

1437 Cortlandt - Spring has arrived in Sandra Lloyd's garden. Repeat blooming azaleas skirt the front of the house while a brick walk way separates the foundation planting from the flower beds that frame the rest of the front yard. Petunias, snapdragons, dianthus, bluebonnets, and other spring annuals are mixed in with iris and amaryllis, among other bulbs. Sandra is a big fan of bulbs and has many varieties tucked away in her flower beds that bloom at different times of the year. The magenta blooms of the witch hazel hedge line the neighboring fence line and a saucer magnolia, with its early spring pink blossoms accents the corner of the house.

Jonathan and Louise Holley of 619 Woodland. The Holleys purchased their home in 2015. They were attracted to the home in part because of the beautiful live oak tree that shades the front yard and the unique landscaping that provides a shady, low maintenance retreat, that encourages hours of sitting on the front porch swing. The previous owners, Rachel and Chris Powers, employed a top designer from the Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens to design the gardens. Two rainwater cisterns (500 gallons each) collect rainwater from the roof and AC condensate to water the yard with soaker hoses buried in the beds. A drainage feature was designed through the front yard to convey overflow from one of the cisterns out to the Street. Some of the unique plantings in the front gardens include a banana tree shrub and two sweet olive shrubs on either side of the front porch stairs, which provide fragrant scents while sitting on the front porch. Other plantings include many shade tolerant lillies, ferns, and iris. The backyard is equally shady and includes several very productive grapefruit and orange trees along with a large pecan tree. The yard and gardens encourage lots of wildlife visitors, especially birds. We would like to thank Joshua's Native Plants and Garden Antiques for the gift certificate presented to our Yard of the Month recipient.

501 Highland The garden club despaired of finding a Yard-of-the-Month for March after this winter's devastating freezes until we spotted Denise Liebl's front yard. Deep curved beds wrap around the lawn. The beds are anchored with presently blooming white azaleas and Spring Bouquet viburnum and also boxwoods. Two pink climbing roses mound on either side of the front steps. A redbud tree provides a stunning focal point in the springtime. The beds are then finished off with a variety of perennials and annuals. Blooming now are verbena, pansies, dusty miller, snapdragons, and flowering kale. Rock rose, agapanthus, and Mexican sage are among the perennials just coming out of dormancy, but will provide color over the course of the year. Two yews flank the entrance to a brick patio on the east side of the house which includes an outdoor dining area. Beds in this area contain a Japanese magnolia, blooming now on bare stems, and 2 maples, offspring of a friend's tree, and also a lemon tree. They enjoy the morning sun and are protected from the afternoon sun by the shade of the house. The garden was designed by well-know landscape designer Pam August and was installed and is maintained by Bella Terra who faithfully covered the plantings during this past season's freezes.

1007 W. Melwood Owner Kacey Knox grew up in the suburban northeast side of Houston, but she was drawn to the historic charm and architecture of the older Houston neighborhoods. She and her husband purchased their home in Norhill in 2005 and have been steadily renovating

during the last decade. Her garden is her passion and joy, changing with each season. She has employed a whimsical combination of Texas natives, flowering perennials and vines, edibles and annuals which visiting butterflies, bees and birds seem to enjoy as much as she enjoys their frequent visits. We want to thank Buchanan's Native Plants for donating a gift certificate for the September Yard of the Month

456 W 24th Street Stacy and Kay Sutter moved to their home in August, 2006. The house came with "Professional landscaping", which consisted of a few azaleas and a crepe myrtle. It also had a small building in the back between the house and garage, leaving a very small space for yard. Shortly after they moved in, they moved the extra building and started putting in beds. Stacy and Kay both love a little dirt therapy. Stacy designed and built the Koi pond which they have filled with Butterfly Koi and water lilies. Kay spends most of her free time digging in the beds that now surround the house. They try to keep something flowering for the bees and butterflies, and moving water for other yard wildlife. Several years ago, they had the opportunity to take over the lot next door. They had the lot graded and laid sod and built the fence. This area is still their work in progress, but they will work it in pieces.

824 West 14th Street Laura and Tom Pash wanted a garden that would complement the modern architecture of their new home. This xeriscape choice handsomely delivers on that promise and with very low water needs is looking quite smart too considering our ongoing drought. The metal planters were built with a collaboration of CEA Loveless home design and Thomas Strong Landscaping (both local businesses). They built the custom water fountain too, which the birds quite enjoy. Tom created the yard design and they did the work. The idea was low maintenance with mostly native plants for a nature friendly, sustainable environment.

One of the large planters in front holds an olive tree and the other Chinese fringe tree that bursts with white blooms in the spring and late summer. Smaller planters with succulents guard the front door. Vines on the east side fence are blackberry bushes, which go crazy with berries. Two apple trees line the short driveway. The backyard is full of edible plants and herbs. Grasses such as Lindheimer muhly and purple fountain grass, cacti (prickly pear, red and narrowleaf yuccas) and butterfly attracting plants (cigar plant, lantana, mist flower) fill in the plant palette. White gravel is used predominantly as a durable mulch with other areas are lined with bigger, rounder rocks reminiscent of a dry stream bed.

A longer example in first person:

605 Aurora St. From Sharon Stinson & Greg Lopp:

"The Yarden is our happy place.

Twenty years ago when I was searching for a house in The Heights, one of my biggest requirements was a sunny yard for growing. I started by creating a 'practice bed' in the backyard and filled it with random perennials that looked interesting or that I knew from growing in Austin. It did not take long to learn that Houston has a climate all its own.

Then one bed became two, then three, then four to six. We discovered surprises that only an old lot could bring in the form of hundreds of pounds of broken bricks buried right under the soil, a forty foot stretch of carpet less than two inches below the surface and a few action figures lost since the 1970s.

With large sycamores surrounding and shading the backyard, we shifted our growing to the sunnier areas of the yard. There are always between 15-30 containers growing vegetables in the driveway. The front yard has full sun and therefore it is where we grow most of our vegetables. The beds we built lining our front sidewalk have been filled with 80 sq. ft. of corn, 12' tomatoes, and 14' okra.

In the beginning, we were growing purely for the enjoyment of ourselves and the friends with whom we shared our fresh vegetables, but then we started noticing how our Yarden affected our neighbors. More and more people would stop to stare and ask questions, children watched caterpillars, bees, and butterflies. People would begin a conversation and leave with herbs, vegetables or seedlings. Many people told us they changed their walking routes to keep an eye on whatever we're growing.

During Covid, I began actively planting our easement between the sidewalk and the street. I grew plants from seed and then began inserting annual flowers and herbs. Each year the easement gets more densely planted. This year I planted kale for neighbors to take if they wanted. Basil is always available to the neighborhood in the summer, just by cutting some from the easement.

It's easier to list what we don't grow than what we do. But right now, in our front yard, you will find tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cilantro, calendula, marigold, salvia, bee balm, coreopsis, ginger, borage, purple coneflower, black eyed susan, verbena, okra, roselle hibiscus, gomphrena, lemongrass, yarrow, lemon verbena, mint, gaillardia, cosmos, shrimp plant, pigeon-berry, fall aster, white mist-flower, Gregg's mist flower, three types of salvia and more."