

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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Lamorinda trees are bursting with color

By Diane Claytor



Flowers of a magnificent magnolia tree in a Lafayette back yard

Photo Andy Scheck

Driving or walking around Lamorinda in the weeks leading up to the first full day of spring has felt almost like stepping into a floral shop. The landscape is bursting with colors — the pinks, purples, whites and yellows of flowers blooming and the vivid greenery all around boldly announce that spring has finally arrived, despite

this week's spring showers.

And after the rainy winter we've experienced, it couldn't come soon enough for most of us. But don't wait too long to enjoy all this beauty because, as Ken Murakami of the Moraga Garden Center noted, most of the blooms will be gone before we know it and soon the leaves will be sprouting.

There are many trees producing flowers; many began blooming last month and some may either continue into or start in the coming months. Some of the more popular trees around Lamorinda appear to be non-fruit bearing flowering fruit trees, including flowering plum, cherry, apricot, crab apple and combinations — or hybrids — of these plants. According to Murakami, the time of blooming depends on the variety, although “most will bloom between February and May. Flowering plums bloom earlier than cherries, apricots earlier than plums.”

Murakami assures that it's not too late to plant trees that will flower this spring. And if the blossoms are already gone, planting them this year will produce beautiful flowers next spring. The website, www.fast-growing-trees.com, indicates some other flowering trees that would do well in our area include crape myrtles, mimosas and dogwoods.

And then, of course, there are the magnolias, prized for their beautiful flowers, or, as noted by the San Francisco Botanical Garden, “...the most magnificent flowering woody plants for temperate gardens...” With more than 200 species, magnolias produce fragrant flowers that are white, pink, red, purple or yellow.

These trees, native to Asia and Central and South America, grow very well in our area, said Michelle Krasowski, a Contra Costa County librarian and former docent at the San Francisco Botanical Garden. She reported that the main blooming time for the Asian magnolias is just about over while those from the Americas bloom later in the spring and early summer.

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