Pamorinda OUR HOMES

Attic Insulation Upgrade
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Setting Up an Organic Vegetable Garden

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 1 Wednesday, March 14, 2012

By Sophie Braccini



Volunteers of all ages spend their Saturday morning working at the Garden Farm

Photos Shophie Braccini

full house of gardening enthusiasts gathered on Feb. 24 at the Moraga Library to hear experienced gardener Deva Rajan of Moraga Garden Farm and garden steward Julie Welch of Saint Mary College's Legacy Vegetable Garden discuss organic vegetable gardening.

Rajan's and Welch's garden settings are quite different: a north facing slope for Saint Mary's, a flat rich oneacre patch of soil for the Farm. Whatever their physical setting, however, both gardeners use neither pesticides nor herbicides, and create bountiful crops utilizing ancient proven methods to grow food that can be easily replicated in local gardens.

"We are very lucky to be using a piece of land next to a creek. It used to be a garden that supplied vegetables to the Moraga Ranch in the old days of Moraga," said Rajan as he explained about the fertile soil of his property.

... continued on page D3

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What clients are saying about VLATKA

Vlatka provided far and away the best real estate experience that I have had. She sold my four bedroom home in December 2011. She did a fantastic job marketing my home, holding open houses, assisting me with presale work and closing the sale in a short amount of time. Vlatka also found my dream home in Orinda. She listened carefully to my desires, needs and budget requirements and we found a home that far exceeded my expectations. She is extremely honest, personable, and very professional. She is available to you consistently and works tirelessly on your behalf. You will have a wonderful experience with Vlatka as your real estate professional. Carol B

Quite honestly the service provided by Vlatka exceeded any expectations we could have had. This is our 6th home purchase and we obviously had some sales along the way as well, and Vlatka was the best agent we have ever dealt with, by a mile. She was great throughout the process. She worked tirelessly for us when we were merely prospective buyers and also after the sale was completed and continues to follow up on issues for us.

I really cannot say enough about every aspect of our interaction and would be more than willing to provide any additional follow up regarding her performance. Mike and Becky

For Sale 44 Lucille Way, Orinda Offered at \$649,999



Sale Pending in Orinda Representing Buyer



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT
LAFAYETTE	9	\$345,000	\$1,300,000
MORAGA	9	\$200,000	\$1,500,000
ORINDA	3	\$249,000	\$1,700,000

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

1825 Del Rey Street, \$639,000, 3 Bdrms, 1689 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 2-16-12; Previous Sale: \$679,000, 09-08-09

3702 Highland Court, \$595,000, 4 Bdrms, 2091 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 2-10-12; Previous Sale: \$950,000, 07-11-07

3264 Marlene Drive, \$345,000, 4 Bdrms, 1449 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 2-9-12; Previous Sale: \$31,000, 03-08-72

3714 Mosswood Drive, \$759,000, 3 Bdrms, 1725 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 2-17-12

3154 Ramada Court, \$630,000, 3 Bdrms, 2302 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 2-7-12; Previous Sale: \$63,500, 06-01-73

4 Rancho Diablo Road, \$755,000, 3 Bdrms, 1882 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 2-7-12; Previous Sale: \$925,000, 10-21-05

927 Reliez Station Road, \$530,000, 2 Bdrms, 1437 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 2-3-12; Previous Sale: \$867,000, 03-30-05

8 Ruth Court, \$450,000, 3 Bdrms, 1419 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 2-13-12

1060 Silverhill Drive, \$1,300,000, 5 Bdrms, 4095 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 2-7-12; Previous Sale: \$240,000, 10-17-97

MORAGA

1965 Ascot Drive #10, \$205,000, 2 Bdrms, 1130 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 2-3-12; Previous Sale: \$366,000, 12-21-04

765 Augusta Drive, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1728 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 2-14-12; Previous Sale: \$699,000, 11-28-00

903 Augusta Drive, \$765,000, 4 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 2-17-12; Previous Sale: \$615,000, 07-30-99

