

Kathy and Dave Allstot ~ Garden #1

In 2016, Nevada County natives Kathy and Dave Allstot, purchased a 3.5-acre parcel of raw land off Allison Ranch Road in Grass Valley, setting out to build their dream home and garden. Kathy, a Master Gardener, retired in 2020 after 36 years with the Nevada City Post Office. Dave followed after a 42-year career with Economy Pest Control and together they began designing and creating their landscape. With the help of a local architect, one of their first projects - and most challenging - was the pool, now Kathy's favorite place to relax and take in the garden.

"It's really magical," she says, "sitting in the pool, with the waterfall going, the blue sky above and Dave's roses all in bloom." Once the pool was completed, surrounded by tiered retaining walls and flagstone, Dave's vision for the sloping property began to take shape. The garden now features 75 rose bushes along with deodar cedar, Japanese maple, lavender, butterfly bush, peony, lilac and dogwood. A golf enthusiast, Dave also designed and built three small chipping and putting areas.

Below the deck sits an outdoor kitchen and BBQ area for entertaining, adjacent to a large artificial turf space bordered by lavender and salvia. In the lower yard, Dave recently added a pergola, seating area and horseshoe pit, with future plans for a bocce ball court.

Winding pathways of rock pavers and gravel connect the landscape, leading to raised vegetable beds planted with onions, strawberries, tomatoes, cucumbers and bell peppers. Two years ago, the couple redesigned the front yard and entrance, creating a large dry creek bed measuring approximately 30 by 50 feet. Filled with bark, natural rock and a variety of trees and shrubs - including deodar, mock orange, Norwegian pine, eucalyptus, Chinese fringe flower, redwood, oak and butterfly bush - it adds texture and color. Flowering daphne and pink and white azaleas welcome guests on the front porch while paver pathways lead to a side yard planted with oleander, bamboo, Meyer lemon, and olive trees.

The couple has also discussed adding a "secret garden" off the side of the house, where the driveway and garage sit and the landscape slopes dramatically.

"It's something we're thinking about that would involve a pretty big retaining wall with levels, an archway and lattice fencing," says Dave. "I guess I just need another project!"