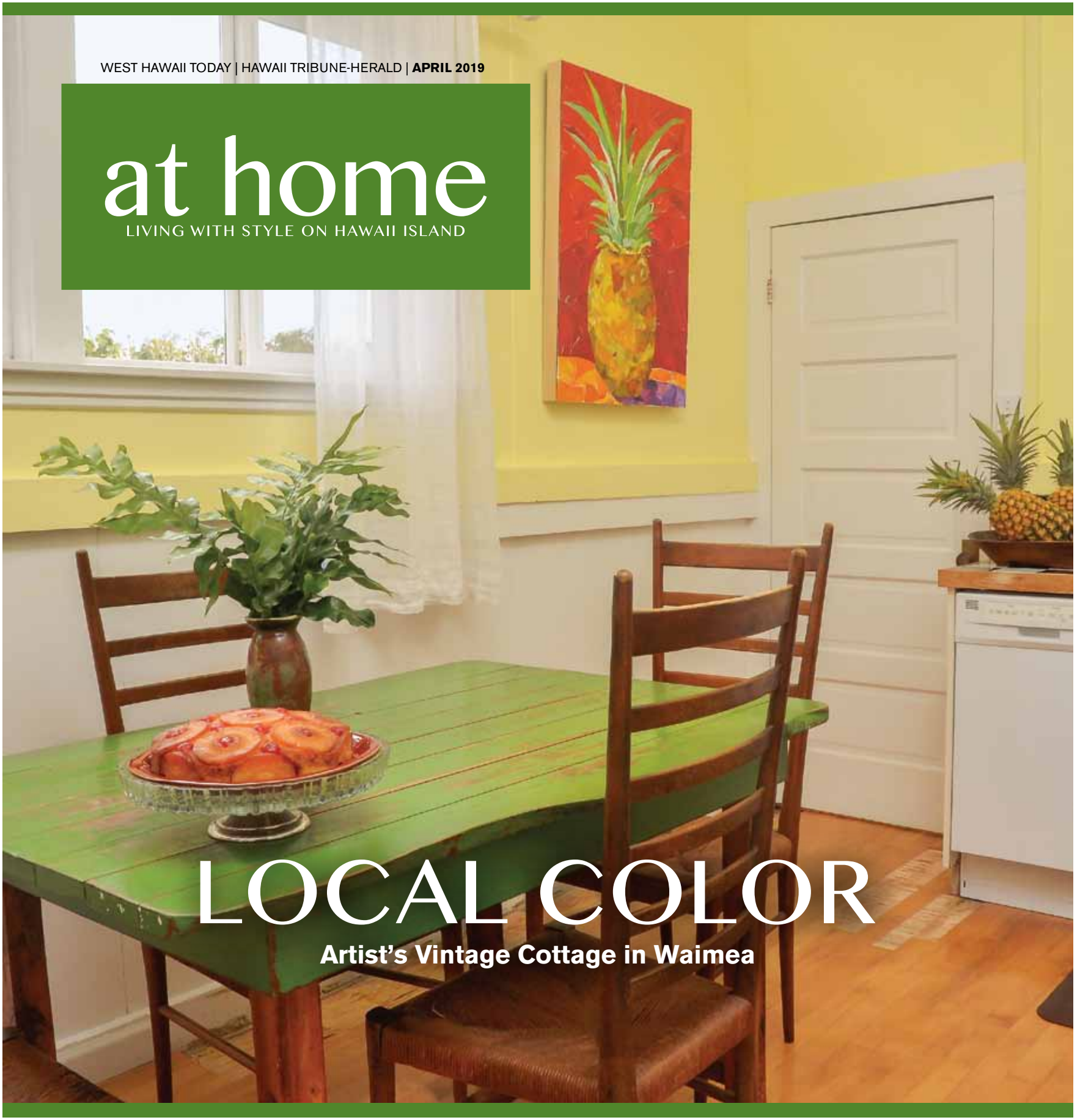
WEST HAWAII TODAY | HAWAII TRIBUNE-HERALD | **APRIL 2019**

# at home

LIVING WITH STYLE ON HAWAII ISLAND



# LOCAL COLOR

## Artist's Vintage Cottage in Waimea

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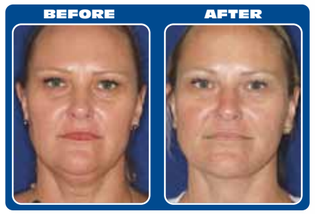

