

Westlake Ranch Property Owners Association

GUIDELINES

WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING FOR FRONT YARDS

ADOPTED MARCH 15, 2016

OVERVIEW OF WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE DESIGNS

The use of native and low water use plants in Westlake Ranch front yard landscaping is allowed and encouraged. The overall look should be in keeping with the planned aesthetic of Westlake Ranch, which includes a well-organized, thoughtful distribution of a variety of plant materials in an interesting array of planted areas with varying height and massing. Accordingly, large expanses of homogeneous plant materials (e.g. ground cover), artificial materials (e.g. synthetic turf) or non-vegetated areas (e.g. gravel beds) are not acceptable. These materials may be used on a limited basis to provide accents, but cannot be the focal point of the landscape design.

LANDSCAPE WATER CONSERVATION METHODS

Along with water-efficient landscape designs utilizing low water use plants, there are a number of methods that can be used to conserve water resources while still maintaining the health, appearance and function of front yard landscaping in the Westlake Ranch community, including:

- Installation of efficient irrigation systems
- Regular maintenance of irrigation systems
- Frequent adjustment of irrigation controllers for seasons & weather variations
- Irrigation scheduling based on plant water needs
- Irrigation scheduling during early or late hours to avoid wind disturbance
- Prevention of overspray and irrigation runoff
- Soil improvements and organic mulching

Homeowners are encouraged (or in some cases required by City or State mandates) to incorporate these measures into their landscape design and/or maintenance programs. Check with your water provider for current restrictions.

ELEMENTS OF WATER-EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE DESIGNS

The effective design of low-water use landscaping includes two important elements - plant selection and plant management/water application methods.

Plant Selection

In order to be effective, plants utilized in any landscape design must grow well in the area. The “Sunset Western Garden Book” is an excellent source of plant information and shows the climate zones for each plant. Climate Zone No. 21 should be used for Westlake Ranch. Solar exposure is also very important, so the accompanying plant list specifies those plants that do well in the shade. While other plants may survive in the shade, they may not flower or grow well. In addition, some of the plants shown as shade tolerant can also grow well in full sun.

Photographs of almost any plant can be found at the Sunset Plant Finder www.sunset.com or by using an internet image search. All of the plants included herein are rated as having low or moderate water needs. Ratings for most plants can be found in the University of California publication titled “Water Use Classification of Landscape Species” which can

be found by performing an internet search for “WUCOLS”. Westlake Ranch is in Region 4.

High water use plants can be incorporated into low water use landscapes, but they will require additional watering with a hose or separate drip or bubbler irrigation valve. Over-watering of the low water use plants will shorten their life and often kill them.

Plant materials should be properly spaced during installation. Plants that are spaced too close together to grow naturally must be heavily trimmed. This “hedging” of plants destroys their natural characteristics and shortens their life spans. On the other hand, plants that are spaced too far apart and grow slowly may leave unsightly bare areas for lengthy periods of time, which is also undesirable. The lists herein are categorized by approximate plant size, but the spacing recommended in the Sunset Western Garden Book should be consulted before selecting any plant for a specific location.

Perennial plants (e.g. Salvia, Lavandula and many ornamental grasses) need to be cut back to the ground every year to stimulate new growth so they should be avoided or used sparingly to minimize unsightly areas. Additionally this task increases maintenance and increases green waste.

Existing, established plants even if not rated as “low water use” can often be effectively incorporated into water efficient landscapes. Existing plant material should be tested for drought tolerance before a major renovation is considered.

The suggested plant lists included in this guideline are not all inclusive or exclusive. New plants are constantly being introduced and many of them have low water requirements.

Plant Management/Water Application Methods

A common misconception is that native and other low water usage plants do not need any water or maintenance. Plants selected as part of a water-efficient landscape design must be properly cared for in order to achieve desired results.

Planted areas must be regularly weeded to maintain the desired aesthetic and to remove competition for water. In addition, most plants require some level of pruning to maintain a healthy structure and at some point will require replacement.

