fig trees and grapevines. Dry the branches and cuttings to use in your smoker or barbecue this summer to add interesting flavors to your grilled specialties.

- **WATER** houseplants while you are on vacation by filling a plastic bottle with water, piercing the neck of the bottle with an ice pick, and burying the bottle with the neck down. Your plant will slowly drink as needed.

- **PATIENCE:** St. Patrick's Day is around the corner. Spring is only a few weeks away.

Hang in there for the rest of winter and watch for the reawakening.

Go out for a walk and stay until sundown! Going out is going in!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



The hillside is colorful with sunny daffodils and calendula.



A structural planting boasts a textured natural look.



Purple plum blossoms after the rain.



**Viburnum
in bloom
behind
Cynthia
Brian.**

For more gardening advice for all seasons, check out Growing with the Goddess Gardener at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/books>. 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, Family Forever, 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 <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com>



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New Listing!



417 Moraga Way, Orinda

4 Bd | 2 Ba | 2007 Sqft | \$2,250,000

Custom home by Dan Bartlett of DB Design Build features, soaring ceilings, wall of multi-sliders & scenic views!



8 Hidden Lane, Orinda

5 Bd | 3 Ba | 4495 Sqft | \$2,250,000

Beautiful 5bd/3ba, 4495 sqft home w/ wrap-around Sleepy Hollow views and is move-in ready!

New Listing!



5 Los Dedos Road, Orinda

3 Bd | 2.5 Ba | 2322 Sqft | \$1,900,000

Classic home nestled in the Orinda hills features private, half acre lot w/ expansive backyard, pool & panoramic views!



23 Kellie Ann Court, Orinda

4 Bd | 2.5 Ba | 2236 Sqft | \$1,895,000

This 4bd/2.5ba home features a bright living & dining room w/ views, hardwood floors & flat backyard areas!



17 Fallen Leaf Court, Lafayette

5 Bd + Study | 5.5 Ba | 4789 Sqft | \$4,495,000

Rare, single-level 5bd/5.5ba family home nestled on a cul-de-sac in one of Reliez Valley's most coveted neighborhoods!



211 Corliss Drive, Moraga

5 Bd | 2.5 Ba | 2538 Sqft | \$1,699,000

Fabulous family home nestled on prime private .42 acre in sought after Rheem Valley Orchards neighborhood!

New Listing!



1411 Stonehedge Drive, Pleasant Hill

3 Bd | 3 Ba | 2304 Sqft | \$1,675,000

This stunning tri-level located in the desirable Valley High neighborhood has been updated from head to toe!

New Listing!



2601 College Ave #309, Berkeley

2+ Bd | 2 Ba | 1084 Sqft | Call for Price!

Conveniently located between Elmwood & UC Berkeley, this light & bright top-floor unit has Bay views!



1409A Spruce Street, Berkeley

1 Bd | 1 Ba | 645 Sqft | \$549,000

A beautifully refreshed, light-filled retreat located in the epicenter of one of Berkeley's most well-loved neighborhoods!

The Village

Ashley Battersby • Shannon Conner • Meara Dunsmore • Linda Ehrich • Emily Estrada • Joan Evans • Linda Friedman • Liz Gallagher

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