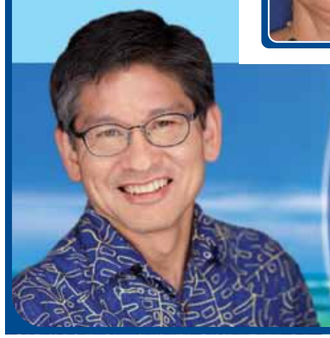

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at home
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APRIL 2019

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**On the Cover**: Artist Mary Spears' pineapple collage hangs on the wall of her Waimea kitchen, where a freshly baked pineapple upside-down cake sits atop an antique table. Located in downtown Waimea, the vintage cottage was built by Parker Ranch in the early 1920s for the local school's headmaster.

PHOTO: KAREN ANDERSON

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PHOTO: KAREN ANDERSON

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COVER STORY

Pineapples take center stage in Mary Spears' kitchen, where a freshly baked pineapple upside-down cake sits below a pineapple collage created by Mary. The vintage cottage features 12-foot-high ceilings and board-and-batten construction.

# LOCAL COLOR

## *Mary Spears lives the artists' life in vintage cottage in Waimea*

"I'd describe my style as 'happy shabby chic' with a Hawaiian/plantation-style tropical flair," said Mary Spears of her colorful vintage cottage in Waimea. "Every time I walk through the front door, I'm immediately happy. This space is truly magical."

An artist specializing in oils, acrylic and collage, Mary creates artwork in her studio that was originally a carriage house adjacent to the cottage. On display throughout the home and studio, Mary's artwork pays homage to local landscapes and tropical foliage. Abstract pineapple-themed collages hang in the kitchen and living room, adding pops of color to the single-wall construction.

"The pineapple motif started four years ago when a friend gave me a baby purple pineapple," said Mary. 'It's so much fun to portray pineapples because of the fantastic geometric shapes and colors."

Built by Parker Ranch in the early 1920s for the local headmaster, the cottage was also home to two nuns who lived there for nearly two decades. The 12-foot-high ceilings convey a sense of volume that isn't reflected in the small square footage.

By the time Mary purchased the cottage in 2006, the aging fixer-upper needed substantial restoration. Specializing in historic renovation, local contractor Gregg Erickson transformed the dilapidated abode into the charming cottage it is

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAREN ANDERSON

The entry bench is topped with a pillow featuring Mary's artwork.

Mary's painting above the bed depicts the dramatic Waimea landscape.

The lanai echoes Waimea's paniolo heritage.

Mary Spears takes a break in her art studio adjacent to the cottage.

Custom printed bleached-linen pillows feature tropical images from Mary's collages.

today, all while maintaining the vintage character of the board-and-batten architecture in keeping with the heritage of Waimea.

"I bought this house in 2006 and it closed escrow in October two days before the big 6.9 earthquake on a Sunday," recalled Mary. "Then on Monday, a flash flood went through town and on Tuesday we had to evacuate due to cracks in the reservoir. The house survived fine, but it was quite a first week of home ownership."

Mary will soon be adding a sunroom to the kitchen as well as expanding the parlor/office. Her favorite room in the house, the kitchen is the central gathering place when friends come to visit. Mary loves hearing the sounds of children's laughter that emanate from the elementary school next door.

A Big Island resident since 1989, Mary is a Masters swimmer who trains regularly at Kauna'oa Bay and has completed many Maui-to-Lanai open-ocean team swim competitions. Living in Waimea provides a scenic backdrop for Mary to create her *plein air* style of painting.

Mary's art is showcased at Tiffany's Gallery in Hawi, at the Glyph Gallery in Holualoa, and at the Fairmont Orchid's artists collective. She also creates large custom murals that grace many homes on the Big Island, including inside a newly completed resort home in Hokuli'a.

An artist-in-residence with Hualalai Resort's homeowners' association, Mary discovered her love of collage when teaching children's art classes at the resort. A trip to Italy and Pompeii inspired her current interest in mosaics. Working with hand-painted paper, she discovered she could achieve a mosaic effect within the genre of collage.

"Collage is a great medium. I like the textured effects. It looks like a painting from far back, but up close it's an assemblage of painted paper. The torn white edges of the paper give the effect of a mosaic."

