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Single-Family and Duplex Front-Yard Landscape Guidelines

Pursuant SAMC 41-609 (NS-3038), the following are the landscape guidelines and permitting requirements established by the Director of Planning and Building, which may be amended from time to time, for required front yard landscaping for properties developed with a single-family residence or a duplex:

1. Rehabilitated landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or **less than 2,500 square feet do not require plans or permits.**
2. New landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area of 500 square feet or more or rehabilitated landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet are subject to the [Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance](#) and require plans drafted and stamped by a certified landscape professional and permits.
3. All required landscape areas on private property **MUST** be covered with materials such as plants, compost and mulch, synthetic turf, or permeable hardscape. Approved driveways and walkways shall not count toward required landscape area.
4. Refer to the zoning district standards for minimum number/size of trees and shrubs that are required in the landscape area. <https://www.santa-ana.org/zoning-documents/>.

Below please find landscaped standards for zoning districts where single-family and duplexes are commonly developed: Single-Family Residence (R1) and Two-Family Residence (R2) zoning districts.

Table 1 – Single-Family and Duplex Front-Yard Landscape Standards

Landscape Standards	Single-Family Homes (R1) & Duplexes (R2)*	
	Number	Size
Canopy Trees (Double-staked)	1	24-inch box
Shrubs (Herbaceous perennials/shrubs)	6	5-gallon
Shrubs (Herbaceous perennials/shrubs)	10	1-gallon
Turf/Ground Cover	Turf or acceptable dry climate ground cover	
*Applies to single-family and duplex structures in the R1 and R2 zoning districts, respectively. Other uses permissible in the R1 and R2 follow separate standards, as specified in each zoning district.		

5. **Ground cover (i.e., live plant material, turf or synthetic turf, or combination thereof) must cover at least 65% of the required landscape area.**
- a. All of the required landscape area shall be covered with plant material by the time the plants are mature, or within five (5) years, whichever is sooner.
 - b. Synthetic turf shall comply with the synthetic turf standards: <https://www.santa-ana.org/documents/synthetic-turf-standards/>.
 - c. Any required shrubs shall be planted in planter beds free of synthetic turf. The total planter bed area shall equal or exceed two (2) square feet of planter bed area per required shrub. Planter bed areas may be covered by mulch or other live plant ground cover.
 - d. No more than 25 percent of the shrub planter bed shall be designed in such a manner as to be free of live plant material within five (5) years.
 - e. All required trees shall be planted in a tree well of no less than two (2) feet from the trunk or four (4) feet diameter, whichever is greater. Required trees shall be located in areas where tree canopy will provide maximum amount of shade over hardscapes, structures, and/or synthetic turf to reduce urban heat island effect. The tree well shall be free of live plant material or synthetic turf and covered with mulch.
 - f. If not covered by permeable hardscape or plant material, landscape must be completely covered by at least a two-inch layer of mulch. Acceptable mulch includes compost, bark and other organic material. There can be no bare soil or installation of non-permeable hardscape, such as a concrete patio or walkways other than the approved walkway leading from the street to the primary entrance of the unit.
 - g. All live plants selected from [LA Coastal Gardens](#) or www.bewaterwise.com are drought tolerant and options to help reduce water use.
 - h. Irrigation systems should be adjusted to be water efficient through best practices (drip irrigation, bubblers, etc.)
6. **Permeable hardscape may cover no more than 35% of the required landscape area.**
- a. Permeable hardscape may include decomposed granite, decorative stones, pebbles, gravel, pavers and brick set on a bed of sand, where no mortar, cement, or grout has been used.
 - b. Permeable hardscape adjacent to approved driveways shall not be used for parking of vehicles. Permeable hardscape is to have no greater than a two (2) percent slope to allow percolation of water into the soil.

For more information and a variety of resources for creating and maintaining front yard landscaping, please visit: <https://www.santa-ana.org/documents/how-to-garden-in-a-drought/>.