

episode nine: Firescape Garden, Cookin' in Brooklyn, and America's Most Watered

Garden Wise Guys Owen Dell and Billy Goodnick offer insights into maintaining a beautiful, functional, and sustainable garden in this informative and entertaining episode. Billy and Owen visit Santa Barbara's Firescape Garden for a final look at the project and explore ways to ensure that new plants adapt to their surroundings. Get Cookin' In Brooklyn and learn how to create your own low maintenance, stable food community using permaculture principles. In the America's Most Watered segment, careless high water-users are busted for using inefficient and careless watering practices. Learn simple and inexpensive ways to ensure that you too do not become one of America's Most Watered. Also, check out what plant made it to the Plant Spotlight and see whether it may be a good fit for your home. Finally, in a moment with Randy Mooney, explore all of the benefits that the Neighborhood Food Shed Program could have in your neighborhood.



key concepts

1. Santa Barbara Firewise Garden

A. New Plants

- Check your irrigation system for proper coverage and water disbursement
- Check to make sure that nozzles are not clogged or covered
- Make sure that areas surrounding your new plants are weed free
- Mulch all areas making sure NOT to touch trunks, roots, and stems
- Give plants a deep watering but do so less frequently
- ALWAYS change irrigation scheduling seasonally



B. Firescape Refresher

- **Zone 4** is the area farthest from the house, about 100 feet. This zone is comprised of mostly open space with wide gaps between planted areas. The purpose of this zone is to take the energy out of the fire by providing a discontinuous fuel source.
- **Zone 3** should be about 60 to 100 feet away from the house, consisting of plants that are generally knee high. Plants in this zone should burn quickly so that the energy of the fire will die out.



Make sure to consider placement and flammability of the plants that you are using in this area.

- **Zone 2** is the area about 30 to 60 feet from the house. All plants in this area should have high water content in order to keep a potential fire at bay. Succulents are a good option for this area.
- **Zone 1** is the area immediately surrounding the house, about 0 to 30 feet. All trees should be no closer than 10 feet from the house and should also be non-flammable. Different plant heights and sizes in this area are acceptable but all plants must be highly reluctant to burn.

2. Helpful Hints for New Plants in the Garden:

- **Mulch**, but keep it away from roots and trunks as this can create mold.
- **The Right Plant Right Place** principle is key in maintaining any functional and sustainable garden. Consider water, sun, and soil needs of your plants when locating them. If plant needs do not match up with their location, move them before they are established.
- **Volunteer or Nurse Plants** are great in providing color and cover as well as preventing erosion. Although the nurse plants may not be what you desire as a permanent plant, keep them around in order to provide important functions and eventually the desirable permanent plants will crowd them out.
- Always create interesting and complimentary **color and foliage** combinations when planting.



3. Cookin' in Brooklyn

Using permaculture principles, a stable food community can be produced on almost any sized landscape without a lot of work from the gardener. It can be fun and easy to grow your own fruits, vegetables, herbs, and specialty foods in your own backyard! Foods such as rosemary, fennel, apricots, pineapple guava, and loquats are not only delicious but easy to grow and low water using. Remember to use ample amounts of mulch on your land to keep weeds down, lock moisture in, and return nutrients to the soil!



4. Pilgrim Terrace Community Garden

Owen Dell gets a tour of the Pilgrim Terrace Community Garden. The garden is a low cost place where anyone with a desire to grow their own food can rent a plot. Cerena Childress, an expert gardener from Pilgrim Terrace, had these helpful hints to offer in maintaining a healthy food plot.

- Use a **rich soil** that is filled with worm castings and manure.
- A **soaker hose** is often the most efficient option for watering techniques.
- Depending on the plant and the condition of your plot, a **transplant or seed** may be the best option.
- Use the appropriate **equipment** for your different crops, such as a trellis for peas.
- **Have fun** with your plot and grow things that you will enjoy. Grow specialty foods that you can't always find in the store or foods that will grow year round.





5. America's Most Watered:

Follow these simple rules to ensure that you do not become one of America's Most Watered!

- If you break a sprinkler head, replace it with the same type so that it matches the areas watering need.
- Create hydrozones, or assemblages of plants that all have the same watering needs. Doing so will save you money and keep plants healthy.
- Schedule a water check-up and have a professional evaluate your landscape efficiency. A water check-up will also equip you with helpful tips and suggestions to assist you in maintaining a healthy, beautiful landscape while saving you water and money.
- To schedule a water check-up call Cathie Pare at 805-564-5593.



6. Plant Spotlight: Aloe

Aloe is a water wise, drought tolerant plant ideal for the Santa Barbara area. It also has high water content and is therefore a perfect match for any firescape garden. The plant is easy to grow and will even prosper in sea side conditions. Aloe blooms with beautiful yellow, orange, and red flowers in the winter providing aesthetic beauty when many other plants are dry and brown. Beware of planting in low lying areas as the aloe is subject to frost.

7. A Moment With Randy Mooney

The Neighborhood Food Shed Project is up and running in Santa Barbara. The program is intended for neighborhoods interested in meeting a couple of times a month and exchanging surplus crops that would otherwise go to waste. The program is a fun way to get together with neighbors, meet new people, learn about different gardening techniques, try new foods, and share recipes. Don't let your crops go to waste, start a Neighborhood Food Shed Project in your area! [Click here](#) for more information.

