

## **Keep it Simple**

### **Topics: Agaves, Cactus and Succulents; Compost**

#### **Garden History**

We moved to Tucson in the summer of 2014, and our house had been vacant for over a year. Natural grass covered the backyard, and Cat's Claw vine climbed the back fence. We chose a landscape company to redo the backyard that asked to see the interior of our house. The contemporary look of our garden resulted. We installed artificial turf after getting a dog. It requires little maintenance and no water and is a good playground. We also added raised beds as I love to grow vegetables and herbs. Before the raised beds were completed, I learned to make my own soil by sheet mulching, a compost technique.

#### **Garden Basics**

**Irrigation:** The landscaper added drip irrigation to the raised beds and the flowerpots on the pillars. The rest of the backyard primarily includes agaves, cacti and other succulents with no water. The front yard originally watered on one drip line: trees, bushes and cactus. We improved this with 3 separate drip lines to meet the different plants' requirements.

**Fertilizer:** I amend my raised bed soil several times a year with compost that I make and some commercial organic soil. I occasionally add worm castings and fish emulsion to my flowers and veggies.

**Pest Control:** My favorite pest control is my fingers and soapy water. Only when there is a serious problem do I use Bt or neem oil. I did use beneficial nematodes for a grub infestation.

#### **Garden Philosophy**

My philosophy is 'keep it simple'. My happiest time gardening involves harvesting herbs and veggies for dinner and sharing produce with friends and neighbors, I love the color and fragrance of blooming flowers which I mix into the raised beds. The landscaper recommended placing flowerpots on top of the pillars that look out onto the wash. This became one of my favorite additions as the color remains all year.