Furnished with shabby chic pieces from Bernie Moore's former Local Color store, Mary's cottage showcases splashes of color via pillows, bookcases, paintings and end tables. Her new 100-percent linen zippered pillows (available at MarySpears.com and at Tiffany's Gallery) feature tropical images based on her paper collages.

Home is where the art is for Mary, who relishes the beauty of her surroundings and the joyful feeling of her cottage. "I love the idea of creating something in my home, because I feel like this house is a work of art unto itself," she said. ■

Mary Spears in her studio, which was originally a carriage house.


# Homes Come in all Shapes and Sizes

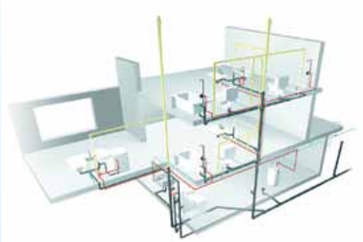
## DIAGNOSE. SOLVE. PROCESS.

**QUESTION:**
**How can I tell if my plumbing pipes need to be replaced, vs. being repaired?**

**ANSWER:**
The integrity of your pipes depend on the materials used, proper installation and time. If you have not had any problems with your pipes in 20+ years and suddenly you're experiencing leaks from any water, gas or wastewater drain line sources and upon inspection you notice corrosion, cracks and/or brakes, that is a good indicator it is time to invest in a repipe; especially on the good recommendation of a licensed plumbing contractor. If your pipes show no signs of needing to be replaced but you have leaks at joints/valves or bursting pipes, those are situations in which repairs would be needed, possibly your pressure regulator might be failing and needing replacement, etc, -but where you're not necessarily in need of a full repipe.

We recommend you obtain up to 3 estimates from licensed plumbing contractors before deciding to do this type of work. You can check license statuses online via this link https://pvl.ehawaii.gov/pvlsearch/. Protect your property investment and have peace of mind by always hiring licensed plumbing professionals in good standing with the State of Hawaii!

We offer free estimates and can inspect the condition of your water, gas and DWV lines to inform you whether the life of your pipes will hold up for a reasonable amount of time or if it is time to take action to replace them and protect your property and health.



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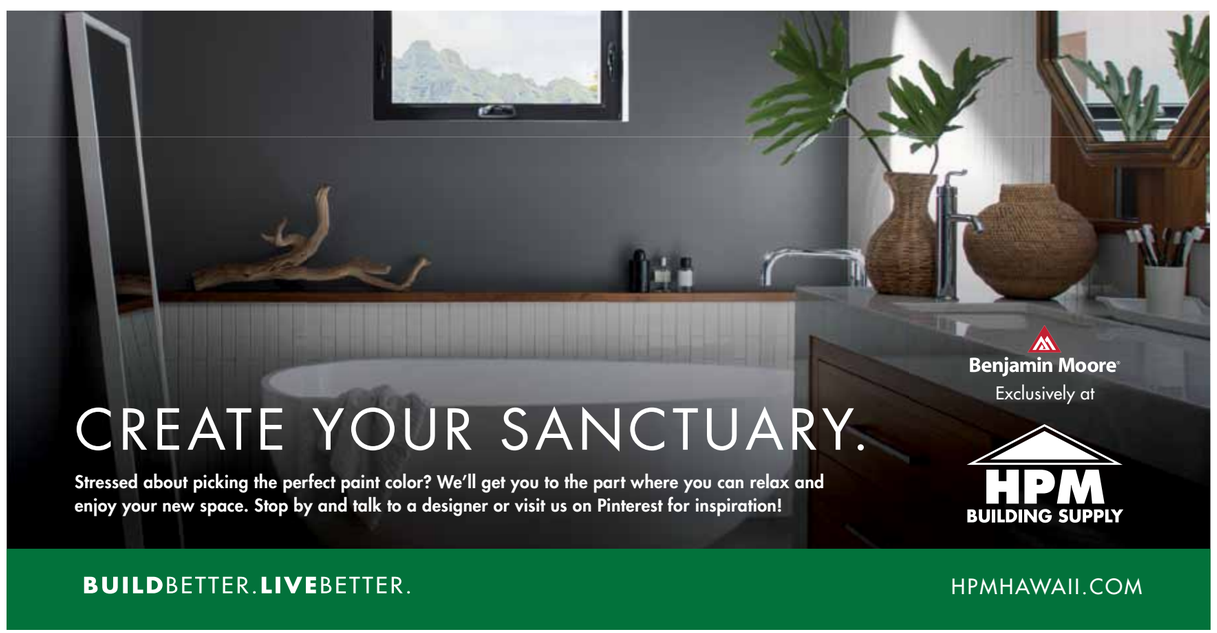

FEATURE

Kim Thompson weaves her magic on a large floor loom located on the second floor of her Kona Paradise home. Ocean views and blue skies inspire her creative pursuits.

