

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 04 Issue 20 Wednesday, December 8, 2010



*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ...read on page OH4*

## The Buzz about Bees

By Sophie Braccini

The fact that her grandfather was a beekeeper, a long time ago in her native Ukraine, may have something to do with Roxy Wolosenko's attraction to the *Apis mellifera* (the Western Honeybee); but it was not until she became a Master Gardener, and got more into plant life, that the Lamorinda resident took the leap. "The whole idea of the

connection between all living things became very real," she says, "bees are a part of the wild animal kingdom and we can interact with them. Having them around gives me the feel of being part of a cycle, of being part of the wilderness."

Not to mention the delicious honey she gets for her family every year.

Wolosenko has two hives in her garden. She transferred the colonies from her rural Bollinger Canyon home to suburban Lamorinda. "Bees give a better yield in our gardens because we grow flowers year round that feed them," she says. She is one of the many Lamorinda residents who have a few hives in their gardens. They get honey,

and their flowers, fruit trees and vegetables get pollinated; some feel part of the fight to keep the *Apis mellifera* healthy in California.

When the Shivelys moved to their new Lafayette home 12 years ago, they soon noticed a wild bee colony nestled in one of their oak trees. They enjoyed having them around and would have liked to capture a swarm, but they lacked the know-how. Then they found Steven Sparks, a biology professor at Ohlone College who cares for a plethora of hives – they now have three hives in their orchard. No one has ever been stung, the orchard has been producing like never before, and the Shivelys get a pound of wild honey each year for their own use.

"There are many experienced beekeepers around, and some of them may be willing to have 'new bees' help them in their hives," says Brian Wort, president of the Mount Diablo Beekeepers Association (MDBA) – the group which serves as the main source of information for individuals wanting to start caring for bees.

According to MDBA founding member Steve Gentry, there are about 25 Lamorinda families in the group. Gentry, an Orinda resident, sells his honey in farmers market (he was featured in the July 11, 2007, issue of Lamorinda Weekly), and is one of the group's instructors.

Wolosenko is also a member of MDBA. When she decided to start keeping bees six years ago she went to Craigslist and found Walnut Creek resident Mike Stephanos, who was giving out hives.

...continued on Page OH3



*The wild beehive at the Shively's.*

*Photo Sophie Braccini*





## Red Bows & Silver Bells Happy Holidays

We would like to say thank you to our clients and friends for their continued support and trust over the years.

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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

<b>LAFAYETTE</b>	Last reported: 9
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$770,500
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,325,000
<b>MORAGA</b>	Last reported: 1
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$747,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$747,000
<b>ORINDA</b>	Last reported: 1
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$410,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$410,000

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

- 8 Amanda Lane, \$940,000, 3 Bdrms, 1953 SqFt, 2006 YrBl, 10-26-10
- 549 Arrowhead Drive, \$1,235,000, 5 Bdrms, 2970 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 11-10-10
- 985 Hawthorne Drive, \$799,000, 3 Bdrms, 1341 SqFt, 1941 YrBl, 10-27-10; Previous Sale: \$775,000, 04-15-04
- 547 Merriewood Drive, \$1,065,000, 3 Bdrms, 2082 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 11-10-10; Previous Sale: \$254,500, 08-21-85
- 1090 Oak Hill Road, \$770,500, 4 Bdrms, 2066 SqFt, 1939 YrBl, 10-28-10; Previous Sale: \$30,000, 03-14-72
- 20 Olympic Oaks Drive, \$965,000, 3 Bdrms, 2330 SqFt, 1996 YrBl, 10-27-10; Previous Sale: \$488,000, 11-05-96
- 1369 Reliez Valley Road, \$875,000, 2 Bdrms, 1483 SqFt, 1942 YrBl, 10-26-10; Previous Sale: \$108,455, 10-26-10
- 19 Springhill Lane, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 2797 SqFt, 1947 YrBl, 10-26-10; Previous Sale: \$1,345,000, 11-30-07
- 3454 Sky Lane, \$1,010,000, 3 Bdrms, 3027 SqFt, 1992 YrBl, 11-9-10; Previous Sale: \$90,000, 01-10-89

### MORAGA

- 9 Laird Drive, \$747,000, 3 Bdrms, 1640 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 11-9-10; Previous Sale: \$840,000, 09-15-04

### ORINDA

- 23 Hall Drive, \$410,000, 4 Bdrms, 1806 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 11-5-10

## Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

### LAFAYETTE

- 1 Nephi Court, 94549, Wells Fargo Bank, 11-04-10, \$848,155, 3751 sf, 4 bd
- 840 Reliez Station Road, 94549, Morgan Stanley, 10-20-10, \$1,060,390, 2269 sf, 4 bd

### MORAGA

- 126 Ascot Court #C, 94556, Wells Fargo Bank, 10-28-10, \$153,639, 858 sf, 1 bd
- 744 Country Club Drive, 94556, California Equity Management, 10-21-10, \$473,900, 2079 sf, 2 bd

### ORINDA

- 241 Orchard Road, 94563, Indymac Mortgage, 11-12-10, \$166,683



# The Buzz about Bees

...continued from page OH1

“Beekeepers are very generous and Mike helped me get started with my hives; he recommended that I join MDBA.” Wolosenko explains that the group provides training and organizes meetings that supported new beekeepers. Also a horticulturist, Wolosenko enjoys observing the bees when “they do their own thing.” She thinks that the biggest problem beekeepers have is keeping other creatures from preying on the bees. “An ant attack can wipe out a whole colony in the few days,” she recalls from experience.

Something similar happened in the communal Moraga Garden Farms. Bill Durkin recounts that a hive was installed in a corner of the garden for a year and made a difference in terms of yield. “They swarmed twice,” he said, “but then one day, they disappeared.”

Bees have been under a lot of stress. According to Sparks, the country is losing 40% of its bees to diseases and Colony

Collapse Disorder (CCD). “It is a very complex issue with more than one cause,” explains Sparks, “when we saved bees from certain diseases we might have weakened the hives by keeping alive individuals that should have died. Plus certain pesticides are very detrimental to bees and when traces find their way into honeycombs it weakens the larvae.” According to Sparks, if the country continues to lose 40% of its bees every year the situation will be catastrophic for farmers. “We will have to import massive quantities of bees from all over the world, thus creating another potential problem there.” Everyone remembers the horror stories of the Africanized bees, dubbed ‘killer bees.’

Wolosenko, a landscape architect with Roxy Designs, also believes that everyone can contribute to support the local bee population. “I have designed gardens for beekeepers,” she says, “To determine if a garden is a good wildlife habitat



*Roxy Wolosenko and her 13-year old daughter, Anya, check on their bees*



*A bee in the Shively's garden*

*Photos Sophie Braccini*

you look at the air space above the plants and you see who is coming to visit.” She recommends planting native plants such as Coyote Brush, because they will attract native bees, and plants such as lavender and rosemary that have a long flowering season and can help support the hives during the winter.

For those seriously interested in learning about bees, the best bet is to go to the first meeting of the season organized in January by MDBA. “We meet the second Thursday of the month at Heather Farms between January and October,” explains Gentry, “interested people should come to the first meetings in January, February and March to learn the basics, then in April, they will join the group’s order for new colonies and they will be able to start their beehives.” On April 15 MDBA holds a traditional workshop at which participants can obtain all they need to become active beekeepers, including a few thousand bees to set in their boxes.

“It is a wonderful experience,” concludes Gentry, “you learn to see like a bee – to see the world through their unique perspective.”

For more information go to [www.diablobees.org](http://www.diablobees.org).



December 2010 - Digging Deep

## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian-Gifts of the Garden

*"In search of my mother's garden, I found my own." -Alice Walker*

Other than a trip to Disneyland, traveling to my mother's gardens during the holiday season is an experience to remember. Her acres of flora are spectacular any time of the year, but from early December until January 6th the grounds are turned into a dazzling winter wonderland of color, light, sound, and fragrance. Growing up on the farm in Napa Valley, we five children anticipated Christmas a full three hundred and thirty days every year. The other thirty-five days were spent in total ecstasy as we played, sang, and celebrated this festival of merriment.

Since we lived so far away from the city lights (down in the boondocks as we lovingly referred to our valley), Mom and Dad told us it was imperative that we decorated the gardens and orchards so that Santa could find his way to our vineyards. Oh, how many nights we spent scanning the star lit sky for any sign of his sleigh sailing through the galaxy! Rudolph's bright red nose would be spotted on Christmas Eve after we had distributed many gifts from the garden and kitchen to friends and family. We'd rush home from midnight Mass to fill a bucket of freshly harvested carrots as a treat for the tired reindeer and of course, leave Santa and the elves plates of homemade cookies accompanied by a bouquet of cyclamen or roses for Mrs. Claus. The secret to a happy holiday was always centered on giving from the garden.

