

What inspired/motivated you to re-do your landscape?

- The insanely high water bill for one. We went from \$80 flat a month to over \$400 in just a few years. Our sample bill usage was 14,000cf for one month, now the summer usage is around 3000cf. We also wanted to be more environmental and congruent with our rather dry climate (esp with global warming). At first we also wanted to have a huge veggie garden and we did for a few years but we way over produced for our needs, now we just have a couple planter boxes and that feeds our family of 5.

How would you describe your yard?

- Well, we live on a VERY busy intersection (College & Cross) but if you mean our landscaping, it is a mix of fruit trees and rather southwestern landscaping which includes small rock, bark, chips, big rocks and paths. We designed it on Adobe Illustrator and most of the plants are just cuttings of our own (or cuttings from friends). We use a LOT of succulents and cacti species because those are so drought tolerant. College is non-irrigated but Cross we put a couple low pressure lines to simply/automate summer watering's. Both properties have an automated sprinkler system but we occasionally supplement with hand-watering as needed.

Did you do it yourself, hired a professional, or a combination of both?

- Did both properties ourselves.

What type of plants did you use?

- Aloe vera, cactus species, succulents, mexican primrose, CA lilac, asparagus fern, roses, lavender, olive and yucca

Did you use any rebates that the city offers? What about a landscaping class?

- We love the rebates!!!! Use them often to help offset costs. We've used composter, mulch, sprinkler and rain barrel rebates over the years. Never attended the landscaping classes.

Does your landscape use any pesticides? If the answer is no, how do you fight against pests?

- We use no herbicides or pesticides. We don't want to disturb the natural biome.

How often do you water your yard? Do you use drip irrigation?

- Hand water the xeriscape at College but we have a low pressure irrigator at Cross. The fruit trees at College are automatically irrigated. Everything else is only occasionally hand-watered as needed mostly during the summer.

Does your landscape attract birds and/or beneficial insects? If so, what kind?

- Tons of birds, tons of pollinators. We do have some pests (snails, slugs, harlequin bugs, aphids, etc) but they are minor.

When did you start working on your landscape?

In its current form: Cross was just this spring, College we did in stages one side in 2017 the other side in 2020.

Anything else you would like to share? This could include any advice or lesson's learned from working on your own yard that you would like to share.

If you want to take out your lawn, you have GOT to use a good landscaping barrier. We tried using sheets of cardboard to be more environmental but in a couple seasons the weeds reappeared. We like the grey fiber barrier sold in big rolls at Costco. If you want to go organic you need to keep the weeds away or you'll spend MANY hours weeding. Some species like nut sedge will blast through any barrier, but most die off. Some weeds will start to seed in the landscaping material but those are quite easy to pull. We love bulk material at CL Smith, great price and variety. Trying using a mix of stone and bark/chips, color combos looks really sharp. USE BORDERS to keep the different materials from mixing. Home depot has great recycled plastic barriers that are easy to install before or after install landscaping material. You can do your own work unless you have physical limitations, just break it up into chunks or hire a young neighbor or relative. I have 3 teen children so they are all on my payroll and they love the satisfaction of a job well done.

Another rather somber word of advise... When I planted my fruit trees in front many years ago I naively planted them along our exterior picket fence, hoping to share fruit with folks strolling by. As a kid in Davis, I loved grabbing a handful of cherries or an orange from our neighbors front yard trees, so I thought I would pay it forward. Well, as the trees matured and began to produce, most people did just grab an orange or an apple but other folks decided to bring bags to harvest loads of fruit, some even came into our yard at all times of day and night trampling across our plantings to help themselves (as I witnessed on our security cameras). As sad as it is to concede this, for this reason, I do NOT recommend growing fruit trees in your front yard. Maybe just put a table out front with a bag to share from your backyard bounty.

Vegetables are not often targets of "yard shoppers" so go ahead and put in a planter or two and you'll be amazed how much you can produce and such satisfaction. I go out each day and harvest veggies and herbs for our meals. So cool. Oh yeah, get a couple composters too!!

My wife and I have been landscaping for years in Woodland, since the early 90s and we've learned from our mistakes. We've learned to grow in accordance with our climate and availability of water in a dry state. I think to shorten the learning curve those free COW landscaping classes sound like a great option! Have fun.