

# Home & Garden

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A Fall Home and Lifestyles Guide for Sonoma County

Sept. 26, 2013 page D7

## The Recipe for a Great Kitchen Remodel

By Lorraine Alexander

Have you ever noticed at holiday parties, one thing you can count on – folks will always gravitate to the kitchen, no matter what the size?

Many of us have fond memories of the smells, conversations, hearty meals and love that came from grandma's kitchen. Well, the news is: kitchen design has changed a great deal since grandma's days, with a focus on state-of-the art technology, convenience, beauty, ergonomics and sustainable materials. The rapidly growing trend of healthier lifestyles, along with homegrown organic food, is shifting plenty of attention to the kitchen. It has become the natural hub of entertaining, and now more than ever, the kitchen is truly the heart of the home.

Kitchens are by far the most expensive remodeling project you will encounter, so you will want to get this project right. Whether your plans are for a simple paint upgrade on your cabinets, a full-blown remodel or something in-between, here's sound advice that will help you achieve the finest results. To begin, let's learn from the mistakes of others; what are some the pitfalls?

### The big offender

Too often, I see kitchens or bathrooms that just don't fit the home. As soon as you enter, they smack you right in the face as 'newly remodeled.' If you could visualize the project out of that environment, usually it's not a bad design. In fact, one could even say it was a nicely done. But instead, it interprets in the home as a strange misfit of materials and selections. When a remodel is well done, the newly remodeled room will fit the home like a glove. It will seem gently relaxed, fresh, fun, and transition with ease and grace.

### More than just good taste

The language of materials, color and design is complex. Each color, finish and style conveys a language: formal, relaxed, modern, fresh, fun, dramatic, rich, elegant, edgy, masculine, feminine, whimsical, farm-style or country. A simple but excellent mate-



photos by Sarah Bradbury

New updated cabinet doors transform to drawers, offering renewed purpose and organization while creating sleek lines within the existing box cabinets. Handsome granite tops now cantilever, extending the workspace and offering a new place to sit while entertaining or preparing meals. Below: A custom island hosts a relaxed version of traditional wine storage.



Have fun and express your personality in the areas that can be easily altered as your tastes change while keeping the dominant areas of the project clean, simple, timeless and tasteful.

rial example is polished granite, which conveys a strong message as a formal material due to the high sheen — and the rule of thumb is the darker the color of granite, the more veining, the more formal the statement. On the other end of the spectrum, a more

casual choice might also be granite, but with a honed (matt) finish, in a light color, with very little veining and tight consistency in the pattern.

Each material we select communicates a message. And in the end, the combination of these selections will



convey an instant mood when you enter the room. The top three most important questions you will need to ask are: How does this material relate to the rest of my home? How will this

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### Top 10 Designer Tips

1. Do your research well in advance. Know what products and options are available in the marketplace.
2. Make a wish list. Include 'how you entertain' and 'your cooking habits' – share these with your design team.
3. Set a realistic budget and buy the best quality you can afford. Setting the budget too low will only get you disappointing results.
4. Spend the time to select the perfect 'dream design/construction team' and hold at least one collaborative meeting in the front end of the project. Putting these professionals together to discuss the project has enormous benefits.
5. Get professional help from a designer that can coordinate materials and color that translate well in your home environment, and live with your selections for a few weeks before finalizing them.
6. Don't go for the first item that immediately 'wows' you. I can guarantee you will tire of it.
7. Have fun in the areas that can be easily changed. Paint, art, accessories. Keep the design lines clean, timeless and tasteful.
8. Get healthy – Select sustainable, recycled materials when possible, and low or no VOC products. You and your family will breathe easier. Be wary of 'greenwash' products – those that claim to be 'green' but are not.
9. Focus on the ergonomics – If well done, this will make life easier and make cooking a joy.
10. Spend part of your budget on a quality lighting plan. Your project will come alive, instantly adding beauty and value.

