



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian Gremlins of the garden



Photos Cynthia Brian Decorate your front porch with pumpkins and chrysanthemums.

### By Cynthia Brian

"Gnome and elf and fairy, Witch and ghost make merry On this last of dear October's days." ~ Lettie. C. Van Derveer, Halloween Happenings, 1921

The howling, nipping, and barking of the coyote send shivers down my back. Although they hunt throughout the day, as dusk settles over the hills and the moon rises, these wily carnivores set out to regulate the ecosystem. As apex crepuscular predators in an urban landscape, their prey is often our beloved pet. Creepy and blood-curdling!

For kids, the hot topic of conversation this week revolves around Halloween. As we decorate pumpkins and light jack-o'-lanterns, spooky specimens and wild phantoms are also prowling around our hallowed grounds.

We work hard to maintain our landscapes and it's frustrating to

have our sanctuaries invaded by unwanted organisms. One of the most noxious weeds to assault our gardens is the bindweed. Mimicking the fair face of a morning glory flower, like a poltergeist, it twists and tangles until it strangles plants and shrubs. Each plant produces more than 50 seeds that can survive for 50 years or more, making this deep-rooted gremlin a wicked weed to eradicate.

The cast list of freaky wild ones includes the misunderstood good, the beastly bad, and the pesky players that we often wish to hocus pocus somewhere else.

### The Misunderstood Good **Owls**

Owls are the silent, stealthy hunters of our gardens providing free rodent control. When you hear their haunting hoots, be grateful that they've designated your trees as their habitat. Install a tall owl nesting box if you don't have old trees attractive to owls.

**Frogs and Toads** 

In folkloric traditions, magic potions are concocted in rituals using frogs and toads to cast evil spells. These helpful hoppers have been much maligned. As a natural pest controller, they will munch over 10,000 insects in a few months. Their summer song and mating calls are melodious, indicating that you have a healthy environment. Turn a broken clay pot on its side, bury it halfway in the soil, and welcome these amphibians to their toad abode. Bats

Dracula and the coronavirus have something in common ... they both disparaged the docile bat. Bats are not winged rodents or bloodsuckers. Instead, they are the only flying mammals with wings. Bats are productive pest patrollers feeding on insects, progressive pollinators of hundreds of plant species, and sensational seed dispersers.



Plant garlic to keep vampires away.



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Approximately 3,343 square feet of living space showcases refinished hardwood floors, gorgeous millwork, soaring ceilings, recessed lighting, and a freshly painted interior. Five bedrooms and three bathrooms include a two-bedroom/one-bathroom detached and updated guesthouse.

Price and address upon request.



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### Lamorinda home sales recorded

City	Last reported	Lowest amount	Highest amount
LAFAYETTE	24	\$1,025,000	\$3,000,000
MORAGA	19	\$390,000	\$2,900,000
ORINDA	22	\$540,000	\$5,250,000

