

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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## The Cutting Edge of Water Use and Reuse

*One Lafayette homeowner is a leader in Contra Costa County*

By Sophie Braccini



*Gwenn Lennox shows the entrance to the gray-water collection tank.*

*Photo Sophie Braccini*

When John and Gwenn Lennox decided to rebuild their home in Lafayette, they knew they wanted it

to be energy efficient, to incorporate sustainable materials and have a drought resistant landscape—but they

never imagined they would end up with home in which they used rain water to wash the laundry and gray-

water to keep their lawn green.

Architect Greg Faulkner came up with the idea; contractor Tom Alderson contacted Brent Bucknum, owner of Hyphae Design Laboratory, who conceived a \$30,000 self-sustaining system that's one of a kind in Contra Costa County.

"The system we set in place is two-fold," explains Gwenn Lennox, sipping tea at her matte red granite counter. "Downspouts collect rain water that drips along the butterfly shaped roof; that water falls in sand boxes that filter it and prevent leaves and other debris from getting into the storage. The rainwater is stored in two 1,700 gallons containers that have been buried under the patio. A pump sends the water back into the house to be used for the laundry, for sinks in the garage and the laundry room, and for our water fountain. The second part is the gray-water recycling."

Gray-water recycling is the more unusual component of a household system. Use of gray-water has become very common in dry states, especially for golf courses and large expanses of landscape. The same principles are applied here, but on a much smaller scale.

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