## Autumn Harvest in the Garden

### Composting, harvest and delicious rewards

By Abby Bard

In the years I've been gardening, I've learned so much, especially how much I still need to learn. So when I heard about a composting workshop, sponsored by the Daily Acts environmental education group at Sonoma Compost on Mechem Road in Cotati, I signed up.

On the longest day in June, I spent the day at their site to learn the mysteries of composting from Will Bakx, soil scientist and compost master, who runs the facility and conducted the workshop.

Our group started out in a small organic garden, run by and for the employees — the raised beds holding a veritable vegetable jungle, a testament to the fertility of the soils made there — and continued out to the yard, where long rows of shredded vegetation, in various stages of decomposition, are mounded, turned and watered by giant machines and monitored for temperature. This process creates heat, destroys harmful bacteria and kills any seeds, resulting



in a healthy, dark, crumbly material that the plants love.

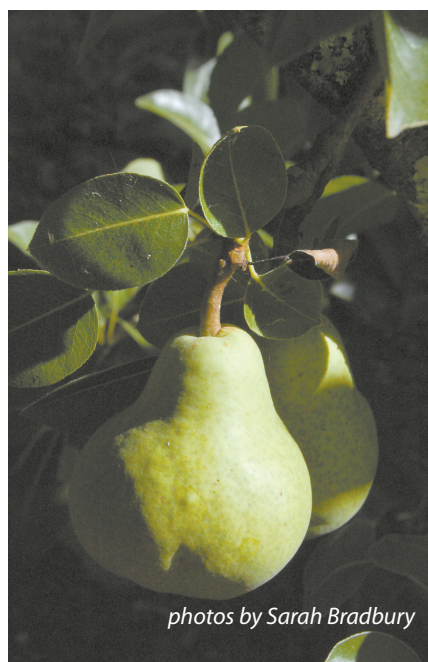
I learned that I'm partway there with my own home composting effort, but could do it a whole lot better. I need to make my pile larger, at least 3' x 3' x 3' in dimension, and:

- Keep the mix of brown materials,



like dried leaves, wood chips and shredded newspaper (carbon), and green materials, like pulled weeds and garden waste (nitrogen), at a 30 to 1 ratio

- Reduce particle size
- Buy a long thermometer at the hardware store to keep tabs on the



photos by Sarah Bradbury

temperature, which should reach 165°

- Keep my pile well-watered, and
- Turn it frequently to move the cooler materials on the outside of the pile into the hot center.

I also learned the differences between hot composting, cold com-

posting (which does not control diseases or weed seeds) and vermicomposting (letting the worms do the work — which is great if you have way more food waste than dried leaves and chipped wood). Christine Condon, who trained at Rudolph Steiner College, taught a segment on Biodynamic composting, a holistic and spiritual approach to composting, increasing the quality of hot-composted material by incorporating Biodynamic plant preparations and certified organic animal manures into the mix.

After half a day surrounded by compost, I had a head full of information and the scent of compost and dust in every pore. When the workshop ended, I bought six bags of Sonoma Compost, self-shoveled into recycled potting soil bags that I had brought with me, and came home with enough enthusiasm to mulch my veggie beds with the bagged goods and turn over my own compost pile.

| See Harvest on D10 |



*"It's why we live here."*  
Join our salute to the Harvest workers & growers as they rush to bring in the 2013 crop. Let's celebrate all of our farmers & ag friends!

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<b>SONOMA WEST</b> TIMES & NEWS 823-7845	<b>The Healdsburg Tribune</b> 433-4451	<b>THE WINDSOR TIMES</b> 838-9211	<b>2013 Harvest</b>  894-3339
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# Master Gardeners Free Workshops

**OCTOBER 2013**  
**HEALDSBURG**  
**October 5**  
**How to Grow Blueberries, Raspberries, Blackberries and Strawberries**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Sun-sweetened berries of all kinds, still warm from the garden, can be an enjoyable crop for the avid gardener. Master Gardener Gwen Kichherr will teach you how to grow these fruits and enjoy their bounties from spring until fall frost, with just a few rows of plants. Healdsburg Regional Library, 129 Piper St.



