

Garden Wise TV Episode 13: Design a Water Wise Garden & Save (26:09)

As the drought continues more and more residents are replacing their dying lawns with beautiful water wise gardens, and we're here to help you learn how. In this Garden Wise Episode you'll learn how to remove your lawn, how to design your dream garden, and how to maintain your irrigation once it's all done.

To start us off, Billy Goodnick, local landscape architect and author, meets with two clients who are ready to remove their lawn, but need a little help with the process. Homeowners, Stacy and Fred, are back to speak with Billy now that they have made the decision to get rid of their front lawn, and keep some of the back lawn. Even though their lawn hasn't been watered for a couple years, there are still patches of grass holding on. To ensure these weeds don't pop-up during planting, Billy recommends sheet mulching. This process consists of activating the soil by getting it wet, covering it with cardboard and mulch, and being patient! Stay tuned for our next episode to find out what Fred and Stacy replaced their lawns with.



Next we take a look at a water wise garden, and how it was designed from start to finish. The first thing to consider is the purpose of your redesign: do you want it to be useful or is it just decorative? Let's say you are on board with getting rid of your lawn and want something more attractive, but are unsure of what plants to use. Bill's tip is to use larger massing of a small variety of plants. This particular garden is a forward facing garden with tall plants toward the back, looking out toward the street. When selecting plants, consider what they can do; trees can provide shade, taller plants can screen the inside from the streets, and low ground cover plants can prevent erosion. For this project, the goal was to screen the inside view without creating a green wall. The choice was *Grevillea long john* because of its wispy look that didn't block the view. Before redesign, this garden had a path with stepping stones; for the new garden, there were more gaps to create a permeable walkway to help prevent runoff. This garden was designed for the people looking from the street, and people walking through the garden. Finally, consider the longevity of the garden such as how large the plants will get, the sustainability of the garden, and its water-use.



Another important part of a sustainable garden, is selecting water wise plants that will attract beneficial insects. Kathy Rem, co-founder of Beekeeper's Guild in SB, teaches us how to create a bee friendly garden with some drought tolerant plants. Bees love clusters of flowers, like lavenders, sages, and salvias. During drought times when there isn't enough water enough available for plants, drought

intolerant plants cannot produce nectar for the bees. Planting drought tolerant plants, gives the bees something to eat. Succulents, like yuccas and agaves, and herbs with small flower clusters are also beneficial for bees. Why do we want bees in our garden? Bees are important for increasing fruit and vegetable yield in your garden and in the world! Another way to support bees is filling a bird feeder with rocks and water to attract bees. Avoid using pesticides which harms the bee communities by creating healthy soils to prevent pests. If you are interested in becoming a beekeeper or supporting the bees visit BeeGuildSB.org.



Once you've selected your plants, Oscar Carmona, instructor for the Green Gardener Program, teaches us about irrigation management. He recommends checking your systems regularly to ensure proper function. Turn the test setting on so you can visually see if the systems are working properly and that there is good coverage. Test your system at least once a month, especially during drought times. An important feature on your irrigation controller is the seasonal adjust. This allows you to change the watering percentage based on the weather. Visit WaterWiseSB.org weekly for the watering % adjust. After it rains be sure to turn off your irrigation system manually for 48 hours or use a rain-sensor.



In the wise words of Becky Davis, "remember you are the agent of change, and together we can conserve water and create beautiful climate appropriate gardens." Now, you have the tools to create a healthy, water wise garden. Learn more about designing water wise landscapes by visiting our website WaterWiseSB.org.

