

OCEANSIDE RESIDENTS NAMED 2018 WATERSMART LANDSCAPE CONTEST WINNERS



On June 6, 2018, the Oceanside City Council recognized homeowners **John and Anna Gonzalez** as the winners of the 2018 WaterSmart Landscape Contest, an annual competition that recognizes outstanding water-wise landscapes based on design and overall attractiveness, climate-appropriate plant selection, maintenance, and irrigation efficiency.

Fashioned after a Mediterranean garden, the Gonzalez property **at the corner of Via Clemente and Avenida Canora** now uses fifty percent less water than what was used to irrigate the turf-grass lawn that it replaced. A casualty of the water restrictions imposed during the recent drought, the Gonzalez's once green lawn was the catalyst that moved them to step outside their comfort zone and try something new. At a friend's suggestion, they enrolled in a four-class series at Mira Costa College that was sponsored by the San Diego County Water Authority, and designed for homeowners wanting to take a hands-on approach to transforming their turf-centered yards into attractive, water-wise landscapes.

For Anna, that decision to "try something new" marked the beginning of a passion for water-wise landscaping and a greater appreciation of nature and the environment. While Anna admits that doing the work themselves was a big leap for the couple, by taking their time and doing a little bit at a time, the job became more manageable and the pride in their accomplishment was that much sweeter.

For color, shape and texture, they added a wide variety of succulents, including Agaves, Kalanchoe, Echeverias, Aeoniums, and Sedum. And by arranging their climate-appropriate plants based on water needs, they found that they no longer needed overhead sprinkler irrigation, which they were able to convert to drip irrigation, reducing their irrigation schedule to an average of 3 minutes, 3 times per week, with no need to irrigate during the winter months.

Upon meeting the Gonzalez's for the first time, one gets a sense of their generous spirit and upbeat manner. When asked about the response to their new landscape, they'll tell you that they are still surprised by all the

compliments and well-wishes that they receive from folks in the neighborhood or from people just driving by. Whether being engaged in conversation, getting a shout out or a honk, or just being flashed with a thumbs up, the Gonzalez's are touched by the positive feedback and kind gestures. And while they are thrilled that their dream garden uses fifty percent less water, translating to a significant reduction in their water bill, it's the goodwill that the project has generated that Anna will tell you is the greatest benefit of all.

Ask either of them to tell you about their water efficient landscape and you'll see their eyes light up and their smiles grow brighter. They are overjoyed to share their experiences, troubleshoot questions, or just offer clippings of their plants and succulents to help others get started on their own water-wise landscape. For both Anna and John, giving back is important. From all of the positive lessons that they've learned on their journey to transform their landscape, they like to think that they are now getting an opportunity to pay it forward and share a little piece of their Garden of Goodwill.

EXCEPTIONAL ENTRIES RECEIVING HONORABLE MENTION





220 Barnes St.
Barnes Manor, LLC (Patrick Doyle)

Apartment
Complex

