

# Funkadelica

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**Topics: Funksional Art in the Garden  
Creating a Lush Urban Garden**

## Garden History

Since purchasing my home in 1985, I have been changing the very mid-century lot into a more personal and welcoming environment. I want my garden to express my quirky personality.

There had not been many changes made to the original garden when I moved in. I did have to do some privet and boxwood removal when I just could not stand them anymore. There was a privet hedge in the front yard, which I pulled out with a heavy

chain and a Chevy Suburban. As a single gal, I have had to learn to use the tools available to me. I moved the fence in the backyard toward the alley and created the terraced area, making way for larger plants. I was given some octopus agave and some agave desmettiana, which grow really well and propagate on their own. I am trying to make use of plants which are hardy and more drought tolerant, wanting to create a lush environment without using so much water.

The mosaics started taking over after I traveled to Barcelona and saw the magical, whimsical mosaics of Gaudi. I began with stepping stones and quickly gravitated to any flat surface. The tribute to my dogs, my daughter's dogs and cat, past and present, guards the house from its place outside my patio door. I love to incorporate found pieces and ceramics to make my garden a magical place.

The story of my garden's evolution would not be complete without talking about the therapeutic benefit I receive from getting my hands in the soil and working up a good sweat moving things around or planting new plants. I have said that the garden always benefits when I am going through a rough time. Gardening is very healing.

## Gardening Basics

**Watering:** I have begun to limit high water use plants. I harvest rainwater and use gray water from my washer and evaporative cooler. I hand water using Tucson city water.

**Soil:** There is a lot of caliche and compacted earth, which I have battled for many years. I have added compost and other soil amendments to help my suffering plants.

**Fertilizer:** Currently I am using Mesquite Valley Growers Special Blend. I also use Arizona Best Citrus fertilizer. I have used Miracle Grow, but have not had great luck with it.

**Pest Control:** I have had problems with grubs and have tried different products. Currently, I am using compost tea with nematodes from Arbico.

**Gardening Philosophy:** I have been influenced by the Spanish patio concept with the heartbeat of the garden being the Buddha fountain. I use color and lush plantings to create a peaceful, cool, out-of-doors living space.

**Personal Gardening Secrets:** It takes time to create a fabulous garden. Let it happen and enjoy the process.

