

episode thirteen: Lawn and Order

In Episode 13 Billy and Owen find themselves ready to be sentenced to a long jail term due to their intolerant position regarding lawns. "Defamation of dichondra, besmirching of bermuda" are the charges.



When the judge decides to show a little leniency, the Garden Wise Guys embark on a 24 hour quest to develop a script for their show that takes a more reasonable approach.

Tune in as Billy and Owen show viewer four different approaches for saving water, reducing maintenance and having a gentle impact on the environment:

key concepts

1. Reduce the size of your existing lawn and manage the irrigation better

It saves water, saves the owner money and uses less pest control that could harm the environment. Owen said most people give their lawns too much water. He suggested going to www.sbwater.org to find out how much water to apply. Run your cursor over the Landscape reference on the left-hand list to see the pull down menu and click on Landscape Watering Calculator. For instance, it says, cool season grass in clay soil should be watered eight times a week, four minutes each time this time of year, but only three times a week in December.

2. Substitute low water using plants that can reduce your water use by as much as 50%

The GW Guys talked about a meadow sedge called *Carex pansa*, which uses half the water of a fescue lawn and doesn't need fertilizing. The grounds at the City's Sheffield Reservoir's Historical Water Treatment Plant Building, at Mountain Drive and Mission Ridge Road, were planted with *Carex pansa* this year. *Carex pansa* can still look like lawn with mowing.

The GW Guys next go to a site that has two types of *Carex*, *Carex pansa* and *Carxx glauca*, which use one-fourth that of a fescue lawn and does well in shade.

Billy suggests a good place to replace grass is between and among stepping stones. He suggested using *Dymondia Margaretae*, which has gray green foliage and yellow flowers, uses little water, and needs no mowing or fertilizing.



To see more lawn alternatives, go to “Water Wise Gardening in Santa Barbara County,” on www.sbwater.org and look in “Garden Galleries” section for “Lawn Alternatives.”

3. Completely eliminate turf and substitute functional uses like patios, paths and pergolas plus water-wise plants

Billy took viewers on a tour of a property he designed, featuring the removal of lawn and replacing it with water wise ornamental plants and functional elements such as steps and pavers. For plants, he pointed to lavender, cat mint and breath of heaven. Along the property line, rather than a standard fence, he had a trellis installed, and put it to use next to a fruit and vegetable garden. This brings up the final lawn alternative in the episode, food.



4. Grow food!

The GW Guys visited the home of Lynn Siegel-Boettner, founder of *Santa Barbara Food Not Lawns*, who has replaced her front and back yard lawns with a food garden. Heather Hartley, representing *Food Not Lawns*, said the organization of 12 neighborhoods that grow and share food, has a web site, www.sbfoodnotlawns.org. It provides information on how to form your own neighborhood partnership as well as provides a map of the locations of fruit trees that are accessible to the public for the picking.

Click [here](#) to see the full episode and amazing music video "Taking Out The Grass Is A Gas"