

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 15 Issue 19 Wednesday, November 10, 2021



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Butterflies are free



Photos Cynthia Brian

A majestic monarch lands on a zinnia.

By Cynthia Brian

"If a butterfly flutters its wings in Brazil, could it cause a tornado in Texas?"~ Edward Lorenz, meteorologist

Almost everyone has heard of the "butterfly effect." Originally based on weather and climate predictions, it has become a metaphor for the effects of chaos theory – the concept that small events can have huge widespread consequences.

As I was driving home from work one late

October day and listening to a radio program chronicling the rapid extinction of many species on our planet, I was struck by the comment that 99.9% of monarch butterflies have vanished from the West Coast.

Only a few years ago, I had enjoyed a glorious November morning in Pismo Beach among thousands of monarchs fluttering through the gum trees at Monarch Grove.

Knowing that the Moraga Garden Club had a goal of revitalizing the monarch butterfly population with its "Moraga for Monarchs" mission, I drove straight to Rancho Laguna Park to investigate the progress of the project. I was blown away at how quickly the area had developed from barren land to a lush, organic, ecologically beneficial beauty basin. The co-founders, Julie Stagg and Bobbie Preston, are quick to point out that this has been a community project of love with support not only from the members of the Moraga Garden Club, but from the town of Moraga, Saint Mary's College, Moraga Garden Center, Moraga Park and Recreation Foundation, numerous service organizations, and wildlife experts.

The "Moraga for Monarchs" goal is simple: repopulate monarchs throughout town while providing public monarch habitats, educating citizens, and providing plants to support monarchs and other pollinators in private landscaping.

Following their lead, every gardener can easily invite a bevy of beneficials to take up residence in the garden. Their website is a cornucopia of ever-evolving information about nectar plants, milkweed gardening, building a habitat, as well as supportive plants that are currently being installed in the Rancho Laguna Park Monarch Garden.

By first planting nectar plants that bloom February through April followed by monarch-specific nectar plants for blooming in October and November, a garden will be attractive to pollinators in all seasons. Besides butterflies, bees, birds, hummingbirds, lady beetles, bats, and other helpful insects will be darting and swooping through this nourishing landscape.

When I visited, swaths of cosmos in several colors had grown to over eight feet high. Purple, salmon, and chartreuse zinnias shone in the sunlight. Black-eyed Susan, purple verbena, Agastache, lobelia, sage, mints, yarrow, and butterfly bush were hosting bees and butterflies, including several monarchs. A trickling rock waterfall powered by the sun offers a sweet drink to the flyers. The water feature is flanked by a river rock dry creek that provides a sunning area for the butterflies surrounded by cosmos, zinnias, and lobelia as an artful caterpillar stands watch.

... continued on Page D10



A heart of love on a zinnia shines brightly blooming with the Black-eyed Susan.