

Changing your garden, changing your life

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Photo Sophie Braccini

In their Lafayette home Kay Countryman and Ron Briggs will also showcase their garden for the first time. The backyard used to be a lawn that year after year absorbed an increasing water — and financial — budget. Countryman had been going to the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour for years and really liked a garden a friend of hers had done. Roxy Klein was the architect and she and her husband decided to work with her.

Klein designed the garden and established the plant list, creating spaces and areas in the garden that gave the couple a feeling of space they had never had before. The garden was completed two years ago and the couple soon noted that it had consequences on their lives they had not expected.

Not only was their water cut by 66 percent, but the new landscape created a new experience for them. They say that it is as if the garden suddenly became alive. They felt that it was drawing them outside; they noticed that they were spending much more time in the garden, feeling grounded and happy. There they observe the wildlife coming back, the change of seasons, the beauty and variety of the environment. Briggs said that he would never have guessed how much the new garden would mean for his well-being.

The Tour

The Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour is on Sunday, May 7. It is free and self-guided. This year, for the first time, participants can choose between receiving a free PDF of the 80 page garden guide or paying \$10 for the printed guide. More information at www.bringingbackthenatives.net. There are 39 gardens on the tour, eight from Lamorinda, and several nurseries, including some that rarely open their gates to the public.

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