58 Merrill Circle #N, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 4741 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 2-13-12

28 Merrill Circle #S, \$1,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 4808 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 2-13-12; Previous Sale: \$1,755,000, 10-22-04

4001 Paseo Grande, \$980,000, 4 Bdrms, 2461 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 2-8-12; Previous Sale: \$124,500, --

1896 School Street, \$1,400,000, 5 Bdrms, 3254 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 2-14-12; Previous Sale: \$480,000, 03-19-96

821 Villa Lane #4, \$200,000, 2 Bdrms, 882 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 2-10-12; Previous Sale: \$423,000, 04-21-06

113 Westchester Street, \$450,000, 2 Bdrms, 1552 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 2-3-12; Previous Sale: \$730,000, 01-25-08

ORINDA

73 Brookwood Road #33, \$249,000, 2 Bdrms, 882 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 2-17-12 147 Canon Drive, \$770,000, 3 Bdrms, 2435 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 2-17-12 1 Dos Posos, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 3920 SqFt, 2002 YrBlt, 2-8-12;

Previous Sale: \$600,000, 08-25-00

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

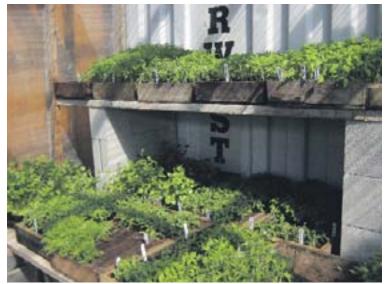
LAFAYETTE

Brown Avenue, 94549, Sarm Trust, 02-14-12, \$657,000, 2142 sf, 3 bd
Oak Street, 94549, Bank of New York, 01-19-12, \$542,547, 1394 sf, 2 bd
Westminster Place, 94549, Bank of America, 01-17-12, \$733,140, 2845 sf, 5 bd

Loma Linda Court, 94563, US Bank, 01-18-12, \$669,237, 2459 sf, 3 bd

Setting Up an Organic Vegetable Garden

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A variety of herbs

"It belongs to the Bruzzone family, and the agreement we made with Russell (Bruzzone) dates back more than 20 years."

The acre is manned by a group of about 60 volunteers who take charge of the various tasks from seeding to planting, watering to weeding and harvesting. "Our philosophy is to grow more than we need, so after we sell our tomatoes and zucchini to local restaurants and markets, the volunteers get all that they need, and there is still plenty for charities." Along the way, Rajan teaches the principals of organic gardening he's learned and perfected over the years.

"In the fall, we plant a cover crop of nitrogen-fixing legumes such as fava beans, bell beans and purple vetch," he said. When the plants have matured and the soil is still moist, but not too heavy, the entire cover crop is tilled into the ground. ... continud on page D6



Fava beans help the soil



California Craftsman

15 Candlelight Lane, Lafayette









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To Stage or Not to Stage

by Andi Peterson Brown

Tome staging refers to the act of preparing and showcasing a property for sale in the real estate marketplace. Many people associate the term only with carting in a houseful of rented furniture and painting the walls an unassuming white. And for certain homes, that might be the case. But in reality there is a spectrum to home staging, and for some sellers it may simply mean dressing up and rearranging what's already there, decluttering rooms, or merely removing some personal items during home showings. While it is common for sellers to initially feel some resistance towards staging their home, the truth is that staging is a tremendous asset. And here's why:

- It makes for a great first impression. Staging a home creates a neutral palate so that many buyers can see themselves living in the home and making it their own.
- It enhances the emotional experience. A lighter, brighter, cleaner, warmer, more organized and more cheerful home will win a buyer over every time.
- It eliminates distractions. Personal effects should be minimized and rooms should be used for their intended purposes. Many buyers can't see past the play room that ate the dining room.