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

- 3190 Acalanes Avenue, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 1512 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 09-10-21, Previous Sale: \$1,825,000, 05-10-18
  596 Antonio Court, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1368 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 09-13-21,
- Previous Sale: \$950,000, 08-10-06
- 18 Benthill Court, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3013 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 09-08-21, Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 04-05-13
- 3643 Boyer Circle, \$2,751,500, 3 Bdrms, 2597 SqFt, 1945 YrBlt, 09-07-21 1000 Dewing Avenue #307, \$1,185,000, 3 Bdrms, 1568 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 09-15-21 3298 Gloria Terrace, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 1956 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 09-08-21 3122 Indian Way, \$1,985,000, 4 Bdrms, 2810 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-13-21 3368 Johnson Road, \$1,495,000, 3 Bdrms, 2047 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 09-14-21,
- Previous Sale: \$1,550,000, 05-04-18
- 1283 Juanita Drive, \$1,560,000, 5 Bdrms, 2460 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt, 09-01-21, Previous Sale: \$675,500, 03-31-14
- 1129 Martino Road, \$3,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 3326 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 09-10-21, Previous Sale: \$2,050,000, 06-16-18
- 1064 Miller Drive, \$2,225,000, 4 Bdrms, 3023 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 09-15-21, Previous Sale: \$460,500, 11-05-98
- 3416 Moraga Boulevard, \$2,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1690 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 09-03-21, Previous Sale: \$835,000, 10-14-14
- 945 Oak View Circle, \$1,310,000, 3 Bdrms, 1617 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 09-07-21, Previous Sale: \$640,000, 07-29-10
- 965 Oak Vista Court, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 3615 SqFt, 1994 YrBlt, 09-03-21, Previous Sale: \$810,000, 06-29-09
- 5 Pleasant Place, \$2,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 3547 SqFt, 2014 YrBlt, 09-17-21, Previous Sale: \$1,898,000, 03-12-15
- 1618 Silver Dell Road, \$1,777,000, 4 Bdrms, 2099 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 09-16-21, Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 04-24-19
- 46 Silverwood Drive, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 2155 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 09-07-21
- 3485 South Silver Springs Road, \$2,210,500, 5 Bdrms, 2449 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 09-17-21
- 3575 Springhill Road, \$1,320,000, 3 Bdrms, 1629 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 09-15-21, Previous Sale: \$900,000, 05-13-14
- 3149 Stanley Boulevard, \$1,430,000, 4 Bdrms, 1657 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 09-09-21, Previous Sale: \$640,000, 01-03-13
- 3220 Surmont Drive, \$1,950,000, 5 Bdrms, 2773 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 09-15-21, Previous Sale: \$1,300,000, 09-24-20
- 1191 Vacation Drive, \$1,025,000, 3 Bdrms, 1442 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 09-16-21
- 1048 Via Media, \$2,025,000, 4 Bdrms, 3120 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 09-16-21, Previous Sale: \$357,500, 10-01-86
- 1039 Windsor Drive, \$1,810,000, 4 Bdrms, 2010 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 09-10-21, Previous Sale: \$1,525,000, 06-15-18

MORAGA

- 1039 Alta Mesa Drive, \$975,000, 2 Bdrms, 1700 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 09-10-21, Previous Sale: \$244,000, 12-01-90
- 1174 Alta Mesa Drive, \$1,480,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 09-15-21, Previous Sale: \$1,195,000, 07-24-17
- 2059 Ascot Drive #108, \$390,000, 1 Bdrms, 713 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-16-21, Previous Sale: \$235,000, 12-03-13
- 2083 Ascot Drive #134, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-03-21, Previous Sale: \$380,000, 10-04-13

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### Stop the drips



bigstock images

### **By Jim Hurley**

We've all seen a comedic scene in shows where the protagonist can't sleep because the noise of a dripping faucet is driving them to distraction. In reality, especially during a prolonged drought, that drip is a waste of precious water.

Here's how drips happen. Faucets are simply valves which control the flow of water into the sink. Your household water supply is under very high pressure, so just the slightest damage or wear on the seals inside the faucet valve will allow water to squeeze through and cause that drip.

In the old days, a good handyman would carry a little box of black rubber washers in various sizes and shapes to a house call. The repair was simple: just shut off the water supply, unscrew the tap, and replace the washer. Then came cartridges. A modern faucet has a cylinder inside called a "cartridge" to control the flow of water. Cartridges come in all shapes and sizes. Unless you have a very old faucet with washers, a DIY repair for drips goes something like this: 1. Shut off the water supply valve under the sink.

2. Remove the cartridge from the faucet. Make a note of the faucet manufacturer if possible.

3. Take the cartridge to the hardware store. (Find the old guy who knows what to look for

and where to find it and hope they have a cartridge that is an exact match in size.)4. Return home and install the new cartridge.

5. Turn on the water and see if that fixed the problem.

This is not always easy.

When shutting off the supply valve under the sink, turning the valve handle may cause a drip to start from the valve stem. Before you start, remove any items under the sink to keep them dry and to make it easier to observe the floor for drips. Turning off the valve may also not completely shut off the flow of water to the faucet. In some cases, the shutoff valve also has a washer that may also be faulty. If this happens, you will need to shut off the house main water supply and replace both the shutoff valve and the faucet cartridge.

These shutoff valves deserve an entire article of their own. In brief, there are two types of shutoff valves; one that screws shut, (turn the handle several times to close the valve), and one that stops at a quarter turn. The quarter turn type (a ball valve) is the best. If the screw-down type needs replacement, buy a quarter turn valve of the same size.

