

NATURAL FEAST FOR THE SENSES

THE CONCRETE DECK WAS PART OF THE HOME ALREADY. "INSTEAD OF REMOVING IT, WE WASHED IT AND RECYCLED IT," CATHERINE SAYS. THEY PUT UP THE BLACK HANDRAILS AS A BARRIER THAT WOULDN'T BLOCK THE PRETTY VIEW.

A landscape designer incorporates sound, movement, color and scent into her drought-tolerant gardens to fully capture the calming essence of nature.

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Photography by DANIEL BOSLER PHOTOGRAPHY





(TOP) THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOME RECEIVED A FEW UPDATES THAT COMPLETELY CHANGED THE LOOK OF THE FRONT ENTRANCE. IT USED TO BE ALL GRAY WALLS WITH A PLASTIC GATE, BUT CATHERINE REPAINTED THE LEFT WALL WHITE FOR A POP OF BRIGHTNESS. SHE ALSO HAD A CUSTOM SLIDING DOOR MADE IN IPE WOOD FOR WARMTH AND ADDED DECOMPOSED GRANITE, PAVERS, A BOULDER AND SUCCULENTS TO BRING THE SPACE TO LIFE. "THE ARRIVAL TO A HOUSE IS IMPORTANT. I LIKE A HAPPY ARRIVAL," SHE SAYS.

PEOPLE WILL PAY TO VACATION IN BEAUTIFUL PLACES SURROUNDED BY NATURE. Skip the trip and create a calming oasis you can visit every day in your own backyard. Catherine Bosler, owner of Bosler Earth Design, specializes in designing landscapes and gardens for homes that could use a bit more outdoor appeal.

"I love when a house has no personality and we have to give it personality through the landscape. That's always a fun challenge," Catherine says. This particular home in Hollywood Hills, California, received several updates that brought life to the exterior spaces.

Drought-Tolerant Gardens

When Catherine started working in residential landscape design 10 years ago, there happened to be a drought in California. "Thanks to the drought, we started to have a lot of plants pop up in nurseries that were never seen here before," she says. "I discovered the world of Australian, Mediterranean and South African plants."

Because of this experience and the variety of new plants she fell in love with, Catherine now specializes in creating drought-tolerant gardens. Colorful, lush and striking, these low-maintenance landscapes are becoming a Southern California signature design.

Nature's Transformations

But while Catherine has her own preferences, she tackles each project with its own personalized plan. "I love to look at the architecture of the building and understand the homeowner's personality," she says. In this case, she wanted to provide the homeowner with peaceful retreats at the front entrance and back of the home.

(TOP, LEFT) TO ADD SOUND TO THE BACKYARD, CATHERINE DESIGNED A LARGE MASONRY FOUNTAIN COVERED WITH A GRAY/BLUE STONE VENEER. "I PUT TWO PLANTERS ON THE TOP TO PUT SUCCULENTS IN," SHE SAYS. LIFE IS INCORPORATED INTO THE FOUNTAIN WITH STRING-OF-PEARLS SUCCULENTS CASCADING DOWN THE FRONT AND AN AUSTRALIAN TREE FERN PEERING OUT THE SIDE.



(MIDDLE, LEFT) THE HOMEOWNER'S OFFICE DOOR LEADS TO A PRIVATE PATIO AT THE FRONT OF THE HOME. CATHERINE WANTED TO TURN THE SPACE INTO A RELAXING HAVEN, SO SHE REMOVED THE GRAY FLOOR TILES AND HEDGE PLANTS AND ADDED SOME PAVERS, A FOUNTAIN, AN OLIVE TREE AND VARIOUS TEXTURED PLANTS (KANGAROO PAWS, MEXICAN BLUE PALMS, MOON EUCALYPTUS AND SUCCULENTS) TO SOFTEN THE LOOK OF THE SPACE. "IT LOOKED MASCULINE WITH ALL THE GRAY, SO I ADDED AN EARTHY TONE WITH THE DECOMPOSED GRANITE ON THE FLOOR," SHE SAYS.



VARIOUS COLORS AND TEXTURES ADD INTEREST TO THE GROUND OF THE PRIVATE PATIO. CATHERINE HAD THE IDEA TO SUBSTITUTE A GROUP OF SUCCULENTS FOR ONE OF THE PAVERS TO MIX IT UP A BIT, BUT SHE FRAMED THEM SO THEY WOULDN'T LOOK OUT OF PLACE. AND SHE TRIES TO ADD A BENCH AT THE ENTRANCE OF MOST OF HER PROJECT HOMES. "PEOPLE TALK A LOT BY THE FRONT DOOR, SO IT'S NICE TO HAVE A PLACE FOR THEM TO SIT," SHE SAYS.



(ABOVE) TO PROTECT THE HOME FROM FIRE HAZARDS, CATHERINE MADE A SAFETY ZONE BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND THE HILL WITH NO SHRUBS. THE CURVY GRAVEL PATH IS LINED WITH COLORFUL SUCCULENTS SUCH AS AGAVE, ALOE, AEONIUM AND.



The spaces she had to work with started out as gray, bare and uninteresting. “The front patio was very cold and sterile,” says Catherine. “We wanted to give it charm and life but keep the mid century feel.” To do so, she introduced materials that would add warmth and clean lines to the spaces. “I use a lot of gravel, wood, decomposed granite and sometimes stucco,” she says.

Catherine begins her transformations with the ground materials and pavers before introducing plant life, so they removed the gray tiles at the front patio and washed down the dirty concrete in the backyard to have fresh palettes to build on. “I like to mix gravels to have different textures,” she says. “Decomposed granite absorbs water into the ground, so it’s better organically than the original gray tiles.” Once they designated clear paths, Catherine incorporated plants that complement Mid Century Modern style.

Safety First

The design of the back patio now flows seamlessly, but they had to take care of fire-scaping the area next to the hill in the backyard. “She’s on a hill that’s prone to catching on fire, so we created a zone between the house and the hill with no shrubs,” says Catherine. She designed a curved gravel path that leads to the black handrails they put up and surrounded the path with colorful succulents for a soothing and safe design.

Not only does she add in color through the plant life, but she hopes that wildlife will contribute to the beauty as well. “I design with hummingbirds and butterflies in mind,” she says. “Not only are they adorable, but they add movement. I pick flowers that attract them.”

Gardening for the Senses

Visual movement isn’t the only element Catherine infuses into her landscapes. “A garden starts with the visual component, but it should really include movement, sound and scent as well as sight,” she says. She ensures some of the plants she chooses have an attractive smell to them, and her fountains add both movement and sound. This way, her clients can fully appreciate and be immersed in the joy and peace their garden can bring. ☺

5 Plants to Attract Hummingbirds and Butterflies

Catherine intentionally plants flowers that will attract wildlife to include movement in her gardens. Here are some of her favorites.

1. Grevillea
2. Kangaroo paw
3. Zauschneria
4. Buddleia
5. Milkweed

