



Self-Guided Landscapes Tour

Lisa V. Valencia, CA

Project Size / Amount of Grass Removed:

We removed approximately 1,500 square feet of grass.

Materials Used: Mesa gold rock; red and black lava; white egg rock; Sydney Peak boulders; Laramie flagstone; decomposed granite and a variety of drought tolerant plants.



What I like most about my updated landscape: Taking out the sod has given our home a totally new look.

The landscape project is unlike anything in our neighborhood and has, I believe, inspired others to try something outside the normal sod and annuals. Our water bill will of course go down, but that's secondary to the visual benefits. I love the Desert Museum Palo Verde's dappled shade and its beautiful yellow flowers. It is amazing to see the flowers that the succulents and cacti have!

What I learned while completing my project: This has been a process of trial and error. Our front yard faces west and gets the heat of the afternoon. I have learned to stick with the succulents and cacti that can handle that heat, though I would like to include others that are a bit more fragile. You also have to take into consideration the potential for frost damage. These both limit what I can use, but really there are so many plants to choose from if you research and ask questions at nurseries that specialize in succulents. In designing the layout I was advised by friends to think of what we see in nature, for instance, there are no flat surfaces. I tried to create a flow, and to include focal points from different views. These are plants that like to struggle - they will rot and die with too much water!

Before



Tips for someone considering updating their landscape: Do your research. Look for nurseries that have a good selection of plants and be sure to buy those that are grown in the same conditions in which you plan to use them. There are loads of resources online - Facebook groups, succulent societies, etc.

After



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Plant List



Parkinsonia aculeata
Palo Verde Tree



Euphorbia tirucalli 'Sticks on Fire'
Firestick / Red Pencil Tree
Photo credit: San Marcos Growers



Kalanchoe luciae
Paddle Plant
Photo credit: San Marcos Growers



Aloe 'Blue Elf'
Aloe 'Blue Elf'
Photo credit: San Marcos Growers



Aloe cameronii
Red Aloe
Photo credit: San Marcos Growers



Dymondia margaretae
Dymondia / Silver Carpet



Echinocactus grusonii
Golden Barrel Cactus
Photo credit: Stan Shebs, Wikipedia



Jade (Crassula species)
Jade
Photo credit: Pixabay / Public domain



Senecio vitalis
Blue Chalk Fingers