THIS WEEK IN THE GARDEN

Hull

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Friendly Landscaping program is launching to help residents and businesses transform once-thirsty landscapes into beautiful, healthy and sustainable gardens and landscapes that send less waste to the landfill, conserve water and energy, and manage stormwater as a resource. Check out the Monterey Bay Friendly Landscaping program standards at www.green-gardener.org.

When the Clarks bought their 1940s era home some years ago, the house was surrounded by extensive water-hungry lawns and other thirsty plants. A driveway of an impermeable material completely covered the house, taking up much of the potential garden space and spilling rainwater onto the hillside below.

Their daughter, Jennifer Hull, a landscape architect with Arnone & Associates (www.ar nonelandscape.com) helped them set goals in transforming the space.

• They wanted to keep precious rainwater on their property rather than let it run off.
• They wanted to use plants and fencing to enclose the space to create privacy.
• They wanted to have an orchard and vegetable beds.
• They wanted to save the many old roses that came with the place and create more space for ornamentals.
• They needed a shed for storage.
• Of primary importance was saving the two majestic native live oaks in the front yard, both of which were suffering from oak root fungus and other ills caused by years of irrigation during the dry season.

And after the shock of receiving a one-month bill from the water company of more than $2000 when the existing drip system malfunctioned, they were determined to transition from all the water-thirsty plants to those that needed little to no supplemental water.

Colfer designed the garden to incorporate these goals. Christianen Associates (christianenorganic-landscape.com) put in the frontyard landscape (permeable gravel paths, stone work etc.), Fernandez Stone Works built the backyard stone walls and patio, and arborist Nigel Bolton of Arbor Art Tree Services (831-688-1239) determined that one oak was past saving but successfully rescued the second.

The lawn was removed and natives and plants from Mediterranean regions were installed in the front garden, creating a space that needed no supplemental water at all. In the back, the driveway was removed and the soil improved, while a line of Leyland cypress and other drought-tolerant screening plants plus new fencing provided privacy from the neighbors. Fruit trees went in and seating areas and growing beds were created.

The homeowners did much of the labor themselves. A laundry-to-landscape graywater system was installed to pump washing-machine water to the backyard stone walls and patio, and arborist Nigel Bolton of Arbor Art Tree Services (831-688-1239) determined that one oak was past saving but successfully rescued the second. The lawn was removed and natives and plants from Mediterranean regions were installed in the front garden, creating a space that needed no supplemental water at all. In the back, the driveway was removed and the soil improved, while a line of Leyland cypress and other drought-tolerant screening plants plus new fencing provided privacy from the neighbors. Fruit trees went in and seating areas and growing beds were created.

The homeowners did much of the labor themselves. A laundry-to-landscape graywater system was installed to pump washing-machine water to the back garden. Under a deck, in consultation with Love’s Gardens, a water-catchment system of linked recycled food-grade barrels was installed that harvests rainwater from the roof, and stores it for irrigating plants in the back garden. A more attractive barrel was placed on the deck to store water for use on the container plants.

So what’s next at the Clarks?

During the lab section of the class on Saturday, participants will create an in-ground infiltration basin, and install a pop-up drain emitter connected by a line to a downsputs. The line will direct roof water to the basin, where it will then gradually filter into the surrounding soil rather than run off down the hillside. The laundry-to-landscape graywater system also will be explained.

What’s now a private backyard was once an expanse of lawn. The entry to the Clark home in Capitola includes paths, a fence and privacy plantings. The Clarks linked recycled 55-gallon barrels as part of their water-catchment system.

Colfer, meanwhile, will give tours explaining her design and plant choices. And Sherry Bryan from Ecology Action’s Monterey Bay Friendly Landscape Recognition Program will present a site sign certifying the landscape and explaining how our community is rallying around ways to reduce water use. The class fee is low because it is sponsored by the Water Conservation Coalition and local water agencies. I’ll be there — what a great opportunity to learn more about water conservation methods — and I’ll hope to see many of you!

Garden tips are provided courtesy of horticulturist Sharon Hull of the San Lorenzo Garden Center. Contact her at 423-0223.