



Melvina Vistas

Year Built: 1901
 Home Size: 2200 sq.ft.
 Contractors:
 Ecoscape Environmental Design (see ad on page 11)
 Simple Solar Systems (see ad on page 11)
 Burton Construction

Home sponsored by:



A Mountain Garden of Eatin'

by Bill Melvin

Early Boulder County tax records show the value of our original structure at \$25 back around the turn of the 20th century. Since then this funky mountain cabin has seen numerous additions that have culminated in a fitting tribute to both the old and the new. Over the years, the house has been a labor of love that hopefully has increased the value slightly!

Melvina Vistas offers insight into green remodeling and energy-efficient options for existing structures, including solar panel installation, on-demand hot water heater, sustainable flooring, reclaimed wood products, and no-VOC paint throughout. The interior is nicely complemented by a lush landscape of edible, native, drought-tolerant species creating a little oasis on the slopes of Fourmile Canyon.

After a few years of renting and becoming intimately familiar with the house and its draftiness, we decided that the windows were the first upgrade to be made once the house was ours. We also chose to install of a wood-burning stove — that was a no-brainer, with 12 acres of densely populated pine slopes within view, in desperate need of thinning for both forest health and wild-fire mitigation.

The breezes were felt under the house too, where the water pipes were strategically placed. We were finally forced to consider the luxuries of a foundation. That seemed a wise time to remodel the kitchen, since it needed to be jacked up to install the foundation. We integrated locally harvested and milled woods for the post and beam construction, countertops, and ceiling. We reused the existing wood siding that had been hauled down from a mine shack many years ago. Removing walls to create

an open floor plan created a much brighter space that now allows us to grow herbs in the kitchen year round.

We've made numerous energy efficient improvements over the years. To complement our passive solar gain, we installed a 3.1 kilowatt PV system designed and installed by Joe Callahan of Simple Solar Systems. An on-demand hot water heater recently addition replaced an outdated hot water heater from the 80s. Several Energy Star appliances that conserve both energy and water use have been added over time to replace the outdated and dysfunctional refrigerator, dishwasher, and washing machine.

As a permaculture designer and owner of Ecoscape Environmental Design, Bill integrated an edible landscape into our 7,200 ft. elevation mountain property; numerous fruit trees, berry bushes, herbs, vegetables, and a host of natives are supported by various water-harvesting schemes. The result is an integrated food forest that provides organic delights throughout the growing season.

Between the green remodeling and the landscape of discovery, we look forward to a healthy and fun space in which to raise our new son, Daniel Jameson.



Bill Melvin and family

ENERGY FEATURES

- Passive solar design
- 3.1 kW grid-tied solar photovoltaic system
- Daylighting, CFLs, LEDs
- Double-paned, low-e windows & insulating blinds
- Energy Star appliances

GREEN FEATURES

- Bamboo and cork flooring
- Locally cut and milled Siberian elm slab countertops
- Low VOC paints

WATER FEATURES

- Composting
- Xeriscape & permaculture
- Drip irrigation
- Wildlife habitat
- Low-flow showerheads, fixtures and toilet
- Water-efficient appliances

RE-USE/SALVAGE FEATURES

- Wood posts salvaged from spruce budworm thinning project
- Rough-cut pine siding & lumber from ReSource
- construction waste recycling
- Recycled old appliances