It is important to remember that staging a home can be accomplished on any budget. It is a sound investment toward the ultimate goal of obtaining the highest price possible in the shortest amount of time. And really, isn't that what it's all about?



andi brown

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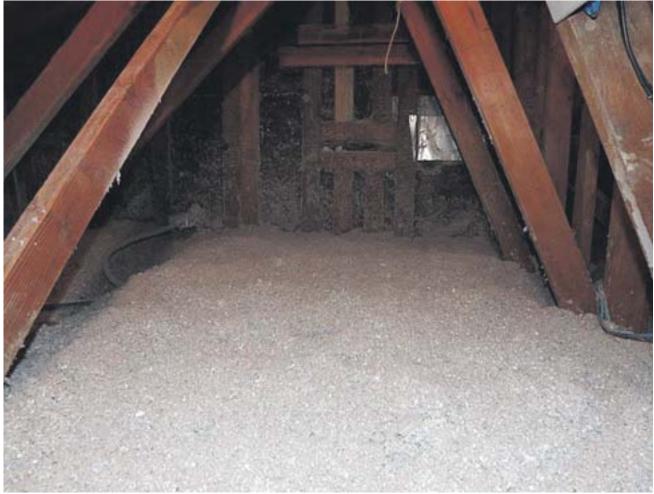
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Batting and Blankets and Loose Fill... Oh My!

Attic Insulation Upgrade for an Older Home By Cathy Dausman



Replaced new insulation

Photos Cathy Dausman

warm in the winter, and comfortably cool in the summer, but paying utility bills to keep it that way can make you hot under the collar.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) says heating and cooling accounts for up to 70 percent of the energy use in your home. Maybe it's time to consider an insulation upgrade?

Home insulation may be found in attics, walls or crawl spaces, but

when considering attic insulation you first need a physics lesson: heat flows from warm to cool. (You probably already knew that, since in winter you try to corral the warm air inside.) During summer, mid-day sun wants in, and tends to heat up the house. Insulation slows or prevents such unwanted changes.

Insulation is rated in terms of heat, or thermal resistance, and is expressed in R-value (the more insulation the greater the R-value). R-value is found by multiplying thickness in inches by a number from 2.5 to 3.7 (based on insulation type). Fiberglass fiber has the lowest R-value, and cellulose (newsprint) the highest. If your attic has yellow, pink or white rolls or batts, it's likely fiberglass. Loose fibers in light colors are probably fiberglass, and darker colored fibers could be rock wool. If you're seeing light-weight granules, that might be vermiculite or perlite.

... continued on next page



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It's possible to "beef up" your R-value simply by adding on to existing insulation; just be sure not to compress the old layer. Insulation works much like a down comforter; it's as much the air pockets as the material itself that holds in the heat.

If you decide to install new insulation yourself, you will likely be working with rolls. Wear protective long-sleeved clothing, plus a hat, goggles, gloves and respirator. Leave space around bare stove pipes, electrical fixtures, motors or recessed light fixtures to prevent fire. It's especially dangerous to pack insulation onto electrical nob and tube wiring (found in houses built before 1940).

If you hire a contractor, your insulation can be rolled or blown in. Be sure to get several estimates and always ask for the same R-value, to compare apples to apples. A contractor will even completely remove old insulation and install all new, although that costs more.

Forty years ago, fiberglass was commonly used for attic insulation; now recycled cellulose fiber made from newsprint is available. Cellulose insulation is non-toxic, a borate treatment makes it fireproof, and rodents won't nest in it (as they will in fiberglass).

Pacific Gas and Electric offers a 15-cent per square foot energy rebate to residential customers on some insulation upgrades through Dec. 31. Go to www.pge.com/rebates for details. The DOE website http://www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html offers insulation guidelines by zip code (although the Lamorinda area zip codes entered default to Napa, Calif.). A full fact sheet is available online at http://www.ornl.gov/sci/roofs+walls/insulation/ins_01.html.