**WINDSOR**  
**October 5**  
**Restoring Habitat – One Garden at a Time**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Learn from Master Gardener Mary Lou Milkoff how to revive our age-old ecosystem with the thoughtful use of native plants. Welcome birds, butterflies, beneficial insects and bees into your yard. Mary Lou will show you how to make your garden diverse and sustainable, cutting down on labor and use of water, pesticides and fertilizers. Windsor Regional Library, 9291 Old Redwood Hwy. Bldg. 100.

**GUERNEVILLE**  
**October 19**  
**Super Succulents for Sonoma County**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Anne Lowings will discuss the best varieties of succulents for Sonoma County. She will also cover how these tough and versatile plants can add year round interest with little maintenance or water. Guerneville Regional Library, 14107 Armstrong Woods Rd.



**ROHNERT PARK/COTATI**  
**October 26**  
**Making your Sonoma County Garden more Sustainable**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Kim Pearson will discuss what is sustainability and why it is so important for the future. Using an example of a small urban garden, she will suggest projects that will transform a typical garden in a more environmentally friendly and sustainable garden that can be a beautiful and enjoyable outdoor space. 6250 Lynne Conde Way.

**SEBASTOPOL**  
**October 26**  
**Soil: Life Under Ground**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Bonita Morgan will discuss the importance of rich, fertile soil for growing all plants. Included in her discussion will be the information to get and keep this fertile soil. Sebastopol Regional Library, 7140 Bodega Ave.



**SONOMA VALLEY**  
**October 26**  
**Plant4Bees-Forage for Honey Bees in all Four Seasons**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Learn how you can create a garden that can provide flowers high in nectar and pollen in all four seasons. Master Gardener Cheryl Veretto will discuss helping honey bees and other pollinators survive in your garden year round while you enjoy the beauty of a four-season bee sanctuary and pollinator oasis. Sonoma Valley Regional Library, 755 West Napa St.

**NOVEMBER 2013**  
**GUERNEVILLE**  
**November 2**  
**Holiday Style: Budget Floral Design**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Learn about the lore, legend and secrets of making wreaths,

swags and table décor to grace your holiday home using materials from you own garden or from those of neighbors and friends. Master Gardener Ellyn Pelikan will show ideas that will inspire you to go home and create your own “holiday wonders on a budget.”

Guerneville Regional Library, 14107 Armstrong Woods Rd.

**HEALDSBURG**  
**November 2**  
**Fall Practices for a Healthy Garden**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Marsha Anderson covers the gardening practices that help avoid the use of harmful pesticides and discusses use of University of California recommended less harmful pesticides-Integrate Pest Management (IPM). Healdsburg Regional Library, 139 Piper St.

**RINCON VALLEY**  
**November 16**  
**Hydrangeas**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Carlyss Van Ness has a passion for hydrangeas. She has designed a workshop to cover water-saving techniques, fertilizing, pruning methods, hydrangea varieties, propagating and drying of blooms. If you grow hydrangeas, you must come. Rincon Valley Library, 6958 Montecito Blvd. Santa Rosa.

**WINDSOR**  
**November 16**  
**Don't Throw Away that Supermarket Orchid**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Ann Chambers will demonstrate why you should not throw away supermarket orchids. She will teach you how to keep it alive and blooming for many years. This is a hands-on workshop. Bring your orchids. Windsor Regional Library, 9291 Old Redwood Hwy.

**ROHNERT PARK/COTATI**  
**November 16**  
**Pruning Fruit Trees: Maintaining Your Backyard Orchard**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Learn how to prune your fruit trees for great fruit and healthy, beautiful trees. Whether you have one tree or a grove, this presentation will give you a step-by-step guide to maintaining your fruit trees. Master Gardener Denny Pedersen will cover the tools you need and how to use them, how to shape your trees, when

| Remodel cont. from D7 |  
room ‘feel’ with this selection of materials and colors? Do these materials and colors reflect the true personality of myself and/or my family?

