

GARDENING

Garden Consultants and Garden-In-A-Box provide affordable options to help reduce water consumption

By: Jean Lovell, Center for ReSource Conservation

David Loose lives near the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) and was aware of CRC's Garden-In-A-Box for a couple of years. He especially liked the low-maintenance aspect of the gardens. In early 2012 he went to CRC learned that CRC offers garden consultations which he thought would be useful. "This was my first big gardening endeavor." He wondered if his free-form ideas for garden design would work and wanted suggestions for which Garden-In-A-Box gardens would work best in his garden. He also needed technical advice on raised beds and soil preparation.

Dave's thinking was right in line with what CRC's garden consultants provide. The consultants are professional landscapers or landscape designers with their own businesses. For a reduced fee, the consultant will come to your home to discuss questions about how to choose, plant, and maintain the Garden-In-A-Box gardens. Garden-In-A-Box kits contain 30 to 32 native

water-wise plants, are professionally designed, and come with planting instructions to make the process as easy as possible. Among other things they will help customers decide what parts of their gardens are best suited to specific garden kits and provide suggestions about preparing the soil and advice on helpful soil amendments to use in preparing your garden to receive the plants. This sort of pre-planning is extremely helpful when done early, well before the plants are in your hands and in advance of putting them in unprepared soil.

Dave states his consultant "met my expectations and then some." He stated that the consultant validated his ideas, helped to simplify some of them, gave him advice on soil amendments, and shared some design ideas about his raised beds. She gave him more confidence about his ideas and about plants, their placement and care. "Her best advice was to take on just one thing at a time."



Dave says the Gardens in a Box are great. One of them he installed mostly according to its accompanying plan. The other had to be adjusted to fit a triangle shape. With the rains that came shortly after planting, they thrived even in their first summer. The consultant's suggestion of getting a drip kit was critical. "Walking around to water is not what I want to do." Dave remarked.

Now he enjoys working there and appreciates the feedback from neighbors and others walking by. When Dave started in 2012, he was frustrated with lawn care. "The front yard was dust and grass and dandelions." Now, "The neatest thing is the good feeling I get with seeing

my unconventional idea in my yard." It is "great to have a "living sculpture" there.

Even though the effort to plan and do the work was more than he expected, "Now that I know the level of engagement necessary in the first year, I am thinking of taking on the back yard, too."

For over 35 years, Center for ReSource Conservation has been helping people in Colorado's Front Range save energy, water and material resources. The GIAB and Garden Consultants are both affordable options to help people reduce water consumption. Visit conservationcenter.org or call the CRC for further information at 303.999.3820.