# LOOM WITH A VIEW

## *Fiber artist creates masterful textiles for her home*

From her studio on the second story of her Kona Paradise home, fiber artist Kim Thompson weaves works of art inspired by her surroundings.

"I have a beautiful view from up here," said Kim, seated at one of two large floor looms upstairs. "I'm always looking out at the changing ocean and thinking about movement and colors. Light is another important factor. The natural light in my studio is fabulous, even on overcast days. My environment really influences the whole creative process."

A retired school administrator from Oregon, Kim began weaving in her late 20s. She makes her hand-woven creations on 4-shaft and 8-shaft looms, weaving everything from scarves and shawls, napkins and tablemats to towels, runners and exquisite wall hangings. Some of her pieces feature iridescent fine silk that changes color with the light. Others showcase textured weaves with wavy designs or double weaves with gradated patterns.

"I'm always trying to figure out how to do complicated patterns on the loom," she said. "It's very mathematical. It's like a puzzle and you have to figure it out."

Kim's fiber art has earned awards at annual statewide-juried exhibitions presented by Hawai'i Craftsmen and Hawai'i Handweavers' Hui in Honolulu. An active member of the Big Island chapter of the Hawai'i Handweavers' Hui, Kim enjoys attending regular workshops taught by visiting weavers. Her favorite mentor is Heather Winslow, from Chicago, who taught the group how to mix unique materials like stainless steel and copper into the weave structure, and how to weave with silk. Kim has also explored integrating tapa cloth or strips of Japanese kimono silk into her weaves. She hand dyes much of her own thread.

Hawai'i presents both inspiration and challenges for a weaver. The wet climate here requires regular maintenance of a loom because gears can get rusty and wood can swell. It's all part of being a weaver in Hawai'i.

"It's a physical art," she said. "You have to be curious and like to do things with your hands."

A member of the South Kona Artists Collective, Kim shows her work online at SokoArtists.com and participates in annual studio tours. Kim says the local weaving community is brimming with talent. "There are wonderful weavers in our hui plus talented newcomers. Our group has spawned a lot of new weavers." ■

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Kim's woven textiles are intricate and complex.

Kim Thompson, fiber artist.

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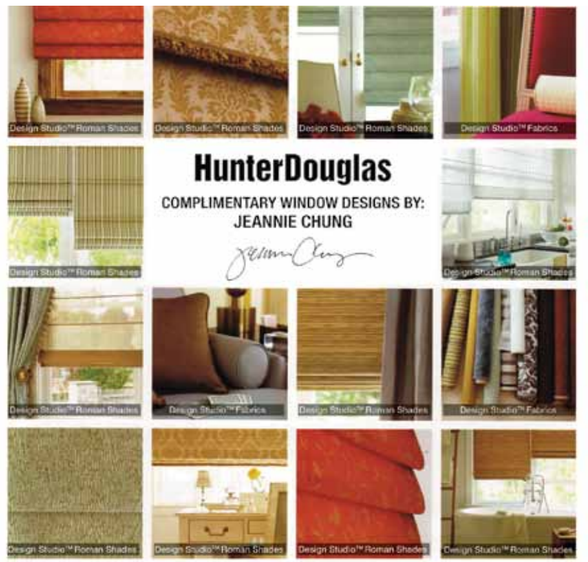


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EDITOR'S COLUMN

# Barking Up the Wrong Tree

My neighbor tried to cut down my tree without permission and frankly, I'm stumped. I'll go out on a limb and say that she should branch out to another hobby and leaf my tree alone. I can't help but throw shade and be a birch about it. Call me a tree hugger, but my neighbor is in for a root awakening. What's stomata with these people, anyway?

