

2023 WaterWise Garden Contest Winner



The WaterWise Garden Recognition Contest celebrates and recognizes beautiful, water efficient residential gardens throughout Santa Barbara County. The 2023 winner for the City of Santa Barbara and the Countywide grand prize is Sharyn Alexander.

Inspired by her “crazy plant lady mom” Dottie Milici, Sharyn and her husband, Clifton Weir, began their landscape transformation seven years ago. The three took on the challenge of design and maintenance head-on as a family. Together, they overcame obstacles ranging from sandy soil and creative gophers to learning about irrigation systems and planting zones. Finding that they were enjoying themselves immensely, the metamorphosis of a once “one-dimensional” garden into an eye-catching explosion of colors and textures became a therapeutic familial pass time.

Verdant and practical, the garden uses drip irrigation, hand watering, and infrequent supplemental watering to keep the landscape water-wise and the water bill low. Beyond a lovely collection of native plants that has inspired neighbors to start their own water-wise journey, the garden means much more to the family. The therapeutic process created a space for Sharyn to focus on herself and her happiness in a challenging chapter of life. Sharyn’s newfound passion for plants and design helped her find a new purpose and a new, thrilling career as a landscape designer and start her business: Alexander Landscape & Design. That passion certainly shows through in this beautiful water-wise garden that gives joy to the owners each time they come home.

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 2023 garden contest entries from all over Santa Barbara County, visit WaterWiseSB.org/GardenContest.