The magic and majesty of our holiday traditions continues today as I learn the lessons from my mother's garden while designing my own. No matter what the temperature of the economy, the best things that come from the garden are gifts for other people. Whether you have a large or small plot, a cornucopia of creative concepts abound in the ground. Whether decorative, culinary, or keepsake, homemade presents are always appreciated because they truly come from the heart. Here's a list of ideas for your green holiday giving.

- If you have pine trees, gather pinecones. Fill a Santa hat and wrap with a bow.
- Fill large pinecones with peanut butter. Tie a ribbon from the stem, wrap in cellophane and make a tag, "For the birds only!" Everyone loves watching the birds enjoy their treats.
- Allow some rose hips to form on your favorite rose bushes. Cut a stem of bright red rose hips along with a spray of lavender, tie with cheerful trim, and add a recipe for a vitamin C fragrant tea.
- Amaryllis is a spectacular long lasting bloomer available in a variety of colors perfect for the season. Plant a bulb earlier in the season for a December show, or buy a flowering plant now and place it in a watering can or decorative bucket to give as a garden gift.
- Dry flowers for potpourri and make beautiful sa-

chets and aromatic fresheners.

- Gather and press flowers in unique compositions against a velvet background in a gilded frame reminiscent of the Victorian era.
- For the feline on your gift list, construct a sturdy pillow filled with catnip.
- Preserve the favor, appearance, taste, and aroma of favorite flowers and leaves by making candy from violets, rose petals, lilac florets, citrus peels, and mint. (Caution-make sure that all the flowers and leaves you use for any gastronomic treats are indeed edible. Don't guess-be certain!)
- Flavor a cup of sugar by mixing in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of fresh petals of roses, lemon balm, lavender, verbena, geranium, or mint. Sprinkle on fruit, dust a Yule log, or sweeten a holiday punch.
- For enchanting savory treats, package carafes of herbed vinegar and olive oil using sprigs of basil, tarragon, dill, thyme, rosemary, or nasturtium. Add a couple of gloves of garlic for zing.
- Buy four-inch color spots and line a French bread basket. Top with tinsel.
- Give rooted cuttings of your favorite plants in a variety of pretty recycled jars.
- Customize your gifts by giving a mushroom farm

with a box of herbs to a chef or mints, lemons, and limes to a bartender.

- Make table place cards for the party host of pomander balls using thick-skinned fruit such as oranges, apples, lemons, grapefruit, and limes. Stud with cloves, roll in allspice, and slide the nametags between the cloves.
- Pull up volunteer trees from your yard, making sure to protect the roots. Plant in holiday themed urns, practical containers, or refurbished canisters.
- Teens can collect discarded CD's, string a glittering ribbon through the center, and present a box as décor for a shimmering outdoor tree. (Great to deter the birds and squirrels from your persimmon trees!)
- For the gardener, wrap a basket containing a high quality pruner, exotic seeds, the book, *Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul*, a pair of heavy-duty gloves, and a bottle of hand lotion.
- Buy cymbidium orchids with two or more glorious blooming stems for under \$20 throughout December. Add a peacock or pheasant feather, wrap in Chanukah, Christmas, or Kwanza cloth, and write a homemade sticker that reads, "Water weekly with warm H<sub>2</sub>O. Keep in 50-70 degrees providing moderate light. Celebrate beauty!"

...continued on next page.



*Magenta cymbidium orchid with peacock and pheasant feathers makes a wonderful gift.*

*Photo Cynthia Brian*



Over the years some of my favorite gifts from my family have been bales of hay, yards of manure, shovels, chain saws, boots, shredders, tillers, hoes, and boxes of gloves. Every once in awhile, I'll get a gift certificate for a massage or a manicure, or better yet, a pledge of a few hours of helping hands. Friends often chuckle at my lack of interest for babbles and bangles as presents, but my garden is my jewel box, my preferred sparkling diamond in nature.

Whether you make wreathes, cards, ornaments, jellies, salts, or just wrap up a few pinecones, this holiday season, have fun spending time with your family creating natural delights and a dazzling winter wonderland with color, light, sound, and fragrance. Light

up the life of those you love and give the gift of, from, and for the garden. HAPPY, HEALTHY HOLIDAYS!!



Close up of rose hips from a pink bonica bush. Photo Cynthia Brian

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*Happy Holidays!*



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A magnificent gift of Amaryllis.

Photo Cynthia Brian

## Cynthia Brian's Digging Deep Gardening Guide For December

"Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own."

