

STEINER RANCH RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINE MANUAL

8.1 Landscape Design

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“**Screening**” shrubs are defined as shrubs contained in 5-gallon containers minimum, selected from the Approved Plant List, which reach a 5-ft. height minimum at maturity. At the time of installation, “screening” shrubs must be large enough to immediately screen the item, containing dense evergreen or semi-evergreen foliage to provide year around screening.

Large Shrubs are defined as shrubs contained in 5-gallon containers which will reach a mature height of 4 ft. or larger.

Small shrubs are defined as 1 or 2 gallon container plants, which reach a mature height of less than 4 ft.

To maintain sight line corridors, shrub heights within the street R.O.W. must not exceed thirty (30) inches in height at maturity.

Gravel is discouraged as ground cover. However, if gravel is to be used for ground cover, it must be submitted to the AC for approval and at least 50% of the area must remain plant material. Gravel in areas that are visible from the street must be submitted to the committee for review. Dry creek beds may be permitted, but will need to be submitted to the AC for approval.

Imitation or plastic plants, including synthetic turf materials, are prohibited.

Proposed planting plan schemes for *units* visible from the street which do not contain any turf areas must be approved. The use of railroad ties for landscape or decorative use is prohibited.

Use of “Screening” Shrubs

To be considered for approval as a variance, fences within a side street setback must be screened using “screening” shrubs (See Section 7.5, Fences & Freestanding Walls). “Screening” shrubs must relate to the street in a coherent pattern, (i.e., arranged in sweeping groups of five (5) or more plants for every twenty (20) feet in length of fencing. Shrubs must be maintained clear of the street sidewalk, street and intersection visibility zone. Shrub spacing shall be 30 inches on center (30” o.c.) or less to ensure adequate screen cover. In all cases, screening must be complete and without void.

If an *owner/builder* chooses to use plant material as a means to screen utility meters and air conditioning condensers, in lieu of fencing, the following requirements must be followed:

- Evergreen shrubs, which are 18”-24” at installation (5-gallon) and reach 4’-5’ height at maturity, must be used to screen utility boxes that are within twenty (20) feet of the curb. Approved plant material would be elaeagnus, viburnum, lorapetalum, or cotoneaster. Any other plant material must be approved in advance by the AC.

- Screening must not block the door/access of an electric transformer. Shrubs cannot be planted any closer than 10' to door side, to allow access by utility company.
- AC units should be screened with screening shrubs, as defined above, or with fencing. Having the AC unit behind the backyard privacy fence would be preferable.

Using “screening” plants for the purpose of screening landscape elements as described above are **in addition** to the minimum number of required front yard plants (See previous page).

Guidelines:

Emphasis should be given to trees, shrubs and ground covers that provide seasonal interest and color. Use low growing shrubs, ground covers, and limited quantities of annuals to enhance the front of the *residence*, especially the entry area. For example, plant material can help define outdoor spaces by providing enclosure, or framing a view.

Plant material that provides wildlife habitat is encouraged, trees and shrubs bearing nuts and berries, for example.

Minimize large areas of turf and emphasize ground cover plantings to minimize water use.

If a *unit* is completed between 1 October and 30 April, a temporary turf of annual rye or fescue should be established in order to prevent soil erosion before a permanent turf is planted in the Spring (see Approved Plant List for suggested types).

8.2 Installation & Maintenance

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Goals:

Healthy, attractive, and thriving landscapes.

With a little care in the plant installation and initial maintenance program of landscaped areas, the homeowner should enjoy his or her landscape environment for many years to come with minimal upkeep.

Requirements:

Owners must maintain all *improvements* within their *residence* except the *improvements* described in the Declaration that are being maintained by the *Association*.

Each *owner* must maintain all landscaping within the City/County right-of-way (ROW) located on his *unit* between the pavement of the street and his *residence*.

Owners/builders are prohibited from making additional *improvements* within or upon any areas that are being maintained by the *Association*, or from performing additional maintenance (such as, but not limited to tree trimming) of any existing *improvements* that are being maintained by the *Association* without consent and approval of the *Association* as applicable, that is maintaining such *improvements* or the area in which such *improvements* are located.

All *improvements* upon a *unit* must be maintained in good condition and repair and in a clean and attractive condition. Any slopes and terraces must be maintained so as to prevent any erosion upon adjacent streets or adjoining property.

Shrub and ground cover beds must be edged to keep out grasses and weeds. Sufficient water must be applied to maintain plants in a healthy condition the year round, subject to water restrictions, which may be imposed by WCID#17 or any future water supplier.

Turf must be kept mowed and edged the year round in accordance with community-wide standards.

Guidelines:

Trees and shrubs should be planted in accordance with normal horticultural practices. Suggested planting details are shown on the previous page. The City of Austin Environmental Manual is also a source for plant installation recommendations. Tree installation is best performed in the fall and winter months to ensure survivability.

Containerized trees should be planted between 15 March and 15 October. Balled and burlap wrapped trees can also be installed at this time as well as during the remainder of the year.

Periodically check guy wires and stakes on newly planted trees to ensure the tree is well supported. Protect the tree trunk from guy wire damage with rubber hoses. Remove guy wires and stakes one to two growing seasons after the tree roots have become established. Black plastic edging is discouraged.

Landscape irrigation should occur before 10 a.m. or after 7 p.m. and in conjunction with governmental jurisdictional recommendations or guidelines to avoid excessive evaporation.

Landscape areas installed with an automatic irrigation system should be scheduled to water, at most, every five (5) days between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. when water demand is lowest.

Less water is used if the grass lawn is used as an indicator: when grass does not spring back after being walked on, it is time to water.

All tree species are susceptible to deer browsing. Small caliper tree plantings should not be left unprotected. Trees should be caged with mesh wire until the canopy is taller than deer can reach.

Immediately paint all wounds, including fresh pruning cuts, on Live Oaks and Red Oaks to minimize the possible spread of oak wilt disease. If possible, pruning should be avoided during the period from 1 February to 1 June. A coat of tree-wound paint acts as a barrier, which stops fungal spores carried by insects, from entering the wound. Painting old wounds is not beneficial.