

2021 WaterWise Garden Contest Winner



The WaterWise Garden Recognition Contest celebrates and recognizes beautiful, water efficient residential gardens throughout Santa Barbara County. The 2021 winning garden for the City of Santa Barbara is owned by George Hopwood and Joseph Navarro. Eight years ago, the owners inherited a thirsty lawn and a border of camellia bushes when they purchased their home in Hidden Valley. They knew the lawn was not going to stay and used a push mower as a motivator to move forward and create a vibrant space to interact with nature.

George and Joseph took advantage of the water wise gardening and rainwater harvesting classes offered through the City and explored the online [water-wise plant database](#) for garden design options and plant choices. The ability to see photos of plants highlighted in Santa Barbara gardens helped them visualize their new yard. To make their garden vision come to life, they worked with Nate Zacarias of AllScape Design and Installation.



Their garden includes a wide variety of native and water wise plants, a dry creek bed that directs the rain water from their downspout into their garden, and drip irrigation that is only used to supplement the plants during the summer season. The textures and colors from the varieties of plants, such as manzanita and Point Sal sage, bring enjoyment to the owners, the neighbors, and the butterflies. No more push mower needed; this garden is low maintenance, water thrifty, and is inviting to people, pollinators and puddles. There is color and life in the garden all year long.



In Santa Barbara, an average of fifty percent of the water used for a home goes toward landscape irrigation. Water wise gardens demonstrate that landscapes can include lush plantings and flowers, attract wildlife, are easily maintained, and save money on water bills. For garden inspiration and to see garden contest entries from all over Santa Barbara County, visit WaterWiseSB.org/GardenContest.