Irrigation equipment has become very sophisticated and “smart” controllers can apply the correct amount of water based on actual rainfall received. Another option is to add a rain sensor to an existing controller which will over-ride the clock setting when rain has occurred. On the other hand, watering with a garden hose can be even more accurate if done properly. Drip irrigation and bubblers are very efficient since they can apply water at the soil surface thus, they are not affected by wind and overspray like sprinkler heads. The problem, however, with these non-spray systems is that they are installed at the root ball of the initially small plant and then are too close to the plant when it grows larger. This scenario can be deadly to California native plants. Drip irrigation and bubblers are very helpful on small planting areas that are very difficult to accurately irrigate with spray heads.

When establishing any new plant material, remember that every container-grown plant has a small root system and has received frequent watering in a very well drained soil all of its life. These plants require higher initial watering rates until roots are established in the yard.

SAMPLE LANDSCAPE DESIGNS

Three types of landscape design examples are included here to provide some ideas and guidance. Many good pictures of low water use landscape designs are available at www.bewaterwise.com and other on-line resources, although not every example provided on these websites will be acceptable in Westlake Ranch. Some communities in Southern California allow desert-style landscapes predominant in Arizona, but those are not allowed in Westlake Ranch. It is always a good idea to submit a conceptual plan for Architectural Committee comment prior to preparation of a complete set of landscape plans.

Before modeling your landscape plan after another home in Westlake Ranch, please check with the Architectural Committee to make sure that plan conforms to these guidelines.

Xeriscape with Ground Cover or Synthetic Lawn

This design may be very similar to existing front yard designs except the lawn is replaced with a low growing ground cover or artificial turf. Groundcover must be properly maintained and periodically replaced at the end of its life span. Synthetic turf has a high initial and replacement cost and often appears unnatural in a landscape. Current manufacturing standards have produced attractive “lawn” varieties, but they can still be very reflective and unnatural looking. For that reason, utilization of this material must be limited and is subject to strict regulations for placement, installation, maintenance and replacement. The most realistic looking artificial lawns are located in deep shade areas which are also the most difficult areas to grow grass. Artificial turf is not permitted adjacent to natural lawn without an adequate buffer such as a planter between the two.

Dry Creek

This is a very natural design for Southern California and should include native trees such as a California Sycamore or Coast Live Oak. Most front yards have a swale that directs water from the rear and or side yards across the front yard to the driveway. The swale line should be utilized for the dry creek/cobble path and may include boulders or foot bridges to enhance the theme. Large expanses of rock or mulch, such as those that may be found in Arizona landscapes, are not acceptable. Most of the planting should be low growing or spreading to accent the dry creek theme. A tree grove is also very appropriate since this is a normal part of this natural environment. Usually, strap-leafed plants such as Agapanthus, Dietes and grasses are used to replicate a riparian or meadow effect.

California Natives

Any design can include or feature California Native plants, but their limitations should also be considered. First of all, be aware that not all California Native plants have low water use requirements. Two popular native trees – the Coast Redwood and White Alder -- actually have high water needs and should be avoided. Others have very low water needs and cannot tolerate our clay soils or survive any watering whatsoever. The most successful native shrubs are cultivars of the native species that have good garden tolerance. The design shown herein is equally appropriate for California native and other Mediterranean plants or a mixture of both.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Any changes or improvements which alter the exterior appearance of any property must have Architectural Committee approval. Please refer to the architectural rules for specific requirements regarding submittal of landscape plans, as well as separately issued guidelines for installation of artificial turf.

1. Rock/gravel may only be used for dry creek theme, as indicated above, or as small accent areas. No large expanses of rock are permitted. These materials may only be used as decorative accents.
2. Natural mulch materials may be used as temporary ground covering under newly installed plant material, not as “filler”.
3. All plants must be permanently installed, not placed in pots.
4. Plant massing and spacing should be carefully considered, taking into account the mature size and rate of growth of each plant.
5. Your street tree has been designated by the City of Thousand Oaks. Contact the Public Works Department if you want to replace your tree.
6. Revised irrigation plans must be included in the landscape plan submittal.

