

YARD OF THE QUARTER



MERILYN & KERRY MURRAY

The 2023 Second Quarter-Yard of the Quarter has been awarded to Merilyn and Kerry Murray. They purchased their home at 3328 Blackstone Court in April of 2020. They chose Magnolia Point in particular because they wanted a gated community that was not as congested as Orange Park had become and chose this residence because the lot has a view of a pond and green areas in the front, the golf course in the back, and is on a quiet cul-de-sac. They have been busy renovating inside and out.

They started their exterior renovation with a hardscape upgrade, the backdrop for a beautiful monochromatic landscape design. It was inspired by Merilyn's love of roses and a red/pink color scheme. They rejuvenated the flower beds with soil amendments, treated the existing shrubs for various diseases and fertilized the plants. The plants in the front beds



were replaced with red and pink drift and knock-out roses. Their primary accent color is yellow. They chose perennial re-blooming yellow dwarf Stella D'oro daylilies as the primary accent plant. Caladiums are the secondary accent.

It didn't take long to discover that the positive attributes of the lot's location had a downside: hungry deer who apparently viewed the rosebuds and flowers as delicacies. The Murrays responded by researching and planting deer repellent /resistant plants throughout the garden. They are using mint plants and are experimenting by planting deer resistant wildflower seeds they found online.

- Landscape & Irrigation Committee



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Enjoy most:

The season-long color from spring to first frost. Merylyn's favorite flowers are roses and her favorite colors are reds and pinks.

In the plans:

The most recent additions are the rose bed around the mailbox. They are nearly finished with the house interior renovations and will be putting the finishing touches in the pool area soon.

What they consider when shopping for flowers, shrubbery, or ornamentals:

The color, final plant size, USDA growth zone (we are 9A), length, timing, the blooming cycle and the health of the plant.

On fertilization and watering of featured plantings:

They follow a 3 month fertilization schedule. They are on alert for Rose fungal diseases and treat the areas that show the first signs of infection.

Main improvements done to the yard:

After moving here from Georgia about 3 years ago, the Murrays removed the concrete walkway, driveway and the pool area surround, repacing most



of it with pavers. They added a paver walkway from the driveway to the pool area and paved the pool area with travertine tile. They added concrete sculptural elements such as the pagoda and birdbath in the front bed and sculptural pieces in the pool area. They removed sod between the front of the house and walkway, built up the beds with soil amendments and planted red drift roses and knockout roses in the front beds and around the river birch in the lawn area.

Their first 'success':

The front beds. (They like to look at the "before and after" photos!)



Do they maintain their own yard and plantings?

Yes: Merylyn enjoys encouraging continuous blooming of her roses by deadheading them after they finish blooming. Kerry mows his lawn because he feels that the larger mower decks the landscape companies use will damage his lawn. They spend about 20 hours per week on their garden.

Send your nomination for the award to Cindy Francisco - pltlwr44@gmail.com

Photos: Becky Hinson

