

Grow Your Own Gourmet Veggies

By Sophie Braccini



2012 plant sale at the Moraga Gardens Farm

Last year Rhiannon Herpolsheimer, a Lafayette acupuncturist and amateur gardener, bought all her tomato plants at the Moraga Gardens Farm, but this year, she will have to wait a few additional weeks to get her favorite heirlooms.

Plant sales at local community gardens are perfect for those who are looking for organic plants adapted to the local soil and weather. But buying local can be a problem when weather is challenging—the Moraga Gardens Farm had to postpone its annual sale by a few weeks until March 30. To compensate for the tardiness, new varieties of vegetables and herbs have been added, all tried and approved by those who work the garden.

“Our plant sale will be slightly later this spring than in past years, primarily because of the unusually cold weather we’ve experienced recently,” says Gardens member Bobbie Preston. “By patiently awaiting our plants, though, there are always huge rewards for the buyer in that we not only offer a diverse selection, but we’ve chosen them precisely because they do well in the Lamorinda area.” Over 3,200 organic plants grown without the use of chemicals and pesticides will be offered.

All the plants offered for sale are grown in the garden’s greenhouses; the members are organized in teams of transplanters, water crew, and venting, and take turns caring for the tender plants as they emerge in the flats and are transfer in their individual pots.

In the greenhouses, the temperature is kept at around 80 degrees by opening and closing vents. The Moraga farm is known to local restaurants

and markets for its wide range of tomatoes. “The San Marzano is the best tomato for making paste and sauce,” notes Preston. “Our selection of cherry tomatoes includes two different reds, a bluish red/yellow, a yellow and a green variety.”

Claire Curtin bought cherry tomatoes there last year. “I planted the tomatoes in a pot on the sunny deck at my Walnut Creek office,” she says. “As the tomatoes became ripe I would harvest and leave them on the desks of my co-workers who loved to have a small tomato snack during the day.” She says she will add herbs to her selection this year.

As for Herpolsheimer, she is partial to the Brandywine. “This is the hardiest variety producing well late into the season... I was still making salsa from the green ones that ripened indoors in December!” she says.

Twenty different types of tomatoes of all sizes, colors and tastes will be offered, including rare heirlooms.

If you want to make your own ratatouille from your garden, take a look at the eggplants and peppers. “Our eggplants were chosen to provide a choice of plants that do well in Lamorinda and are used for different cooking needs,” says Preston. “For example, the Black Beauty and Rotunda Bianca are great for casseroles and eggplant parmesan, the Ping Ting and the Japanese Long are perfect for stir fry.”

The peppers will be ordered by heat index, from the sweetest, like the Green California Wonder all the way to the knock-your-socks-off Thai, and many in between. This year the farm will include culinary herbs and catnip – as a kitty treat. Sales tables will not

only have pictures of the vegetables but suggestions for use and recipes. Growing instructions will also be provided, such as spacing the plants, pruning, watering and ‘hardening’ the plants so they transfer well from the warm greenhouses to your garden.

Moraga Gardens Farm is located at 1370 Moraga Way, between the Moraga Fire Station and School Street. The sale will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 30, and continue on Saturdays and Sundays from April 6-21 at the same time. For more information, visit www.Moragagardensfarm.com.

Photo Provided

Life in LAMORINDA

Floral Arts Florist

Each and every piece is special to us

Fresh flowers for any occasion • Center pieces
Sympathy arrangements • Plants
Corsages & Boutonnieres

CELEBRATE SPRING WITH BLOOMS

3584 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
(925) 284-5765 • www.floralartsflorist.com
floralartsflorist@gmail.com
Mon-Fri 9:00am 5:30pm, Sat 9:00am 5:00pm



Experience Beauty with Friends

Clark Russell the salon
For All Special Events...

3400 Mt. Diablo Blvd ste 3 Lafayette, CA. 94548
www.clarkrussellsalon.com

925.299.8814

Grand Opening of our Wellness Suite
Saturday April 6, 2013
10am-1pm

Tour the facility • Meet the Staff
Refreshments • Chair Massages • Raffle

3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite B110
Lafayette, CA • 925-284-6150
www.LafayettePT.com
[Facebook.com/LafayettePT](https://www.facebook.com/LafayettePT)

LAFAYETTE PHYSICAL THERAPY

We offer many services in addition to Physical Therapy to meet your fitness and wellness needs:

- Pilates
- Massage
- Balance Class for Seniors
- Personal Training
- Post PT Fitness
- Cranio-Sacral Therapy

School Garden Cultivates Learning from the Ground Up

Springhill Elementary School to host plant sale

By Cathy Tyson

At times there seems to be a disconnect with the parents that this is just a fun add-on, “but there are lessons on chemistry, math, history that you just can’t get in a classroom,” said Nanette Hefernan, master gardener and passionate volunteer at the Springhill Elementary School garden. She points out the multiple raised beds, where the kids calculate yield, and get a lesson in fractions by dividing up the space, kicking it up a notch for the older students – they can do the same thing with the colonial circular planting area.

The colonial garden is designed to dovetail with the students’ curriculum unit on early settlers, using heirloom seedlings that were part of the Native American diet. Got food scraps? After lunch every school day, Green Team kids take recyclable food waste like banana peels and sandwich crusts up to the composting pile, which ultimately will go back to feed the plants.

Because the spacious garden backs up to Briones open space, volunteer Kathy Hemmenway

comments, “We have a definite gopher problem,” along with birds and squirrels that love to nibble. Their solution: wire mesh framing the base of the raised beds – and strawberry plants in recycle cinder block. With clustered picnic tables and a curved presentation area, along with a shed for tools and equipment, and of course lots of planting areas, the sunny, well-drained site is an ideal outdoor classroom.

The garden boasts a cornucopia of plants from young kiwi trees growing up a homemade rebar teepee, sweet peas, tulips, herbs and a unique edible retaining wall composed of espaliered apple trees featuring red delicious, fuji and gala apples on different branches of the same tree, along with a number of raised beds waiting for seedlings. An amazing feat considering the garden is only a few years old – originally part of the school property, but only recently through a herculean parent effort transformed into its current state.

... continued on page B2

EASTER WEEKENED. ALL SQUARED AWAY.



- AMFA ART GALLERY
- ANAHID DESIGNS FLOWERS
- BARBACOA
- BONFIRE PIZZERIA
- ENTOURAGE SPA & SALON
- HELLO TIARA
- KASPER'S HOT DOG COMPANY
- LAVA PIT HAWAIIAN GRILL
- LIVING LEAN
- ORINDA THEATRE
- ORINDA TRAVEL
- PETRA CAFÉ
- REPUBLIC OF CAKE
- SERIKA
- SHELBY'S
- SUBWAY
- SWEET DREAMS TOY STORE
- TABLE 24
- VISUAL ENTRÉE OPTOMETRY

SAT, MARCH 30 2-5 PM
BOUNCY HOUSE
ROCK CLIMBING WALL
FACE PAINTING
PHOTO BOOTH
LIVE MUSIC
PETTING ZOO

FREE FAMILY FUN WEEKEND

Spend this Saturday and Sunday at Orinda Theatre Square! Enjoy a day of FREE family fun this Saturday from 2-5 pm, with bouncy house fun kicking off at noon. Then join us on Sunday at one of our comfortable dining options for Easter brunch or dinner with family. Think inside the Square.

FREE GARAGE PARKING WHEN YOU SHOP OR DINE



orindatheatresquare.com