SUGGESTED PLANT LISTS

Ground Cover and Shrub List

Ground Covers

- *Arctostaphylos* spp. – Manzanita cultivars
- *Baccharis* ‘Centennial’ – Coyote Bush
- *Cerastium tomentosum* – Snow in Summer
- *Dymondia* – ‘Silver Carpet’ (approved for parkway)
- *Festuca californica* – California Fescue
- * *Fragaria chiloensis* – Wild Strawberry
- *Gazania* hybrids – Trailing Gazania (several colors)
- *Juniperus* ‘Wiltonii’ –Blue Carpet Juniper
- *Lotus scoparius* – Dearweed
- *Myoporum* ‘Pink’ – N.C.N.
- *Rosemarinus* ‘Prostratus’ – Prostrate Rosemary
- *Sedum* spp. – Sedum
- * *Trachelospermum jasminoides* – Star Jasmine

Small and Accent Shrubs

- *Achillea millefolium* – Common Yarrow
- *Agapanthus* spp. – Lily-of-the-Nile Cultivars
- *Artemisia californica* ‘Canyon Grey’ – California Sagebrush
- * *Aspidistra elatior* – Cast Iron Plant (shade only)
- *Carex barbarae* – Santa Barbara Sedge
- *Convolvulus cneorum* – Bush Morning Glory

- Coprosma ‘Tequila Sunrise’ – Mirror Plant Tequila Sunrise
- Dietes bicolor – Yellow Fortnight Lily
- Dietes vegeta – Fortnight Lily
- Dudleya spp. – N.C.N. Cultivars
- Eriogonum fasciculatum – California Buckwheat
- Galvezia speciosa – Island Bush Snapdragon
- Hemerocallis hybrids – Daylily (Evergreen Varieties – Various flower colors)
- Heuchera spp. – Coral Bells Cultivars
- Iris douglasiana – California Iris
- Kniphofia uvaria – Red Hot Poker (Many hybrid varieties)
- * Mahonia aquifolium ‘Compacta’ – Dwarf Oregon Grape
- Mahonia repens – Creeping Mahonia
- Mimulus spp. – Monkey Flower Cultivars
- * Nandina domestica ‘Harbor Dwarf’ – Dwarf Heavenly Bamboo
- * Nephrolepis cordifolia – Sword Fern
- Romneya coulteri – Matilija Poppy
- Rosa ‘Flower Carpet’ (various flower colors) – Carpet Rose
- Salvia apiana – California White Sage
- Tubachia ‘Silver Lace’ – Society Garlic
- Zauschneria californica – California Fuchsia Cultivars

Medium Shrubs

- Agave attenuata – N.C.N.
- Abelia grandiflora ‘Edward Goucher’ – Glossy Abelia
- Arctostaphylos spp. – Manzanita Cultivars
- Atriplex canescens – Four Wing Saltbush
- Aucuba japonica ‘Variegata’ – Gold Dust Plant
- Callistemon ‘Little John’ – Dwarf Bottlebrush
- Ceanothus griseus ‘Horizontalis’ – Prostrate Ceanothus
- Cotoneaster dammeri ‘Lowfast’ – Prostrate Cotoneaster
- Euryops viridis – Green Euryops
- * Fatsia japonica – Aralia
- Felicia amelloides – Blue Marguerite
- Grevillea ‘Noelii’ – N.C.N.
- Hebe spp. – N.C.N.
- Hibiscus rosa-sinesis – Hibiscus (various flower colors)
- * Ilex cornuta ‘Dazzler’ – Chinese Holly
- Juniperus spp. (many varieties with various foliage colors)
- * Mahonia aquifolium – Oregon Grape
- Mahonia ‘Golden Abundance’ – N.C.N.
- Myrsine africana – African Boxwood
- * Nandina domestica – Heavenly Bamboo
- Phormium hybrids – Dwarf Flax (various foliage colors)
- Pittosporum tobira ‘Crème de Mint’ – Dwarf Variegated Tobira
- * Pittosporum tobira ‘Wheeler’s Dwarf’ – Dwarf Tobira
- Raphiolepis indica ‘Ballerina’ – Dwarf Pink Indian Hawthorn
- Raphiolepis indica ‘Clara’ – White Indian Hawthorn
- Rosmarinus officinalis – Rosemary
- Salvia leucantha – Mexican Sage

