



Drawing from the architecture of the Spanish colonial home, Debbie Glikzman of Urban Oasis Landscape Design transformed a water-demanding grass lawn into a sustainable Mediterranean garden for this residence in Culver City, California.

A traditional Mediterranean garden design has a few distinctive characteristics. Usually centered around a water feature like a sculptural or tiled fountain, this style of garden also makes use of ample terra-cotta or potted plants, drought-tolerant succulents and ornamentals, topiaries, colorful tile work—usually painted or in a graphic Moorish style—and a pebbled or gravel floor to reduce overall water usage in the style's native arid climate.

Glikzman updated this classic garden design style with a few smart and cost-effective edits to make this residential home feel modern and welcoming. In place of the traditional water feature, Glikzman centered the garden around a classic Moorish quatrefoil planter, creating a focal point for the space. Replacing traditional painted tiles, concrete pavers radiate out from the planter, lending the space an updated, monolithic, and modern feel, while at the same time reducing costs. "The pavers are also a budget item," Glikzman explained to *Gardenista*, "but together these two elements have quite an impact." Two large potted kumquat trees that frame the plate glass window complete the architectural triad.

For plant life, Glikzman sought color and texture in her selection of Mediterranean and California-native plants. Pride of Madeira, Peruvian lilies, French and Spanish lavenders, golden breath of heaven, moonshine yarrow, blanket flower, silver carpet, and myriad roses are enclosed by an informal low hedge of germander.



Opposite: The designer employed a mix of citrus trees and flowers to create the distinctive Mediterranean style.



Above, left: The designer's advice for a Mediterranean garden: "Don't be afraid of color, but make sure that you have a planned color palette."

Above, right: The large potted kumquat tree serves as a focal point for the garden, creating a sense of entrance around the doorway.



Crape myrtle and burgundy-leaved Caribbean copper plants were stationed at each corner of the garden to further delineate the space. "We wanted to craft a sense of entry and enclosure while maintaining a degree of openness to the neighbors, creating an exuberant garden that they could enjoy and share with the community," Glikzman told *Gardenista*.

Reducing the overall carbon footprint and the water bill were also at the top of the homeowner's requests for the garden. Glikzman, who specializes in the watershed method of gardening, used California climate-friendly and drought-resistant plants to reduce the overall water load of the garden. She also incorporated decomposed granite to further reduce water use.

"Using a permeable ground surface is good for your garden and for the environment, as it allows rainwater to filter into the water table instead of out into the street," she explains. "In a balanced watershed, rainwater passes through plants and healthy living soil before moving into our local waterways or going back into the sky to form clouds. With the proper practices, every garden can function as a mini-watershed: sequestering atmospheric carbon, preventing water and air pollution, restoring the water and life of the soil, and attracting essential life into the garden."

To create a Mediterranean garden of your own, Glikzman offered this advice: "Don't be afraid of color, but make sure that you have a planned color palette. This garden uses a lot of purples and oranges, which are complementary colors (opposite each other on the color wheel). Another thing to keep in mind is including a variety of foliage textures to balance everything out. For example, you wouldn't want all the plants to have strappy leaves. It's nice to balance differently sized and textured foliage. You also want to create a rhythm with plant sizes to keep drawing the eye around the space. Last but not least, leave some negative space so the eye has a place to rest. We always like to leave areas with either low-growing plants or some inorganic surfaces." With Glikzman's simple advice, you're one step closer to the Mediterranean.



**VIBRANT FRONT YARD**  
CULVER CITY, CA - USA

**GARDEN TYPOLOGY**

Mediterranean garden

**SIZE**

1,250 sq. ft. (116m<sup>2</sup>)

**CLIMATE**

Temperate

**HARDINESS ZONE**

USDA 10

**ORIENTATION**

South-East

**SUNLIGHT EXPOSURE**

Full sun

**DESIGN BUDGET**

\$5,500 (£5,000)

**MAINTENANCE TIME**

3-5 hours per week

**1**  
A custom concrete planter with symmetrically radiating pavers creates a Moorish style for the Spanish bungalow.

**2**  
Two large distressed ceramic containers planted with kumquat trees frame the stately plate glass window.

**3**  
A decomposed-granite floor surface replaced the grassy lawn. This sustainable garden practice allows rainwater to filter down to the water table, instead of running into the street.

**4**  
A low, informal hedge encircles the garden and creates a sense of enclosure while still affording the residents friendly interaction with the neighbors.

**5**  
A charming crape myrtle anchors the corner of the garden with coral-colored blossoms in the spring and exquisite orange-red foliage in the autumn.

**6**  
The opulent conical blooms of a Pride of Madeira stay a vibrant purple throughout late winter, sitting atop silvery green leaves.

