I have to admit I like large plants. I do appreciate miniatures and smaller ones, but when it comes to exploring habitat or planting things in my own garden, we're talking *Cyphostemma*, not *Lithops*. There are reasons for this of course, mainly based on the potential for success. Big plants are easier to find and to grow than smaller ones. It's a win-win to my mind. I'm going to use a fairly broad definition of tree – anyone who has seen Dan Mahr’s excellent talk on the subject knows how difficult the term can be to define. I’m also going to stick to plants I’ve had some luck growing, since nobody would be interested in pictures of dead sticks. Speaking of dead sticks, I’m going to exclude things like *Acacia* and *Parkinsonia*, which are pretty well covered in more mainstream publications.

My first succulent landscaping was a greenhouse bed in the UK. Unfortunately, its location was heavily shaded and remained constantly wet during the winter months. Plants grew fast (for the UK) and rotted equally quickly in winter. Nonetheless, I realized the benefits of the approach as a teenager.

It is difficult to do landscaping piecemeal, and I prefer to start with a clean slate — no grass or other plants. I also remove any irrigation piping. I’m a fan of raised beds, soil amendment and rocks. The first two for their abilities to grow plants well, the latter for saving them from cold weather. Thus, the transformation of my garden to a succulent landscape took place over about ten years with the most recent phase being completed in the fall of 2013 (Fig. 1). This turned out to be beneficial, as I didn’t make all my mistakes at once.

The climate in Thousand Oaks, California isn’t too extreme. There are only usually a handful of days above 100 ºF in the summer, and the same can be said of frosty days in winter. However, there are exceptions, and I fear frost far more than heat. In 2007, the night of January reached a low of around 20 ºF and temperatures were below freezing for 9+ hours. The following night was not quite as bad, but many things

1. My front garden viewed from the street, perhaps the best vantage point if you are fussy about weeds.