

## Water Wise Citizen Spotlight: a story about the birds, the bees and saving water with the Calders

On a lovely weekday afternoon, we sat down with Joan and John Calder at their home in the Samarkand neighborhood of Santa Barbara. On such a sunny day, it was easy to dig in to their story of transforming their landscape into a water wise paradise. Joan's enthusiasm for landscaping was obvious from the outset.

Over a decade ago, Joan attended horticulture school to learn more about water wise plants. Later the Calders were inspired to install their first water wise landscaping project nine years ago during a remodel of their home. They decided to strip their water-guzzling lawn and started fresh. Today, their yard is full of pollinator plants, natives, and fruit trees. In the spring of 2014, the Calders hosted a workshop with the nonprofit Sweetwater Collaborative, and installed a laundry-to-landscape graywater system on their property.



Walking around the yard with the Calders, we came across a food forest of avocado, persimmon, cherimoya, orange, apricot, grapefruit and plum trees for human consumption while birds and insects enjoyed California fuschia, milkweed and sages. Some of their fruit trees are served by graywater while others are hand watered. Joan's favorite part of their water wise landscape? "The sitting areas so I can watch the bees and pollinators," Joan said as she motioned to the arbor sitting areas where vines weave through trellised arches and one can sit on any evening and see birds and insects dancing about.



Reviewing the lessons they've learned over the years, John has noticed that while this water wise landscape style does require a bit more trimming, it is preferable to the constant requirement to water and mow the lawn. Their passion for water conservation even led them to install four 250-gallon water catchment tanks underneath their deck to capture rainwater runoff. This catchment system feeds their landscape and replenishes groundwater. John expressed his amazement at how fast one thousand gallons of storage fills during a storm.

John and Joan spoke with pride about their water wise landscape and other water conservation efforts. After nine years, they have cut their water use dramatically, captured and reused thousands of gallons of water every year and provided a lovely habitat for both themselves and the critters living amongst them.

If you are interested in learning more about these stories or how you can reduce water use at your home or business, please visit [SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterWise](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterWise) or call (805) 564-5460.