### Bring on the light

Have you noticed that most people naturally gravitate to a room with good light? Lighting is one area that most homeowners and even some designers make the fatal mistake of ignoring. A well thought-out lighting plan is critical for the success of your kitchen project. Imagine working in a large, well-lit prep area flooded with plenty of light. Know that this is money well spent. Plan to incorporate a combination of daylighting (natural light), task lighting and ambient lighting. Your new kitchen will absolutely come alive — instantly adding beauty and value to your home.

As author Nigel Slater said in his book, *The Kitchen Diaries: A Year in the Kitchen with Nigel Slater*, “Good kitchens are not about size; they are about ergonomics and light.”

### Let it shine

Here is some final advice about letting your personality shine through. Although it may be tempting, don’t go for the first item that immediately ‘wows’ you. I can guarantee you will tire of it. Do have fun and express your personality in the areas that can be easily altered as your tastes change: paint, art, accessories — while keeping the dominant areas of the project (cabinets, materials, lighting) clean, simple, timeless and tasteful. In the end, you’ll be grateful you did. Your kitchen will become



photo by Sarah Bradbury

your new favorite place in your home; it will serve you well and stand the test of time with poise and grace.

### About

Lorraine Alexander (above) has more than 25 years in the field of design. The hallmark of her work is material coordination and color. Committed to sustainable design and building practices, Lorraine chairs the U.S. Green Building Council Pacific Region and the Santa Rosa Junior College Interior Design Advisory Committee, and she is certified as a Green Building Professional with Sonoma State University.

Contact: 707-836-9060, info@lorrainealexander.com, www.LorraineAlexander.com.

## Dragonfly Floral Classes

### Accent Arrangements & Small Containers

**October 16, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

Learn how to beautify your home using accent arrangements and how to design in small but unusual containers. You really can have flowers in every room of your house without breaking the bank. Bring three to five small vases, bowls, bottles, etc. from your home. All other supplies, flowers and greenery are provided. \$75



display in your favorite centerpiece container. \$75.

### Centerpieces & Large Containers

**November 13, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

Pam Bell will teach you how to use various shapes and sizes of vessels for centerpieces as well as how to work in some of the larger containers you have around your house, such as vases, pitchers, wine buckets, etc. Bring a selection of two to three larger containers from your home. All other supplies and flowers/greenery are provided. \$75

### Thanksgiving Centerpiece Workshop

**November 24, 10 a.m. – noon**

Dragonfly Floral owner and master designer Bonnie Z will help you design a beautiful and long-lasting

**Decorating your Holiday Table with Glamour: All that Glitters is not necessarily Gold**

**December 9, 5 - 7:30 p.m.**

Learn how to decorate with “over-the-top style” and have it still look good. \$95

**Decorating your Holiday Table with Simplicity: Texture, Color, Nature, Candleware & More**

**December 11, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

Pam Bell will teach you how to create a simple yet beautiful holiday table by using objects primarily found in nature and how to light it. \$75

For more information, please visit: [www.dragonflyhealdsburg.com](http://www.dragonflyhealdsburg.com).

to prune and what cuts to make. Rohnert Park Regional Library, 6250 Lynne Conde Way.

### SEBASTOPOL

**November 23**  
**Rose Care and Culture**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener and prize-winning Rosarian Jim Lange will discuss how to grow healthy roses, including where and how to plant, prepare the soil, water and fertilize. He covers many varieties and how to deal with pests. Jim is past president of the Redwood Empire Rose Society.

### SONOMA VALLEY

**November 23**  
**Edible Landscaping and Holiday Décor**  
**10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Master Gardener Sue Lovelace will demonstrate her step-by-step time saving techniques for assembling the precise number of flowers and greens and choosing the right sized oasis or container. Many of the greens can come from your own garden. Sonoma Valley Regional Library, 755 West Napa St.

For more information about these classes, call 565-2608 or visit [www.sonoma-countymastergardeners.org](http://www.sonoma-countymastergardeners.org).

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