

2025 WaterWise Garden Contest Winner



The WaterWise Garden Recognition Contest celebrates and recognizes beautiful, water efficient residential gardens throughout Santa Barbara County. The 2025 winners for the City of Santa Barbara are Fred and Janice Maggiore.

Among this year's impressive entries, longtime Santa Barbara residents Fred and Janice stood

out for their dedication to hand-crafted design and water wise gardening. Their winning landscape is a testament to what can be achieved with a little ingenuity, a lot of passion, and a commitment to “doing right by the planet” as Fred says.

When the Maggiores purchased the home in 1997, the front yard, like so many others in the region, was dominated by water-hungry lawn. Over the years, as they made home improvements and considered the rising importance of conservation, they made the decision to start removing lawn. The transformation began gradually, with about 20% of the lawn removed during an addition to the home.

Eventually, Fred and Janice decided to remove the remaining lawn entirely. The couple took on the majority of the project themselves, hiring help only for the heavy lifting involved in removing the lawn and installing decomposed granite. The garden is now a vibrant display of water wise plants, carefully selected and maintained entirely by him and his wife. While some opt for automated irrigation systems, Fred prefers to hand-water the garden himself, giving him the chance to stay connected to the plants and their changing needs.

When asked about his favorite feature, Fred was quick to highlight his own custom creations: a solar-powered fountain and a whimsical swinging fish sculpture that bring personality and movement to the space. “My wife would say it’s when people pass by and tell her how beautiful the garden is,” Fred said. “But my favorite part is the solar-powered fountain and swinging fish I made for my garden.”

Beyond its artistic elements, the garden also includes a practical and eco-conscious rainwater harvesting system. The home’s downspouts are directed into a 750-gallon cistern



located in the backyard, which not only helps reduce localized flooding during storms but also provides a valuable source of irrigation water during the dry summer months. Several drains throughout the yard also capture runoff and redirect it into the tank for future use.



Fred and Janice's garden exemplifies the goals of the WaterWise Garden Recognition Contest: to inspire Santa Barbara County residents to reimagine their landscapes in ways that are beautiful, resource-conscious, and uniquely personal.

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, support wildlife, and are easily maintained. For garden inspiration and to see the 2025 garden contest entries from all over Santa Barbara County, visit WaterWiseSB.org/GardenContest.

