

1. *When did you start working on your landscape?*

October 2021, a few months after we moved in.

2. *What inspired/motivated you to re-do your landscape? How long did it take to complete your landscape?*

We wanted a beautiful, drought-tolerant, native-plant based pollinator-friendly garden. We're still in progress, but the front yard is coming along nicely!

3. *Did you experience any set-backs or delays while working on your yard?*

Yes! Previous owners had laid down a thick plastic barrier beneath decomposed granite, severely compacting the soil and denying it of oxygen and water. We had to remove all of that by hand, which was satisfying work, but strenuous.

4. *How would you describe your yard?*

Drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly garden. We have three criteria for plants we will give water to: they should have a pleasant fragrance, attract birds, bees, and other pollinators, or provide a source of food for our family. Ideally a plant will satisfy at least two of those criteria.

5. *Did you do it yourself, hire a professional, or a combination of both?*

DIY all the way! Unless you count the trees planted by the Woodland Tree Foundation's addition (Arbutus, Strawberry Tree) and the City of Woodland's (Lacey's Blue Oak).

6. *What type of plants did you use? Did you have a design plan in mind when choosing plants?*

Mostly drought-tolerant salvias, other sages, lavender, flowering shrubs, and dry-land wildflower mixes (mostly California poppy and red clover). We also planted yarrow, ceanothus, coyote bush, coffee berries, and a butterfly bush. Calendula and a crawling lantana as well. Sunflower seeds were scattered this past year in hopes of adding a shade barrier to our west-facing front room.

We started with a rough design idea, changed it a few times, and continue to adapt it as our plantings grow and give us a clearer idea of what the yard will look like across the year. We're also learning that wind is a big deal here, so we've revised our plan to include shrubs that might serve as wind breaks.

7. *Did you use any rebates that the city offers? Did you take a landscaping class?*

Haven't applied for any rebates yet, but the city did offer a free tree that we took advantage of.

8. *Do you have background experience in landscaping?*

We have gardening and botany backgrounds and used that experience to guide our design and plant choices.

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

Bio control only - hand picking, introducing predators, keep plants healthy with fertilizer/compost when needed and regularly inspect for damage or plant diseases.

*10. How often do you water your yard? What system of irrigation do you use?*

Seasonal rain water does most of our watering for the trees and perennial shrubs. We water in new plants, and during the summer heat will hand water with a watering can once or twice per week (on average using 12-24 gallons per week).

*11. Does your landscape attract birds and/or beneficial insects? If so, what kind have you seen? What part of your landscape does wildlife seem the most attracted to?*

Yes, lots of them! We get hummingbirds around the Strawberry Tree, and other small birds on both that and the Lacey's Blue Oak. We have various butterflies in the yard spring through autumn, and noticed several Gulf Fritillary butterflies last season. Our visitors tend to go for the flowering bushes.

*12. Did you have a budget set? Were you able to stay within that budget or did you go over/under?*

Weeelllll, kinda? :) We like to budget per trip to the nursery and tend to stick close to our desired number (okay, we often go a little over, but it's worth it!)

*13. How much maintenance does your yard need now vs. before when it was a lawn?*

We've reduced maintenance and water use from what a lawn would require, though we didn't start with lawn in this case.

*14. Have you experienced any unforeseen issues with your remodeled yard?*

We took advantage of free wood mulch from ChipDrop, and use it to help retain moisture around our plantings. But that also creates the perfect habitat for slugs, which often creep out and eat seedlings when we're not looking - the filthy slimy things. We feed them to our backyard chickens when we find them.

*15. Where did you get your plants?*

Annie's Annuals and Perennials in Richmond, CA; Yolo County Master Gardener Plant Sales; UC Davis Arboretum Plant Sales; 4-H Plant Sales at Woodland High School; Morning Sun Nursery in Suisun, CA; Green Acres Nursery in Elk Grove, CA; seed catalogs: Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (gomphrena, sunflowers); OutsidePride.com (dry-land seed mix); Strictly Medicinals (California poppy and clover).

*16. Do you plan on expanding or making any more changes to your yard?*

Yes, we have plans to add more flowering shrubs and wildflower mixes to ensure we get lots of pollinators coming by.

*17. Why was the change from a green lawn worth it to you?*

Neither of us see any value in a lawn beyond the temperature reduction it can provide during the hot months. But that's not enough to warrant all the water and maintenance required to keep a lawn going all year. Plus, a lawn creates minimal habitat for beneficial insect populations and doesn't attract any wildlife. Adding in drought-tolerant plants that attract birds and bees and butterflies helps control the temperature, ensures wildlife diversity in the region, and gives us something beautiful to look at out our window.

*18. Anything else you would like to share? This could include any advice or lessons learned from working on your yard.*

Seed blends are an inexpensive way to get started, but they do require attention in the establishment phase. Some seeds will survive better than others, and especially the ones that are prone to being eaten by pests before really taking off (hence our field of California poppies and not much else).