



Photos by Rob Rijnen (El Dorado Way)



# OCEAN FRIENDLY GARDEN of the month



Rob Nieto

Rob Nieto (Rob lives on Indio Drive and, along with your Publisher, is an active supporter of The Surfrider Foundation, a grassroots non-profit environmental organization that works to protect and preserve the world's oceans, waves, and beaches).

## The Garden Of Dene And Emily Hurlbert, Indio Drive

Indio Drive can add the home of Dene and Emily Hurlbert to the growing list of Ocean Friendly Gardens on the block. The Hurlberts' garden is full of blooms and colorful plantings year-round. Look for leucospermum "high gold" and various aloe varieties to bloom throughout the winter months making way for California poppies and white flowered Carpenteria Californica in spring and summer. The blue hues of the stunning and sculptural agave weberi contrast with the deep burgundy and reds of low-water leucadendron varieties like "ebony," "winter red" and "safari sunset." The presence of healthy, biologically active soil and year-round blossoms coupled with a maintenance approach that refrains from the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides promotes greater biodiversity and reduces the amount of harmful pollutants that enter the ocean.

A key water saving feature of the garden is the liberal use of mulch in all of the planted areas. Thick layers of mulch retain moisture and reduce the amount of water that evaporates from the soil and even help prevent soil erosion. In addition to its water saving properties, mulch inhibits weed germination and growth, moderates soil temperature fluctuations and invites earthworms and other soil builders to the garden to help

**OCEAN FRIENDLY GARDEN**

**CONSERVATION**  
of water, energy and habitat

**PERMEABILITY**  
of soil and surfaces lets water slow down and sink

**RETENTION**  
of rainwater and prevention of wet weather runoff

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improve nutrient cycling and soil structure. This improvement in soil structure along with the permeable flagstone walkways will lend to greater infiltration and, consequently, less run-off throughout the site as winter rains continue.

Many homes in the Palisades area have subsurface water that has to be pumped from under structures to prevent damage, particularly in winter, but continuing well into summer during average rain years. Most homes pump that fresh water directly into the storm drain. The Hurlberts were no exception but saw the process as a water conservation opportunity. Subsurface water that was once pumped from beneath the structure into the storm drain is now captured in a 200-gallon tank where it is stored and used to irrigate the garden instead of using potable water. Way to go, Hurlberts!

*If you have a garden you would like featured, check out the Ocean Friendly Gardens criteria list at <http://www.surfrider.org>, then contact Robert Nieto at [robert@robertnietodesigns.com](mailto:robert@robertnietodesigns.com).*

*For more info about the OFG program, contact [ofg@slo.surfrider.org](mailto:ofg@slo.surfrider.org).*