

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Native Garden Blossoms

Back Yard Makeovers: Edible and Drinkable

By Cathy Tyson



Bill and Mary Massarweh's upper level seating area, nestled next to their vineyard in Moraga.

Photos Doug Kohen

Change is good, whether it's a new outfit, paint color or politician. Who doesn't get tired of looking at the same old thing? Two Lamorinda families decided to take the plunge and remodel their less than ideal back yards. Both sets of homeowners are quite pleased with the outcomes; one chose a water-wise organic sustainable garden, the other completely renovated an aging patio, installed terraces up the sloping site and topped it all off with pinot noir grape vines.

The Drinkable

Bill and Mary Massarweh have a steep up-sloping lot in Moraga that backs up

to open space. When they moved there in 1979 it was "weeds, weeds, weeds," says Bill Massarweh. They have two boys, now grown, who entertained themselves in the backyard and beyond, venturing as far as Sanders Ranch. Between the kids and the unfenced yard that was an open invitation to deer, and the occasional lost cow, they kept the hillside portion of their property as the developer left it – littered with pine trees for a number of years. Finally "enough is enough" said Mary, it was time to pursue their vision of a bit of Tuscany in the back yard.

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