

SCOFIELD PHASE VIII **RESIDENTIAL OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Landscaping Guide

The Architectural Control Committee (ACC) is providing the following information and guidelines for landscaping.

Xeriscaping means using native and adapted plants that grow and sustain themselves with low water requirements, and that can tolerate heat and drought conditions. Landscape plans that include xeriscaping still require regular maintenance to keep weeds and grass from growing through and to remove leaves from all areas.

Approval for Changes

Prior to changing any landscape, a homeowner must submit an ACC application available on the Association's website at www.scotfieldridge.org under the *Resources* tab. The application must include an outline of the project and a design plan, as well as details on the type of sodded grass, plants, ground covers, border materials, and hardscape materials to be used. Installation of new landscaping must not begin until the application has been approved. Once the landscape installation has commenced, the project must be completed within 270 days per CCR Section 3.23, or the number of days as otherwise amended. If the project is not completed within that time or the installation varies from the approved plan, the homeowner will be subject to violations as outlined in the Enforcement and Fining Policy. Questions about landscaping may be directed to acc@scotfieldridge.org.

Sodded Grasses

Greenery should remain as 50% of the landscape design inclusive of all yard areas visible from any street. This may be a combination of sodded grasses and plants. Tree canopies are not calculated as part of the 50%. New sod should be placed side-by-side so there are no gaps between pieces. Depending on the amount of shade provided from mature trees, homeowners should consider replacing grass such as St. Augustine with other sodded grasses that are more shade tolerant. Residents are allowed to convert the easement strip between the public sidewalk and the street curb to mulch or rock, with approval, as these areas can be difficult to water without street runoff. The easement strip is included in the 50% greenery calculation.

Sodded grasses that do well in our area include Buffalo grass, Zoysia, and Bermuda. However, no one grass is ideal for all situations, so carefully consider the amount of sunlight your lawn receives and whether you have a sprinkler system installed before choosing a new sodded grass. Artificial turf is only allowed in the backyard, with approval, as long as it does not affect water drainage to neighboring properties.

Plants

Greenery should remain as 50% of the landscape design inclusive of all yard areas visible from any street. This may be a combination of sodded grasses and plants. Tree canopies are not calculated as part of the 50%. Artificial plants are not allowed. Use plants adapted to the pH soil conditions created by the non-turf materials used. For example, don't use acid-loving plants along with alkaline crushed limestone. Acid-loving plants would do well with ground hardwood mulch. Native plants would do well with limestone or decomposed granite.

For public safety, no plant with thorns, spines, or sharp edges can be used within 6' of the public sidewalks (This is a City of Austin regulation). Also, no plants higher than 18" should be planted in the sidewalk easement strip area, as this constitutes a visual safety hazard to pedestrians and drivers. Large bushes must be trimmed to maintain the 18" height limit.

Borders

A clearly defined border separating one landscape material area from another material or turfed area must exist. This maintains a clean look and helps with erosion control to stop runoff. Borders can consist of metal edging or mortared masonry units or simply a well-maintained, consistent, clearly defined border between the different material areas. Masonry products include stone, clay brick pavers, or concrete masonry units manufactured as edging shapes. All masonry products must be properly mortared in place to avoid displacement and weed encroachment or growth between masonry units. Brick masonry must be approved for color and type. If brick units are to be used, they must be solid units, not those with holes. No "common" concrete blocks are permitted. If iron edging is used, it must be properly staked and set with a top edge not more than 2 inches above grade. Borders must be maintained as part of the landscaping, must be kept in attractive condition, and must be edged.

Ground Cover

Non-grass areas may contain ground hardwood mulch, crushed limestone or granite, flagstone, or other loose stone material for a ground cover. Leaves are not an approved ground cover. Ground cover must be contained with a border and not wash out onto the public sidewalk or street. The ground cover must be maintained to prevent weed or grass growth, generally by using commercial grade weaved landscape cloth as a base under the non-turf area. Paver stones may be used to create walkways. Concrete surfaces are limited to driveways, sidewalks and patios only. Large areas may not be composed of a single material. For example, bare mulch/rock is not allowed unless interspersed with plants.

Hardscapes

Hardscapes can include large boulders or other natural materials that are used as part of a landscaping design. Water features, urns, pots, and other man-made ornamentation can add variety, but are not to exceed 4 items total in public view. No boulders or large rocks exceeding 12" in height may be used on the narrow strips between public sidewalks and the street curb (This is a City of Austin regulation). Only 1 large boulder above 2' and not to exceed 3' in height is allowed in the front lawn and cannot create a visual safety hazard to pedestrians and drivers.

Landscape Maintenance

Xeriscaped areas are subject to the same maintenance requirements as other landscaping and must be maintained at all times to ensure an attractive appearance. Plants and bushes must be trimmed, landscape must be kept free of weeds and leaves, borders must be edged and dead branches must be removed. Sickly and dying plants and bushes must be replaced with a similar plant matching the approved plan. Perennials that die back during winter must be cut back to remove dead material. This includes most ornamental grasses and other flowering perennials that are dormant in the winter. The landscape bed must remain well kept in appearance during the off season. No plants may encroach on public sidewalks or the street.

City of Austin Guidance

For information and recommendations on appropriate plants, turf grasses, and trees to use in your landscaping, pick up a copy of the City of Austin's free book *Native and Adapted Landscape Plants: An Earthwise Guide for Central Texas*, commonly known as the "Grow Green" book, free at most nurseries. You can also download the book in PDF format from the website www.growgreen.org. Certain plants determined by the City of Austin to be "Invasive Plants" should not be planted and are listed in the "Grow Green" book. Common examples include berrying forms of *Nandina*, running varieties of bamboo, *Ligustrums* (Privet), *Photinia* plants, *Vitex*, and Chinaberry trees.