Check on electrical wires

Coming Soon in the Orinda Country Club



Sunset Views* Level Yard * Desirable Location

This classic ranch style home nestles into a level setting on top of a knoll and offers views of the Berkeley Hills. The traditional floor plan allows for wonderful indoor/outdoor living, an entertainer's delight! There are 3 bedrooms and 2 baths, hardwood floors, a formal dining area, an oversized living room with walls of glass and a country kitchen. There are also two outbuildings currently used as offices for the artistic owner. The backyard is private and peaceful with a delightful patio, lawn, paths, and gardens. The master bedroom has French doors to the oversized side yard complete with patio and garden. For more information please contact April Matthews at 925-200-0773 or email aprilmat@comcast.net.

It's April in Lamorinda For Real Estate





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Why Not to Top

Shade trees should **never** be topped. The regrowth of a topped tree is structurally unsound. Topping required by utility right-of-way pruning is bluntly obvious and sets an unfortunate community standard followed by others. Instead of topping, use crown *cleaning*, *thinning*, *and/or proper reduction* methods, set by the ISA.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local ISA certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you with your pruning questions.

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Page: D6 LAMORINDA WEEKLY OUR HOMES www.lamorindaweekly.com \$\infty\$ 925-377-0977 Wednesday, March 14, 2012

Setting Up an Organic Vegetable Garden

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The Moraga Garden Farm is located south of the Moraga Ranch off Moraga Way

The next step is the building of fourfoot-wide raised beds separated by twofoot-wide pathways.

"We practice flood irrigation for certain crops," explained Rajan. Pathways are flooded between the raised beds where the plants are grown every two weeks. "This allows the water to saturate the bottom of the raised beds which encourages the plants to develop deeper root systems." The number one crop of the community farm for commercial sale is tomatoes. The farm cultivates nearly 850 plants, consisting of some 20 different varieties. The group gets seeds from the previous year's harvest and buys new organic heirloom seeds every year to test what works best in Moraga. All plants are started from seeds in January in one of

the four green houses.

"We plant our tomatoes after the last frost, usually around mid-April," Rajan said. Volunteers dig deep holes where one shovel-full of compost is thrown, with the addition of a handful of chicken manure. Water is added, and after mixing, the tomato is planted deep into the soil.

Rice straw is spread generously

around the plants as a mulch to retain moisture and to control the weeds. This also keeps the soil populations of worms and micro-organisms high. Since no herbicides are used, volunteers take charge of weeding when needed.

"Once the plants are at full height we stop watering," Rajan said. "It gives the signal to the plant it is time to set and grow fruits." The plants will be watered again if they start giving signs of over-stressing, such as leaves starting to curl.

To fight pests, the most efficient remedy Rajan has found is planting Marigolds at the end of each row of tomatoes. "They work as a natural bug repellent by attracting beneficial insects such as lady bugs," he said. The same principals of using compost, mulch and quite a lot of manual work are also applied by Welch at Saint Mary's.

The Legacy Garden was built and planted from scratch by the class of 2012, four years ago. "We used old bleachers to build our raised beds," she explained. The hillside that was given for the garden is typical Moraga hard clay, the type that needs a lot of amendment to become fertile ground for veggies. Building the beds and adding organic dirt was the solution.

"We compost the vegetables left over from the campus' restaurant, mixed with the leaves," Welch said. "We also do worm composting." Plenty of students provide the manpower to tend the college's organic garden, and there are plenty of participants, too, when picnics are organized in the garden at harvest time. "We also provide a lot of greens to the campus salad bar," she added. and School Street).

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Both Welch and Rajan referenced Ken Murakami, owner of Moraga Garden Center, as a great source of information, support and supplies. For those who plan to start an organic garden this spring, Moraga Gardens Farm will sell about 2,500 rare-tofind heirloom plants this season. In addition to tomatoes, the group will have herbs, eggplants, artichokes, peppers and chayotes. Their sale dates are March 25, April 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, and 22, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1370 Moraga Way, Moraga (between the fire station



Deva Rajan

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136 Greenbriar

Spacious 3bd/2ba home w/hdwd floors, nice light & vaulted ceilings. Pvt cul de sac location. backs to open space. Come see why people love living in MCC!

