

# Garden-In-A-Box Revives Average Boulder Landscape

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:: At Home Series ::

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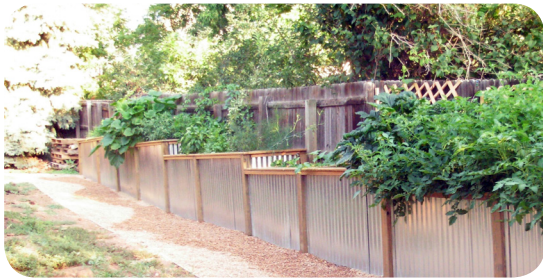
The Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) is an environmental nonprofit whose mission is to empower Boulder County residents to conserve natural resources through its energy, water & waste diversion programs. Today the CRC serves 20,000 residents annually.



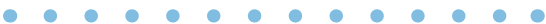
**W**hen Beverly Dacanay and her husband Daniel Martin decided to re-landscape their yard they didn't do it halfway. "We didn't want to preserve any grass," Dacanay said. "We didn't want to use so much water; it didn't make any sense to have that kind of landscape when it really didn't fit the environment."

Martin admits that in their effort to save water they had neglected their land. "Our place was an eyesore compared to the neighbors," he said. So, they ripped out the bluegrass that covered almost their entire quarter acre in South Boulder, and went to work creating a landscape that was both sensitive to the local climate and visually appealing.

They laid out paths that curved through the old lawn. Martin built waist high planters to house vegetables along the back fence, and they converted the front and side yard into a xeric garden.



**"It didn't make any sense to have (grass) when it really didn't fit the environment."** -Homeowner Beverly Dacanay



Xeriscaping is a method of conserving water through using native and drought resistant plants. To convert their yard Dacanay and Martin, who said that they had not been big gardeners before, attended xeriscape classes put on by the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC), and used three of the CRC's "Garden-In-A-Box" kits, akin to plant by numbers where customers get a flat of water-wise plants along with instructions for how and where to plant them for ideal results. "They have professional designs which is really neat," Dacanay said.

The couple's plans started, literally, from the ground up. After getting rid of the

grass they designed and built 500 linear feet of stone paths. Martin estimates that they moved 22 tons of rock, and noted, proudly, that they did all the work themselves with only minimal help from their 18-year-old son. "It was a lot of physical work," he said.

After the paths were built they went to work putting in the vegetable garden and planting the Garden-In-A-Box kits. Dacanay said that they were out in the garden every weekend, and that everything they did taught them something different.

Martin installed the micro drip watering system over the past two summers. "When I turned it on and it worked it was one of the best moments of my life," he said. The watering system - hidden under a layer of mulch - waters eight different zones. They said that this summer they plan to water even less than they did last year, because they think they killed some of the xeric plants with too much water.

Now that it's early spring they are starting to prep the garden, and waiting to see what grows back. Many of the xeric plants are perennials, and they hope that they will come back in full bloom. Chives are already starting to poke up in the vegetable garden, and in front of the house bits of green are showing in the yard and hyssops. "It's kind of fun to see what grows back," Martin said, picking weeds as he walked through the beds.

"We have a lot to do still," Dacanay said. "But, it was so successful that we want to increase it!"

If, like Beverly & Daniel, you'd like to replace your thirsty, dull grass with a vibrant, water-wise landscape, the local nonprofit Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) can help. •