When it comes to tree trimming, you should always hire a certified arborist. Speaking from experience, I've had my chlorophyll of amateur tree trimmers in the past. These hacks go against the grain and turn perfectly good trees into bare hat racks. Certified arborists, on the other hand, are treemendous professionals. They should take a bough after all their hard work.

Long story short, the truncated version of my neighbor story is that my tree is still intact, knock on wood. Yes, it blocks my neighbor's view, but wooden it be nice if we could all get along? As sappy as it sounds, maple it's time to spruce things up around here and be fronds, not foes.

So before you get sycamore of my tree puns, I'd like to point out one thing: The tree you see in the distance is not over there, it's 'ohi'a.

Guava great day, everybody! ■

*Karen Anderson is the managing editor of "At Home" magazine and the author of "The Hawaii Home Book, Practical Tips For Tropical Living." She can be reached at kanderson@westhawaiitoday.com*

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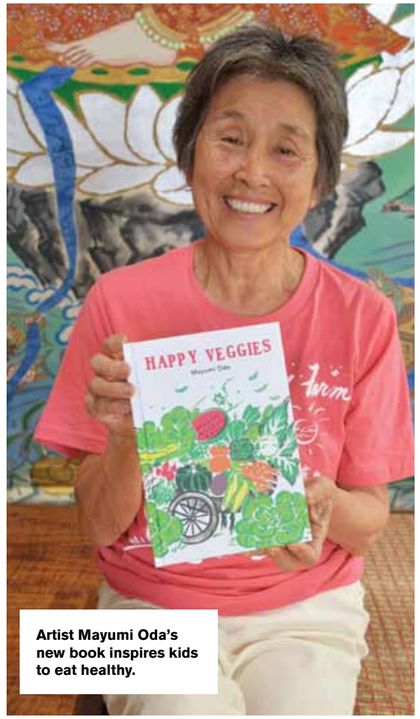
IN THE KITCHEN

Farm-to-table meals are served at Mayumi's vintage home in Kealakekua.

# GINGERHILL FARM KITCHEN




Artist Mayumi Oda's new book inspires kids to eat healthy.

Known to many as the "Matisse of Japan," artist Mayumi Oda is renowned internationally for her free-flowing drawings of goddesses and underwater scenes screen-printed on rice paper. Her work is featured in permanent collections at New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and in private collections around the world.

A visitor to Hawai'i for many years, Mayumi moved to Kealakekua in 2000, where she began cultivating a five-acre former Greenwell property she calls Gingerhill Farm. Today, it serves as her home, her art studio, and an educational retreat that highlights organic and sustainable farming.

Of Mayumi's many published art & poetry books, her recently penned *Happy Veggies* is designed especially for children. It goes hand in hand with the farm's Aloha Garden Afterschool program, bringing schoolchildren on site to experience farming, cooking and yoga.

"I've loved working in gardens all my life," said Mayumi. "We have 10 people here who work on the farm and do farm-to-table lunches and dinners for guests who visit and want to be inspired. We also have a summer camp for kids and a program that brings school kids here to learn about gardening and cooking. My son Zach and his wife Iris do the farm-to-table and facilitate programs while I concentrate on art."

Mayumi's *Happy Veggies* book celebrates the joy of a happy harvest. From morning to night, from winter to spring, seasonal vegetables like cabbage, corn and pumpkins are depicted in delightfully creative imagery.

"I did the book to inspire children to eat vegetables," Mayumi said. "The drawings and words familiarize kids with how vegetables grow."

The Aloha Garden Afterschool program raises awareness about healthy eating, wellness and sustainability. Donations help pay for supplies and teachers' stipends. For information about the program, call Iris at 323-774-9784. To schedule a farm tour that includes lunch or dinner, contact GingerHillFarmRetreat@gmail.com. ■

**RECIPE**

**Gingerhill Farm's Toasted Sesame Dressing**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 cup** | **Sesame seeds** | **½ cup** | **Water** |
| **3 tbsp.** | **Organic miso** | **¼ cup** | **Rice wine vinegar** |
| **2 tbsp.** | **Soy sauce** | | |
| **2 tbsp.** | **Organic cane sugar** | | |

In a small, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-low heat, toast sesame seeds until lightly brown. Place the sesame seeds and the rest of the ingredients in a blender and purée until seeds are smooth or to the specific texture of your liking.

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