

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 17 Issue 14 Wednesday, August 30, 2023



Lamorinda Home Sales

... read on Page D2

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Divide and delight!



A hillside of Naked Ladies.

Photos Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

“There are no happier folks than plant lovers, and none more generous than those who garden.” ~ Ernest Wilson

Many years ago, I was considering adopting two miniature ponies. When I visited the ranch where they were living there was a small pond surrounded by a flush of gorgeous pink blooms that I had never seen before. When I asked the property owner what they were, she told me they were Naked Ladies, a bulb that boasted bright green spear-like foliage in the winter. When the foliage died at the

end of spring, it was necessary to remove the brown leaves, leaving the turtle-shaped bulbs slightly protruding from the ground.

Indicating that her Naked Ladies needed dividing, she dug up a bulb, instructing me to plant it in the sun “anywhere,” irrespective of soil condition. “Wait for next summer’s surprise,” she said. I followed her directions, and that one bulb has evolved into many hundreds that blanket my hillside in a sea of pink perfection. Over the years I have divided, dug, and donated bulbs to many friends, offering them a summer surprise. Divide and delight! It makes me so happy!



Midnight blue agapanthus.

This time of year is a perfect time to divide a wide variety of bulbs and perennials. Besides increasing the number of plants in your garden, divisions can be donated to other gardeners. Dividing overcrowded plants will give the remaining plants room to grow, maintain their health, and rejuvenate your beds. Over-crowded and over-grown plants will not bloom profusely, however, not all perennials or bulbs benefit from dividing.

Before you begin, water the area well a few days before digging. With a shovel or garden fork, dig a large area to remove a clump with the root ball, bulbs, or rhizomes in-

tact. Once out of the ground, shake off the excess dirt and cut or pull apart individual crowns. For perennials, make sure you have roots and leaves. Bulbs and rhizomes need roots attached. To avoid having the roots dry out, plant immediately in another area at the same depth and water deeply. To conserve moisture, add mulch to these newly divided plants.

Not all plants want to be divided. It’s best to leave Baptista, goatsbeard, lupine, milkweed, Russian sage, peony, red hot poker, bleeding heart, Hellebores, lavender, verbena, and oriental poppies alone. ... continued on Page D6