- *Salvia leucophylla* – Gray Sage
- *Westringia fruticosa* – Coast Rosemary

Large Shrubs

- *Alyogyne huegelii* – Blue Hibiscus
- *Callistemon citrinus* – Bottlebrush
- * *Camellia sasanqua* – Sasanqua Camellia (various flower colors)
- *Ceanothus* spp – Ceanothus Cultivars
- * *Cocculus laurifolius* – N.C.N.
- *Cotinus coggygria* ‘Royal Purple’ – Purple Smoke Tree (Will grow to tree size)
- *Cotoneaster parneyi* – Parney’s Cotoneaster
- *Dodonea viscosa* ‘Purpurea’ – Purple Hop Bush
- *Fremontodenron* ‘California Glory’ – Flannel Bush
- *Heteromeles arbutifolia* – Toyon (Will grow to tree size)
- * *Ilex* ‘Nellie Stevens’ – Holly
- *Jasminum mesnyi* – Primrose Jasmine
- *Juniperus torulosa* – Twisted Juniper
- *Lavatera bicolor* – N.C.N.
- * *Photinia fraseri* – Photinia
- *Pittosporum tobira* ‘Variegata’ – Variegated Pittosporum
- *Podocarpus henkelii* – Long-Leaf Yellow-Wood
- *Podocarpus gracilior* – Fern Pine (Will grow to tree size)
- *Prunus ilicifolia* – Hollyleaf Cherry (E)
- *Rhamnus californica* – Coffeeberry
- *Raphiolepis indica* ‘Majestic Beauty’ – Indian Hawthorn
- *Rhus laurina* – Laurel Sumac
- *Rhus ovata* – Sugar Bush
- *Sambucus mexicana* – Blue Elderberry
- *Tecomaria capensis* – Cape Honeysuckle

Ground Cover and Shrubs Key:

- * Denotes shade tolerant plants for north and east exposure or under a dense tree canopy
Can also grow in full sun unless noted
 - California native plant or hybridized Cultivar
- N.C.N. – No Common Name
spp. – All or many species of genus

Tree List

Small Trees

- *Arbutus unedo* ‘Marina’ – Strawberry Tree (E)
- *Cercis occidentalis* – Western Redbud (D)
- *Chilopsis linearis* – Desert Willow (D)
- *Lagerstroemia indica* x *faueri* – Crape Myrtle Cultivars (D)
- *Ligustrum lucidum* – Glossy Privet (E)
- *Magnolia grandiflora* ‘Little Gem’ – Dwarf Magnolia (E)
- *Pyrus calleryana* ‘Bradfordii’ – Bradford Pear (D)
- *Rhus lancea* – African Sumac (E)

Large Trees

- Albizia julibrissin – Silk Tree (D) – Multi-trunk
- Brachychiton populneus – Bottle tree (E)
- Ginkgo biloba – Maidenhair Tree (Male Variety) (D)
- Liquidambar styraciflua – American Sweet Gum (D)
- Liquidambar ‘Rotundiloba’ – Fruitless Liquidambar (D)
- Magnolia ‘Samuel Summer’ – N.C.N. (E)
- Melaleuca quinquenervia – Cajeput Tree (E) – Multi-trunk
- Olea ‘Swan Hill’ – Fruitless Olive (E) – Multi-trunk
- Pistachia chinensis – Chinese Pistach (D)
- Platanus mexicana – Mexican Sycamore (D)
- Platanus racemosa – California Sycamore (D) – Multi-trunk
- Quercus agrifolia – Coast Live Oak (E)
- Umbellularia californica – California Laurel (E)

Tree Key:

- California Native Trees
- (D) Deciduous Tree
- (E) Evergreen Tree
- N.C.N. – No Common Name
- Multi-trunk – Available as multi-trunk or standard (single trunk)