

## GARDEN GUIDE

# 516 Butterfield Place, Moraga

## BACK YARD

### RAISED BEDS

Beds 1-2 have been rotating crops, most often cherry tomatoes, sunflowers, peas, favas, and kale. Bed 3 had asparagus in it, which takes years to mature, so that bed hasn't done much yet. Part of the problem is that there are other plants (sunflowers etc) that volunteer in that bed, and the asparagus don't enjoy that. Bed 4 has sunchokes in it (Jerusalem artichokes), which are harvested in winter once the stalks die off. The stalks were recently cut by landscapers. That bed has been self-sufficient in that we can never harvest enough out of there to not have it full again the following year - you can dig those up now to eat, or wait it out and see what comes up in Spring. Bed 5 has a tree collard in it, which is also self-sufficient. The leaves can be used like kale. These plants can live to be 20+ years old (and this one is about 6 years old), so that's a perennial plant for your dark leafy greens.

All of the beds will have sunflower, calendula and walnut tree volunteers in Spring.

### HERB TERRACE

The long lower terrace behind the beds is full of a lot of useful herbs. There's ground oregano, pineapple sage, other sages, summer savory, and thyme. There are also a few medicinals: the vine that looks like ivy is Fo-Ti. The plant that makes little white daisy-like flower is Feverfew. Between this and the herb bed off the kitchen, we never bought herbs.

### CALENDULA TERRACE

The top terrace was seeded with calendula, which is a pretty, useful, and edible flower. The calendula self-seeds up there... and everywhere else. In the Spring especially, you will see calendula volunteers coming up all over the place, especially in the rocks by the beds and the herb terrace. We harvested and used a lot of calendula flowers, so we pretty much just let them rock on as they wished, except in the beds themselves.

### HILLSIDE PLANTS

The hill was originally planted - from L - R looking at the hill from the house - with Vinca, St. John's Wort, and African Ivy (we found the original landscaping map in the house when we bought it). You'll see the vinca popping up here and there, but most of it is covered by the dewberry brambles. Dewberries are sort of like blackberries, but the brambles are different and the berries are much more intensely flavored. We're guessing they were planted by a bird farmer long ago. The berries make the absolute best galettes you have ever had, and are worth the harvest (wear long pants and gloves).

The St. John's wort is in the middle section of the hill, and flowers in June. We found those pretty yellow flowers to be incredibly useful from a homeopathic perspective.

## GARDEN GUIDE

# 516 Butterfield Place, Moraga

A birch tree next to the one by the hot tub was accidentally removed, and it now comes up as a bush. We left this because birch need to grow in groves, and there aren't that many left on the property. You can also trim it to a single branch, and that will be a new tree. There's also a birch sprout coming up from where a birch used to be at the grass circle - again, we left that (and its mother trunk) because we wanted it to grow. There's also a bay bush at the top of the hill, from where a bay tree apparently used to be.

### PLUM TREE(S)

The neighbors have a wildly productive French Plum tree that hangs into the dog kennel, and there's a wee volunteer on the property as well (whose plums are nowhere near as sweet). The plums are typically ready to harvest in early July. There's a much smaller yellow plum tree at the opposite corner, next to the huge pine tree. Those come in earlier. We used both for plum syrups and compotes and jams.

### CHAMOMILE COUCH

This is over by the outdoor kitchen area. It's planted with Chamomile Treneague (ground chamomile). There is a sprinkler system there, but we find it does better when it's also hand-watered. When it's lush and/or in full bloom, it's an awesome spot to relax. Smells amazing!

### BEDS OFF THE SLIDER

You'll find an herb bed with standard kitchen herbs, and a comfrey plant that won't quit. We used that last for poultices. To the left of that are two beds that we used for lettuce. Keeping the dewberry back is the challenge over there!

### VOLUNTEERS

Because there have been sunflowers and calendula planted in various spots on the property, and because birds love the seeds on both of these, there are a lot of volunteer flowers in the back yard in particular. Expect to see a lot of things coming up in Spring. Calendula comes up more frequently, because it's just persistent like that, but it really goes wild in Spring.

You may also get squash or tomato volunteers in the beds, and sometimes on the hillside from chicken or squirrel farmers. You'll probably also get more than a few fava bean volunteers in the beds. This makes a great cover crop, the beans are great if laborious to peel, and the young leaves (before the beans come in) are delicious.

## GARDEN GUIDE

# 516 Butterfield Place, Moraga

## FRONT YARD

### NARCISSUS & BULBS

Years ago, we thought it would be a fun idea to trench up both sides of the front aggregate stairs and plant narcissus bulbs all the way up. What this means for you is that Spring = a huge number of narcissus coming up. They smell amazing, and we used them (in moderation, the smell is intense) for indoor bouquets.

There are also a few daffodils that come up here and there, and a white Belladonna Lily or two that come up in the fall.

### SILVER DOLLAR EUCALYPTUS

That tree is actually two trees entwined. We've had it looked at/pruned regularly by an arborist. Matt from Woodchuck is the latest. Those leaves make for really pretty year-round indoor flower arrangements. The hummingbirds nest in this tree.

### ROSEMARY

The rosemary in the front yard at the curb is the culinary rosemary bush. The rosemary in the back is decorative. Bees and hummingbirds love them both.

### HUMMINGBIRD SAGE

This plant is over by the pine tree stump, and both flowers and leaves smell insanely good.

### SUN

The front yard gets the most sun of anywhere on the property, and at one point the entire right side was an heirloom tomato garden. At this point it's planted with a lot of low-maintenance, drought-tolerant landscaping, but if you (like us) were thinking, "Where can I fit 18 heirloom tomato plants from Moraga Garden Farms?," the front yard is the answer.

Happy harvests!