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5 Netherton Court

WOW - this is the one! Spacious 5 bd/2.5ba with hardwood flrs, vaulted ceilings, many upgrades & great backyard. Pvt cul de sac location, close to schools & shopping.

Offered at \$1,210,000



3244 Glenside Drive

Charm abounds in/out. Very special 3bd/2ba 1927 sf w/new dlx kit & adj fam rm opening to grassy yd. Very light/bright in all rms. Hdwd flrs, dual panes.

Offered at \$899,000



11 Orchard Road

Quintessential Orinda home on gorgeous private .75 acre lot! 1940's home lovingly refurbished. Great indoor/outdoor California living. Serene, peaceful - yet close to town!

Offered at \$1,250,000



101 Brookline Street

Detached spacious 2bd/2ba + office in MCC. Wimbledon model, large bedrooms, vaulted ceilings. Great views from top of the hill. Flat yd in back, potential patio, dog run, etc.

Offered at \$670,000



136 David Drive

Nature at your doorstep. 4bd.3.5 baths home at end of special "Bluffs" cul-de-sac. Lots of room in/out, modern remod kit w/huge fam rm + frml LR & DR. Big mstr ste. 1.86 acre parcel.

Offered at \$1,295,000



15 Candlelight Lane

Beaut custom blt 5bd Craftsman style hm that looks & feels like new-const. Fab sgl lvl, exceptional finishes thruout. Close-in loc, easy access to town, schools, BART & freeway. A must see.

Offered at \$1,495,000



8 Lost Valley Drive

1st time on market! Beaut updated sgl lvl 4bd/3ba + 2 half baths in 3265 sf on serene 1.1 ac. Vaulted ceilings, gourmet kit, hdwd flrs, Andersen windows. Custom pool & spa, wonderful gardens.

Offered at \$1,375,000



216 Tharp Drive

Special 3bd/2ba 1767 sf home on .26 acre which backs to EBMUD land and trails. Close to award-winning K-8 schools.

Offered at \$800,000



3363 St. Mary's Road

Classic rancher on pvt .47 ac lot. 4bd/2.5ba. LR w/frplc, hdwd flrs, vaulted ceiling. Roomy kitchen w/SS applis. Pantry/Indry off kit. Quiet yd w/pool. Great loc nr trail/town/top schls.

Offered at \$699,000



1328 Martino Road

Elegant gated 1-story 5bd/4.5ba 4839 sf home on .48 ac level lot. Showplace gourmet kit; hdwd flrs; ofc/den; high ceilings; mstr retreat w/frplc, lounge area, lux bath; patio w/frplc; top schls

Offered at \$2,495,000



2 Altarinda Circle

Totally renovated & expanded sgl lvl 4bd/4ba trad on exceptiional .63 ac lvl lot. Exquisite workmanship, showplace kitchen, fam rm, ofc, hdwd flrs, dual pane windows, close to Bart

Offered at \$1,775,000



10 Dickenson Drive

Fully renovated 2711 sf 4bd/2.5ba hm w/quality features thruout. Super new kitchen w/granite. adj fam rm opening to pvt grassy lvl yd. Incredible dlx mstr suite w/fab bath + bonus office/nursery.

Offered at \$1,139,000



3286 Sweet Drive

Price reduced! Lovely 3150 sf home, flex flr plan, updated thruout, granite kitchen. Sweeping views, 2 mstr bdrms plus 2 more bds & 4 baths in Burton Valley. Guest set-up w/sep entry.

Offered at \$848,500



3718 Rose Court

Exquisite Happy Valley classic trad w/finest detail & workmanship. Fr drs, hdwd flrs & much more. Incredible yd w/pool, pergola, outdoor frplc & bbq + a charming cottage. Truly a rare find!

Offered at \$2,795,000

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