

GOT NATIVE-GARDEN PRUNER?

LESLIE BUCK not only describes the secrets to designing her CA landscape below, but has been is a *professional landscape pruner for over 30 years*. She specializes in "pruning so natural you can't tell your garden is pruned," and would love to help you style your established native garden over time. Leslie also wrote the New York Times reviewed garden memoir, "*Cutting Back*," a story about her journey working with traditional native-plant craftsmen in Japan.

Contact her for a native garden pruning consultation any time!

WEBSITE (with pruning video) lesliebuckauthor.com



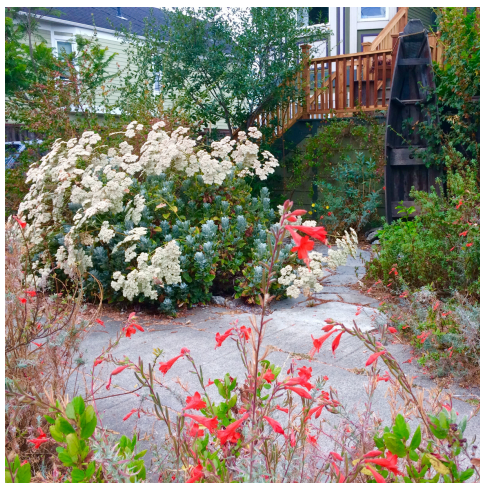
FACEBOOK [Leslie Buck](#) INSTAGRAM

LESLIE'S "HOW TO BUILD A NATIVE GARDEN" RESOURCES:

MY FRONT COASTAL GARDEN

“CA native gardens don’t have to look dry; they can be lush/flower-filled/water-wise”

1. COASTAL BEAUTY: I landscaped the front garden with Calif. native plants that look tropical, with flowers year 'round and wide-leaf evergreen plants, to be friends with an existing 100-year old palm



tree in front of my 1907 Victorian.

2. CRABGRASS TO OASIS: My front and back gardens used to be dead lawns. I prepared the soil by “sheet mulching” over the grass: I put on top of cut the grass: 1) 3” of free horse manure 2) free cardboard obtained from Craigslist or the Recycling center 3) 3 to 5” of almost-free mulch (local arborists will dump huge loads for free or small fee) and left alone these layers for one rainy season—hence killing the lawn and fertilizing the soil.
3. IMAGINATION: I used [Las Pilitas Nursery](#) and [Calscape.org](#) websites to research plants—fun, visual websites. I waited many years (waiting 1-3 yrs is a great idea) before designing my garden, to watch sunlight patterns, where I liked to sit, and what parts of my garden where key “look-out” spots from inside my home. I laid down hoses to practice path designs. I was very inspired when I heard the [Cultivating Place Podcast by Doug Tallamy](#) about how we can feed birds and wildlife by having 15% of native plants be specific wildlife-super feeders: [Superfeeders Cultivating Place Podcast](#).
4. DESIGN/DESIGNERS: I landscaped my front and back gardens with small 1-3” tall plants from [Oaktown Nursery](#), a native plant nursery in Berkeley, and installed drip irrigation the day after planting. With the fertilizer I had applied, and minimal drip irrigation, my garden felt full size by 5-6 years, but I loved watching it grow from young sprouts. Irrigation was installed by John Keefer of Vision Quest Gardens at: jhk77@yahoo.com. I recommend installing a rain sensor so irrigation turns off/on automatically when you are away. Other native garden landscapers who have helped advise me are [Rosemary Zapula](#) and [Tod Gilens](#). My hand-crafted gate was built by Peruvian carpenter [Roberto Gastelumendi](#) who builds garden furniture and garden sculptures custom ordered. His wife [Jessica Cook](#) designed my native garden painting/lightweight board on my deck.
5. WATER: Yes, some natives grow in clay soil with zero irrigation, but fertile soil and drip irrigation allow our gardens to grow fast and thrive, and drip isn’t that much water. For plants that like water, I watered three times a week first three years, now one time a week. Plants that are considered drought-tolerant I water once a week. Zero-water plants like *Fremontodendron* can take summer water the first year, but then you must remove all water during the summer.

MY BACK FOREST/CAMPGROUND GARDEN

"I dreamt about this landscape while writing my garden memoir..."

"I admire her dedication and this beautiful book..." —Alice Waters, founder of Edible Schoolyard



(See lesliebuckauthor.com for more info)

“Looking around, savoring the sounds, sights, and textures of a beautiful garden, I finally realized a few minutes of peace. Nature held me close” —Leslie Buck in *Cutting Back*

1. Spoiler alert: I wrote about the Woodland Garden in *Cutting Back-My Apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto*, before I'd even planted it! The design playfully borrows from Japanese garden design principles. Japanese garden = Natural garden—both evoking scenes from nature.
2. Natural gardens evoke scenes in nature, any nature, not just Japanese. This can be a Redwood forest/desert/coastal scene....pick a spot you love, and ideally use local natives, but you might need to fudge on using only local plants to get the atmosphere you want.
3. Natural gardens emphasize seasons—not flowers, natural lines—not geometric, are naturally pruned—not sheared or miniaturized, and look as if they belong to one ecosystem.
4. Natural gardens feel calm and give you room to think.
5. Natural gardens have flowers to show off a season, that are demure/simple. I love showing off winter with Toyon berries. What season and plants do you like?
6. My Garden is 100% Calif. natives (except for one tree); the scene I chose is the “Campground on the edge of the forest,” since this scene relaxes me. Most of my plants are found in Tilden Park.
7. Birds, birds, birds: “Humans can go to grocery stores for food, birds can’t.” 60% of my plants have berries, and I place piles of branches on the edges for wildlife to enjoy. I also used the website NWF.org to find plants birds use for food in my zip code after listening to a great podcast by **Doug Tallamy: CultivatingPlaceTallamy**. “Super-feeder” native plants provide 80% bird’s yearly food!

8. My pond is combination of recycled tub/bars/rock with a tiny pump. **American Soil** sold rock and drilled hole, Bill Castellon at **BillCastellon.com** set rocks and is a landscaper/rock-setter/teacher of



pruning and rock setting at **Merritt College Horticulture School!**)

9. **Merritt College Horticulture School** teaches natural pruning for our native gardens in weekend drop in, pay when you come, Saturday or Sunday classes! You can also learn natural pruning by doing volunteer work with the **Merritt College Pruning Club**. Learning pruning will improve your garden 80%! If you want to hire a pruner, professionally, I am a Landscape Aesthetic Pruner (I only take on new clients who have mostly native gardens and want natural pruning.).
10. If you would like a garden distraction, are curious about the gardens of Kyoto, want to know how Japanese garden craftsmen are absolutely passionate about local native gardens, then check out my memoir, ***Cutting Back-My Apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto***. The memoir takes you into gardens of private homes, monasteries, and an emperor's garden, while I work alongside traditional Kyoto garden craftsmen. It has been reviewed by the NYTimes/Washington Post/SFChronicle-and is available wherever books are sold or lesliebuckauthor.com.