

Garden Wise TV Episode 9: Golden Rules for Golden Landscapes (27:57)



Golden landscapes in Santa Barbara County represent a strong community effort to conserve water during the drought. But as we enter winter and the rainy season, it's a good time to consider changing those landscapes to be more water wise. In this episode of Garden Wise, our host Becky Davis leads us on a landscaping journey to learn the golden rules of golden and water wise landscaping.

We begin by meeting with Landscape Architect and expert Kim True from True Nature. According to Kim, there are seven main steps to sustainable landscaping, starting with assessing your current landscape for what purpose and desire. The next step focuses on the importance of planning and designing while keeping in mind your needs, desires, restrictions and budget. Soil building is the next step. Your garden is only as happy and healthy as your soil, and healthy soil requires less watering. Compost and mulch are your friends in this step, as they help soil retain moisture and foster nutrients and biological life. Free mulch is available from the County for pick-up, and City water customers are eligible for two free deliveries per year. For more information, visit lessismore.org/mulch. Next is planting and irrigation. Drip irrigation systems are the most efficient way to water plants, but keep in mind they should be checked and maintained at least once a month. Sustainable landscapes require less water and less maintenance, which brings us to the last step: enjoy your landscape!



In the next segment, we visit a laundry to landscape graywater installation hosted by Sweetwater Collaborative and Ecological Systems Designer Art Ludwig of Oasis Designs. Graywater is any water that has already been used, typically from washing machines, bathroom sinks and showers. These laundry to landscape graywater systems do not require a permit as they rely on the pump from the washing machine to push the water throughout the garden, and can be installed by a handy homeowner or by a professional. These systems are great for watering fruit trees and ornamental plants that are high priority water users; however, they are not permitted for annuals and edible plants where the graywater will touch the edible part of the plant.

Next, Mark Broomfield, Ground Maintenance Supervisor at Santa Barbara City College, walks us through the different options for catching rainwater throughout landscape. There are passive and active ways to catch storm water. Passive is focused on the overall design and layout of the landscape to help slow down the flow of storm water and allow it to soak into the garden. Whereas, active is more limiting on the amount of storm water that can be captured, because this method utilizes barrel systems and is confined by the size of the barrel and the pipes connected to it.



To wrap up the episode, Billy Goodnick Landscape Architect and Author, encourages us to have patience and do our research when it comes to picking what and where to plant. Too often plants are planted too close together and in response have to be regularly trimmed and pruned creating more work for homeowners and is not ideal for the plants. If an instantly full garden is what is desired then he recommends planting groundcover and annuals while you wait for the rest of the plants to reach maturity in size.

Remember, you are the agent of change. Visit WaterWiseSB.org for more information on how to be a water wise citizen.