Faucets are so varied in design that it would be impossible to explain how to remove the cartridge for each one. You will need to be creative and gentle as you discover how to remove the handle, which may be stuck on very tight, and disassemble the valve to remove the cartridge.

And not all hardware stores are equal. Find a good one with a variety of replacement parts and a knowledgeable salesperson. An alternative is to go to a plumbing supply house but, unfortunately, they are typically not open on weekends.

Once all the pieces are off – without you losing or breaking them – be sure to stack them carefully on the counter in the order that they came off, so that you can reassemble them in order.

Provided you do all those steps successfully, the problem may still not be resolved because sometimes the valve base is damaged, and the drip is from the valve housing rather than the O ring on the cartridge.

Before you spend this much time and energy on repairing the old faucet, you might consider replacing the whole thing. This may not require buying a new one because most faucets come with a limited warranty and some even have a lifetime warranty. If you have the documents that came with the faucet, (anything with the name and model number on it), call the manufacturer's customer service line and they will send you a replacement. Even if you only know the manufacturer, call their service line and they can use a photograph of the faucet to look up the make and model for you.

If replacement parts are not available, you will need to buy a new faucet. Replacing the whole faucet has only one major challenge: You will need to remove the nut under the counter that holds the old one in place. It is typically a tight space, and the fastening nut may be rusted or just won't budge. The hardware store sells an "Offset Sink Wrench" ostensibly to reach up under the counter and loosen the nut. I have never seen one of those actually work. What I use is my Multi-Tool with a metal cutting saw blade to cut through the nut and then pry it off with a screwdriver.

If you reach a point where it just won't come out, it's time to call your favorite handyman or plumber.

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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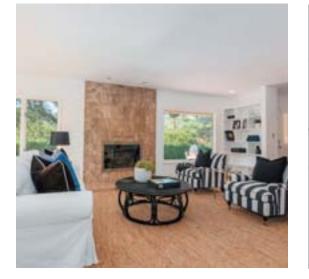
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### Lamorinda home sales recorded

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MORAGA continued
2129 Ascot Drive #2, \$600,000, 2 Bdrms, 1314 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 09-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$525,000, 11-14-18
589 Augusta Drive, \$2,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 2687 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 09-03-21
831 Augusta Drive, \$1,200,000, 2 Bdrms, 2142 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 09-07-21,
Previous Sale: \$850,000, 07-28-15
7 Berkshire Street, \$1,050,000, 2 Bdrms, 2142 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 09-03-21,
Previous Sale: \$680,000, 11-12-04
1388 Camino Peral, \$849,000, 2 Bdrms, 1126 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-02-21
3883 Campolindo Drive, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 1937 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-03-21
2 Corte Azul, \$1,850,000, 4 Bdrms, 2340 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 09-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,249,000, 06-25-07
770 Country Club Drive, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt,
1973 YrBlt, 09-08-21, Previous Sale: \$565,000, 01-11-13
111 Cypress Point Way, \$1,155,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 09-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$580,000, 08-27-03
2145 Donald Drive #8, \$505,000, 2 Bdrms, 1190 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 09-13-21
129 Draeger Drive, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 09-09-21
20 Hardie Drive, \$2,370,000, 4 Bdrms, 2922 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 09-08-21,
Previous Sale: \$470,000, 08-01-92
17 Mayfield Place, \$2,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 2112 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 09-01-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,445,000, 11-13-16
240 Sandringham Drive, \$2,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3108 SqFt,
1976 YrBlt, 09-08-21, Previous Sale: \$475,000, 08-01-91
7 Silvia Court, \$2,000,000, 5 Bdrms, 2446 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 09-10-21,
Previous Sale: \$950,000, 06-04-04
ORINDA
40 Adobe Lane, \$3,469,500, 4 Bdrms, 4045 SqFt, 2020 YrBlt, 09-01-21
67 Brookwood Road #19, \$540,000, 2 Bdrms, 897 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 09-16-21,
Previous Sale: \$405,000, 12-26-06
14 Camino Del Diablo, \$1,580,000, 2 Bdrms, 2222 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 09-01-21
114 Camino Don Miguel, \$2,275,000, 5 Bdrms, 3411 SqFt,
1938 YrBlt, 09-15-21, Previous Sale: \$2,275,000, 08-07-19
35 Candle Terrace, \$4,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 4326 SqFt, 1992 YrBlt, 09-08-21,
Previous Sale: \$3,400,000, 11-15-16
155 Canon Drive, \$1,650,000, 3 Bdrms, 2767 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 09-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,322,000, 10-23-19
29 Crescent Drive, \$1,540,000, 6 Bdrms, 3264 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 09-13-21,
Previous Sale: \$200,000, 04-22-03
409 Dalewood Drive, \$5,250,000, 6 Bdrms, 5964 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 09-10-21
12 Dos Posos, \$1,825,000, 3 Bdrms, 2863 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 09-07-21
84 El Gavilan Road, \$3,325,000, 3 Bdrms, 3152 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 09-02-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,050,000, 12-06-18
8 La Campana Road, \$1,374,500, 3 Bdrms, 1547 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 09-08-21,
Previous Sale: \$840,000, 05-21-14
150 La Espiral, \$3,180,000, 4 Bdrms, 3378 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 09-10-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,100,000, 04-05-18
11 Las Palomas, \$1,800,000, 5 Bdrms, 2338 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 09-13-21,
Previous Sale: \$1,365,000, 06-08-17
5 Lavina Court, \$1,505,000, 3 Bdrms, 1225 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 09-09-21,
Previous Sale: \$865,000, 05-31-16
2 Los Amigos, \$1,030,000, 3 Bdrms, 1667 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 09-02-21
57 Orchard Road, \$1,800,000, 3 Bdrms, 2249 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 09-10-21
79 Orchard Road, \$1,335,000, 4 Bdrms, 2011 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 09-17-21
5 Owl Hill Court, \$4,895,000, 3 Bdrms, 3929 SqFt, 2007 YrBlt, 09-17-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,675,000, 05-19-17
624 Tahos Road, \$3,060,000, 4 Bdrms, 2669 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 09-13-21,
Previous Sale: \$2,000,000, 07-06-05
11 Totterdell Court, \$1,375,000, 3 Bdrms, 1603 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 09-03-21
121 Van Ripper Lane, \$2,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 3653 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 09-09-21
24 Whitehall Drive, \$1,876,000, 4 Bdrms, 2359 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 09-15-21



