

The Cutting Edge of Water Use and Reuse

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Downspouts direct water to sand basin

The operating mode mimics natural wetlands that purify water by acting like a sponge, and extracting contaminants and nutrients through their extensive root mass. "The system is designed to divert, filter, store and dis-

perse the household gray-water to the drip irrigation system," explains Bucknum, "the Lennox' can divert the gray-water to sewer (when they use harsh chemicals for cleaning), or to the in-house treatment system."

Photos Sophie Braccini

Bucknum created a mini wetland expanse on the side of the house that looks like a pretty, ornamental garden. Gray-water that's water collected from the bathroom showers and sinks, as well as from the laundry room, is reused to water the lawn and many plants (but not the vegetable garden). Designing such a system required building a double plumbing system to separate the collection of recycled and non-recycled waters.

Although the process is well known internationally and has been in use all over the world, it was a first for the Lafayette Planning Department and Contra Costa Building Inspectors. "The City of Lafayette really helped us in the process," said Lennox, "they were willing to listen and facilitate."

"Water is a resource that we need to conserve and we loved the concept," said Lafayette City Planner Greg Wolf, "the Contra Costa Building Department looked at the intent of the rules and kept the big picture in mind. It was a learning process for us all." The planner hopes to see more of such systems in the future coming for approval in Lafayette, "These are becoming more common practices," said Wolf, "they just are not main-stream, yet."



Purple drip lines containing gray-water irrigate the lawn.



Access to the rainwater containers under the patio



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