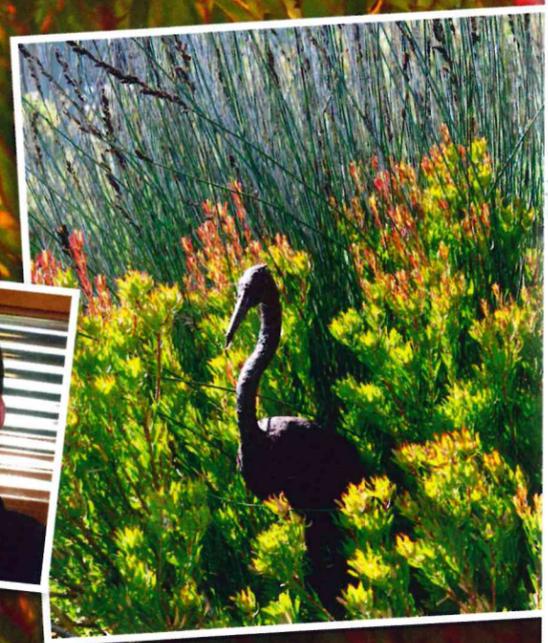


OCEAN FRIENDLY
GARDEN
 of the month



A Labor Of Love

Landscape designer and contractor Robert Nieto began building this cliffside garden on Indio Drive shortly after moving to the home over ten years ago. Since then, Robert, his fiancée Kelly, and her son Andrew, who earned his bachelor's degree from Cal Poly's Agriculture and Environmental Plant Sciences program earlier this year, have transformed the space in what has been a labor of love. Andrew's interest in permaculture and Robert's volunteer work with the Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Gardens (OFG) program have shaped the landscape with a focus on sustainability.

Robert is the coordinator of the OFG program for the San Luis Obispo chapter of the Surfrider Foundation. Surfrider developed OFG after recognizing that the number one source of ocean pollution is runoff from urban landscaping. Ocean friendly gardens like this one emphasize building healthy living soil with contours in the terrain and permeable paving to create a sponge effect, allowing water to infiltrate into the soil as it would in a natural watershed. They also abstain from using

chemicals and commercial fertilizers, which harm beneficial insects, soil biology, pets and people and cause damage to the marine environment when winter rains carry pollutants directly to the ocean through the storm drain system. Climate adapted California natives and a variety of stunning plants from Mediterranean regions of the world use much less water than thirsty lawns. Plants are also spaced with their mature size in mind, eliminating the use of polluting gas powered hedge trimmers and reducing green waste. A complete list of OFG criteria can be found at surfrider.org. This garden continues to evolve and has become a favorite of the many county residents who walk through the neighborhood each day, often commenting about the interesting plants, the many butterflies and bees and the fact that they

have been inspired to take action in their own gardens. While it's true that a gardener's work is never done, the joy of growing fresh, healthy food in a garden buzzing with life and beauty makes it all worth it for this Shell Beach family.

If you have an ocean friendly garden that you would like to have featured, contact Robert Nieto at robert@robertnietodesigns.com.

For more information about the OFG program contact ofg@slo.surfrider.org.

OCEAN

FRIENDLY GARDEN

CONSERVATION

of water, energy and habitat

PERMEABILITY

of soil and surfaces lets water slow down and sink

RETENTION

of rainwater and prevention of wet weather runoff

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