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## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Gremlins of the garden**



Cattails are great for fall arrangements.

Bindweed is a wicked weed resembling morning glory that must be eliminated.

Photos Cynthia Brian

... continued from Page D1

These flying friends don't plague people, but they will devour a thousand mosquitoes in an hour. Provide habitat for these winged heroes to roost by erecting a bat house 12 to 15 feet off the ground. As a bonus to your garden, they'll offer nutrient-rich fertilizer with their excrement, guano. If you fear vampires, plant garlic. **Snakes** 

Snakes are slimy, slithering, and scary. But most snakes are harmless and helpful garden assistants. The common garter snake preys on insects, slugs, and rodents and prefers to live in cool, dark places. Keep your doors closed as it would be frightening to find that a female gave birth to up to 50 live young under your bed! The elegant kingsnake is welcome in any landscape as it eats venomous snakes like the rattlesnake or copperhead as well as rodents and other plant destroyers. **Skunks** 

Skunks are the garbage collectors of the garden. These docile black and white creatures will eat anything including insects, rodents, and yellow jacket larvae. When fruit falls from a tree, they'll be the cleanup crew. Pet food and birdseed are attractors. Because of their odorous spray, these mostly nocturnal, solitary, and non-confrontational creatures get a bad rap. When threatened, they'll stomp, hiss, and puff up before raising their tail and unleashing their potent defense system. **Spiders** 

A glittering pumpkin.

Little Miss Muffet had no reason to run away. Only unwanted insects such as grasshoppers, aphids, cockroaches, and mosquitoes need to fear these valuable web weavers. Research is underway by scientists on the benefits of spider venom to prevent arthritis while the strength of spider silk is inspiring mechanical engineers.

#### **The Beastly Bad**

#### **Gophers**, Moles, Voles

Although we witness the horror gophers, moles, and voles create in our lawns and yard, we rarely see these creeping critters. Stomping on the mounds, trails, and holes may distract them for a while, but like the Terminator, they'll be back. Setting multiple traps and checking them daily is the best method. If all else fails, call in the pros. **Rats and Mice** 

Rats and mice gnaw through wiring, wood, pipes, bags of birdseed, and make nests in our stored patio furniture pads. Reproducing rapidly and prolifically, rats spread disease, contaminate food sources, and infest our homes and gardens. In just three years, a single rat can produce half a billion descendants! Trapping is the humane manner to eradicate these pests unless the wicked witch of the West unleashes her feral black cats to hunt and exterminate. ... continued on Page D13

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Gremlins of the garden**





A Kingsnake is a friend, not foe.