Charles Dickens

With all the suggestions on how you can give of, from, and for the garden, I'm sure you are ready to start digging deep. We do have a bit of work to do before the winter storms. Get ready, get set, grow!

- **SPREAD** three inches of compost around perennials to insulate against the coming onslaught of cold weather. When warm temperatures return, the nutrient rich cover acts as a feeder.
- **WASH** empty pots and containers with a bleach solution, then store upside down until spring planting season.
- **LOWER** the blades of your lawn mower to a two-inch height and give one final fertilizing.
- **HYDRATE** young plants with deep watering to prevent frostbite.
- **BRING** tender outdoor plants indoors for over wintering, or move close to the warmth of the house foundation. You may want to spray with a fog to prevent freezing.
- **DIG** in the rest of your spring flowering bulbs now-daffodils, tulips, crocus, snowdrops, and scillas. Plant in drifts of a dozen.
- **REMOVE** all diseased or bug infested plants and toss with the trash. Do not compost!
- **FEED** the birds by allowing sunflowers, aster, Echinacea seedpods to remain on the plants.
- **POSITION** poinsettias in a barrel of ferns for a splash of color at the front door.
- **DONATE** to your favorite charity. It is the season of giving. Mine of course, is Be the Star You Are!® 501c3 (<http://www.bethestaryouare.org>)
- **PICK** persimmons and pomegranates to use in your culinary feasts.
- **PLANT** bare root berry bushes, asparagus, grapes, and artichokes.
- **PROTECT** birds of paradise or other tender perennials by covering them with burlap covers or even dog blankets.
- **PRUNE** rose bushes for a final flurry of flowers. For rose hips, don't prune.
- **FINISH** planting all spring blooming bulbs. For months of future blooms, plant throughout the month.
- **SPREAD** peanut butter in pinecones to feed overwintering birds, or buy seed to fill your feeders.
- **BRING** branches from your evergreen trees inside to use as inexpensive holiday décor. The fresh fragrance gives your home a cozy, festive feeling.
- **CHECK** out the new documentary, Tapping the Source, where I encourage viewers to turn failure into fertilizer. (<http://www.tappingthesourcemovie.com>)
- **CONTINUE** our quest to READ, PLANT, GROW!

May the magic, miracles, and memories with family and friends be your greatest gift this December. Keep digging deep-it's the power of your source.

Happy Gardening to you!

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# Gardening at the Movies

By Cynthia Brian



Cynthia Brian with stars Neale Donald Walsch and Michael Bernard Beckwith. Photo Eileen Goodis

For the past three decades I have enjoyed the privilege of working in films and television with some of the greatest thespians and directors in history. I've had parts in Oscar winning movies such as Heaven Can Wait, Milk, and Peggy Sue Got Married to being in cult classics like Sudden Impact, A View to a Kill, and Star Trek IV. As an acting coach, I am forever advising my clients that all acting is reacting while showing them the importance of being real. What I never expected was that as an actor, I would be featured in a film playing myself.

Earlier this year, I was interviewed for a documentary by the same team that distributed the film, The Secret. The crew of the movie, Tapping the Source, produced by Bill Gladstone, Gayle Newhouse, and Richard Greninger traveled the globe interviewing thousands of people considered pioneers on the planet for living authentic lives of happiness, abundance, and service. They told me I was chosen to participate because of the positive messages contained in the books I write, the radio show I produce, and the speeches I give as well as the empowerment to women, families, and youth I provide through the non profit charity I founded in Lamorinda, Be the Star You Are!®

I was delighted to receive an invitation to the world premiere of Tapping the Source being held in Los Angeles. When I read the list of celebrities included in the film, I was certain that my humble contribution to the project would never make it to the big screen and would instead rest on the cutting room floor. Movies are always made in the editing room. A few of the stars included Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Michael Bernard Beckwith, Dannion Brinkley, Monique Coleman, Cathy Lee Crosby, Barbara DeAngelis, Bob Proctor, Tanya Roberts, Neale Donald Walsch, Mariel Hemingway, Jean Houston, Barbara Maxx Hubbard, and many more.

Imagine my surprise when I was invited to walk the red carpet to meet the press along with these dignitaries, and moreover to learn that I am featured prominently in the film! It was also rewarding to see my gardens and animals showcased in the documentary. The premiere attracted a sold out crowd of over twelve hundred

attendees. After the screening, I was invited on stage to interact with the audience. You'll recognize my final words of wisdom, "Failure is fertilizer! Put your mistakes in your compost pile and grow a new garden."

