

2022 WaterWise Garden Contest Winner



The WaterWise Garden Recognition Contest celebrates and recognizes beautiful, water efficient residential gardens throughout Santa Barbara County. The 2022 winning garden for the City of Santa Barbara is owned by Susan Clarke and Rand Clark. One of the motivators to create this new, vibrant outdoor living space was the isolation during the pandemic. Susan dreamed of an inviting front yard that included an area near the sidewalk for children and parents to sit and chat on their walks to the nearby elementary school.

Susan's design background and down-to-earth style led her to coax her landscaper friend Jim Anderson out of retirement. He had been the original landscaper when they removed the former lawn several years ago. Jim worked with the owners to create a landscape with texture, color, and sustainable features.

The garden includes a wide variety of native and water wise plants that bloom in different seasons to have beauty year-round, such as the soft and delicate Canyon Gray Sagebrush that drapes over the stone wall. A dry creek bed and underground rainwater collection basin captures more than 600 gallons of rainwater from the roof gutters, creating a deep soak for the trees and garden. Efficient drip irrigation is only used to supplement the plants during the summer season. The reimagined open front yard brings enjoyment to the owners, the neighbors, and the families on their way to school who often sit on the low stone wall for a rest. The owners have created a vibrant space to interact with nature and neighbors.

In Santa Barbara, an average of fifty percent of the water used at homes goes toward landscape irrigation. Water wise gardens not only save money on water bills, but are also colorful and lush, attract wildlife, and are easily maintained. For garden inspiration and to see the 2022 garden contest entries from all over Santa Barbara County, visit WaterWiseSB.org/GardenContest.