Photos Cynthia Brian

 $^{
m in}$   $\,$  The left-over cat food enticed this skunk to the patio.

... continued from Page D12

#### Raccoons

If you are hearing scratching noises in your attic, it's not the walking dead. You could have rodents or raccoons. Raccoons will walk on a tree branch to access your roof and set up a den in the spaces above your ceiling. They also are attracted to garbage, pet food, bird feeders, bird nests, and they kill poultry. Raccoons are major hosts of rabies in the United States. Make sure to cut your tree branches back at least six to eight feet from your roof to protect yourself from these masked marauders as well as from fire laddering. Deter raccoons from setting up house with cayenne pepper sprinkled wherever needed and spray your shrubs and bushes with a solution of a bottle of hot sauce mixed with water.

#### Wild Boars

Wild boars destroy yards, damage fences, and are a danger to humans. The destruction of property by feral hogs costs agriculture over \$1.5 billion annually. They compete with wildlife for food and negatively impact our natural ecosystem, increasing soil erosion and decreasing water quality. Their trampling, rooting, and digging have devastated numerous lawns and gardens locally. Wild hogs are a horror show.

#### **Pesky Players**

Squirrels, deer, and turkeys are a nuisance to homeowners. **Squirrels** 

Bushy-tailed squirrels strip fruit and vegetables from trees and vines before it is harvest time and often take up residence in homes. I've witnessed squirrels scampering on my fence with an apple from my tree that was bigger than his head. They have denuded my pistache trees of their unripe berries and stolen all the chestnuts from the trees. Nevertheless, I enjoy their aerial antics and circus acrobatics as well as their lively chatter.

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A chatty squirrel eats the berries at the top of a pistache tree.

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian **Gremlins of the garden**



Proven Winners two new releases, jet-black leafed crapemyrtle, and a sun tolerant gardenia

... continued from Page D12

#### Deer

Deer demolish gardens with their dining desires. The only sure way to keep them away from your sacred spaces is to build a tall fence enclosing your property. Since my garden is fenced and protected, I welcome the doe and her twin fawns on their daily 6:30 p.m. visit to graze on my grassy slope. Sometimes the stags sharpen their antlers on my oaks and often leave me a gift of them. **Turkeys** 

Turkeys fly over those fences to forage for berries, bugs, and buds. Living in my pines, I sometimes have as many as two dozen gobbling and scratching. I've watched how they share the bounty of their discoveries with some of the birds shaking branches to release fruit to their young waiting below.

Elves, fairies, and gnomes are invited to roam my haunted garden



The devilish looking gulf fritillary caterpillar on the 'Witchcraft' passion vine.

to protect and serve. If you get an infestation of any of the "beastly bad" or when the "pesky players" are bewitching and injurious to your property, it may behoove you to call in the ghostbusters, also known as licensed depredators for nuisance wildlife control. R.I.P. **Spooky Shrubs** 

Ending this article on a lighter note, if you are looking for an allblack bush to showcase for Halloween, Proven Winners developed a crapemyrtle called Center Stage Red that boasts jet black leaves with stunning summer red blooms. I'm partnering this black beauty with a heat-tolerant gardenia, Steady as She Goes. Shrubs with names that evoke goosebumps include Ghost Weigela, Abracadabra Hydrangeas, and Handsome Devil Viburnum.

As October comes to an end, I wish you zombie thrills, frights, and chills. May the grim reapers stay away from your garden. Charge up your broomsticks and have a very happy, safe Halloween.

Happy gardening. Happy growing. Trick or Treat!



Cynthia Brian and a ghoul.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is available for hire to help you prepare for your spring garden. Raised in the vineyards of Napa County, Cynthia 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.

Buy copies of her books, including, Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, and Be the Star You Are! www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Receive a FREE inspirational music DVD and special savings.

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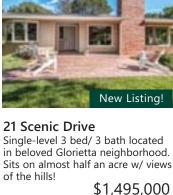
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