The movie is a journey of joy and enrichment featuring a hundred renowned scientists, actors, authors, athletes, spiritual leaders, philanthropists, and healers. The film has launched a movement promoting the secret of success through service to others. My entire life has been dedicated to helping others achieve their dreams while living a life of meaning. What an honor to be profiled in Tapping the Source.

For those of you who read my gardening column, Digging Deep, you understand that gardening is my metaphor for life because when we attend to the inner garden of our spirit, we live natural, happy, healthy, connected lives. Tapping the Source is debuting at film festivals around the country. It is a glorious garden of personal growth on the silver screen. I hope you'll have the opportunity to witness the magic of its message so that you may continue to live with passion, purpose, and possibility.

Cynthia Brian is Lamorinda Weekly's gardening columnist of Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian. Her inspirational books include Be the Star You Are!®, Be the Star You Are!® for TEENS, Miracle Moments®, The Business of Show Business, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul. For more information visit [www.cynthiabrian.com](http://www.cynthiabrian.com) or [www.bethestaryouare.org](http://www.bethestaryouare.org).

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**50 Scenic Drive**

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**179 Crestview Drive**

Incredible estate hm on 20 acre pvt knoll. Beaut built custom w/Fu Tung Chen designed gourmet kitchen, pvt master suite, fab in-law apt, 360 degree views, ideal for vineyard.

**Offered at \$1,999,000**

MORAGA



**1365B Camino Peral**

Comfortable 2bd/2ba, 1281 sq ft w/fireplace, washer/dryer, deck & 2 dedicated parking spaces. Near shopping, park, library and trails. Best schools!

**Offered at \$299,000**

MORAGA



**1412 Camino Peral**

Desirable sgl lvl townhouse. Sunny 2bd + den w/indoor lndry. Nice mstr w/en suite bath. Dining area open to pvt patio, great indoor/ outdoor living, oversized 2-car garage.

**Offered at \$399,000**

MORAGA



**108 Walford Drive**

Tastefully updated home in desirable Rimer Drive neighborhood. 4bd/2ba on .28 ac. Many upgrades & designer touches. Kit/fam rm combo, pvt yd, walk to schools.

**Offered at \$859,000**

MORAGA



**20 Greenfield Drive**

Large wonderful 5bd/3.5ba home, flexible spaces, 2 bonus rooms. Level lawn, near schools, trails, park. Updated kitchen.

**Offered at \$899,000**

MORAGA



**98 Brookfield Drive**

Lovely 5bd/3ba on level desirable Moraga cul de sac. Updated kitchen & baths. Hardwood floors, lawn, patio & pool. Very close to award winning K-8 schools.

**Offered at \$999,000**

MORAGA



**160 Valley Hill Drive**

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LAFAYETTE



**3959 Cowan Road**

Down a long lane to gated entrance sits a great value for a TLC buyer. One half acre Happy Valley property in prime neighborhood. Endless possibilities.

**Offered at \$659,000**

LAFAYETTE



**1176 Glen Road**

Happy Valley Glen. Charming 4bd home w/two office spaces, many new updates. Beaut hdwd flrs, French doors to yard & pool. Close to town, Bart, great Lafayette schools.

**Offered at \$1,195,000**

LAFAYETTE



**3919 So. Peardale Drive**

Fabulous sgl lvl updated home. Tons of natural light, hdwd flrs, vaulted ceilings, LR w/custom fireplace + sep alcove. Marvelous great room, kit w/wine bar, sep pantry.

**Offered at \$1,335,000**

LAFAYETTE



**3819 Palo Alto Drive**

Price reduced on this wonderful Happy Valley home. Beautifully maintained & appointed. Newer kitchen w/lg eating area & fam rm. Ideal in-law set-up. Walk to school.

**Offered at \$1,679,000**

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 Linda Ehrich  
 Joan Evans  
 Linda S Friedman  
 Pamela Halloran  
 Dexter Honens II  
 Debbie Johnston  
 Hal Kaufman  
 Margot Kaufman  
 Susan Zeh Layng  
 Art Lehman  
 Charles Levine  
 April Matthews  
 I. Bruce Maxon  
 Karen Murphy  
 Ben Olsen  
 Sue Olsen  
 Kurt Piper  
 Tara Rochlin  
 Judy Schoenrock  
 Ann Sharf  
 Steve Smith  
 Jeff Snell  
 Lynda Snell  
 Clark Thompson  
 Ignacio Vega  
 Terri Bates Walker  
 Ann Ward  
 Dan Weil  
 Margaret Zucker

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