

## Drought Tolerant Landscapes Guidelines For Front Yards *July 2022 DRAFT*

### **General Overview**

These HOA drought tolerant planting guidelines have been created to help guide the individual homeowner in the process of landscaping their front yards in a water-conservative manner. In the new water wise era, the emphasis of these guidelines is to allow the homeowner to have a personalized, resource-conscious landscape, while also fitting in with the existing theme of the community. California friendly plants are encouraged, as are drought resistant plant types which fit well within the existing community. The Board of Directors believe that if planned and executed well, we can ensure that the members of our community are being responsible with our valuable water resources while also maintaining the property value of our homes.

***NOTE: Although a thoughtfully planned and executed drought tolerant landscape can help conserve water, they MUST still be maintained regularly and routinely. Drought tolerant yards will still be held to the same standards as any other conventional yards in terms of weed removal, debris clean up, and general plant health. Drought tolerant yards are not maintenance free!***

### **Submittal Requirements**

1. Proposed planting plans must be submitted to the HOA for approval prior to installation. Architectural applications are reviewed every month during the Board meetings. All planting plans must include the standard application form and all of the following information:
  - a. A list of plants intended to be used
  - b. Plan view locations of these plants
  - c. Locations of all existing plants/trees that shall remain.
  - d. Location of any new hardscape. (concrete/pavers)
  - e. Location and type of any rock or bark to be used.The plan may be a hand drawn, scaled plan, “roughed” out by the homeowner or contractor.
2. These guidelines are intended for front yard areas only and shall include proposed walkways and other hardscape, planting areas with plant names, retaining walls, lighting, and any other substantive change. Photos of existing conditions are recommended as part of submittal package.
  - a. For proposed retaining walls: drawings shall note materials, colors and heights. Note that taller walls may require building permits from the city.
  - b. Hardscape including concrete and pavers must be included in the application with specific dimensions of the finished product.
3. **Trees:** The Green Valley Lake Association is well established with a variety of common area and median strip trees. As each community has unique features, it is important that the selection of a proposed front yard tree be appropriate based upon future growth within the allocated space and continuity with the adjacent landscape theme. As there is a wide diversity of appropriate trees to

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choose from; these guidelines will not limit the choices, however selection must receive approval from the Board of Directors. The most common trees in the community now are:

- a. Crepe Myrtle
- b. Chinese Pistache
- c. Scarlet or Pin oak trees
- d. Red Maple
- e. Note that white paper birch, Bradford pears, Chinese hackberries, willows, and sycamore trees do not do well in this area and may cause property damage and are therefore generally not permitted. Fruit bearing trees in the front yards are also not permitted.

## **General Guidelines for Front Yard Landscaping**

1. Planting that fits well with the existing community landscape that are well suited for their soil, moisture level, and sun exposure.
2. Using plants that are an appropriate size for the space they are planted in so that frequent severe pruning is not necessary.
3. *Layered* planting is preferred; taller foundation plants, with lower mid ground plants and low foreground shrub or groundcover accents.
4. Selecting plant species that provide beauty and visual interest but do not need to be replanted every season.
5. New plantings are intended to adhere with the approved plant list. However, any proposed plants that are not on the approved plant list may be submitted with a basis for use, subject to review by the Landscape Committee and/or Board of Directors.
6. All trees planted within 5-feet of hardscape (sidewalk, driveways, etc.) shall have a root barrier device installed adjacent to hardscape areas. Trees with invasive root systems will not be approved (sycamore, willow, etc.).
7. Owner assumes all liability and responsibility for any root damage from trees planted in their yards (including but not limited to fencing, walls and structures, utility lines, drainage and to adjacent neighbor improvements).

## **California Friendly Design Guidelines**

“California Friendly” is all about using plants that have low water requirements. In Green Valley Lake, we encourage thoughtful designs that have low water requirements. While this style, also known as Xeriscape, often includes desert landscape of gravel and cactus, this is not the look that suits our community. The Board is not looking for a parched, barren look, nor a no-maintenance (e.g. all rock/gravel) approach. Cactus and large, predominately rock/gravel/mulch areas will not be approved.

In addition, the type, size, and color of rock can have a big impact on the overall appearance of the yard. Using rock as an accent feature is allowed provided that the rock is of a natural appearance. It is not possible to list all the variations and type of rock that are available, but as a general guideline, the type of rock which have been deemed acceptable is often referred to as “Lodi Cobble” in the 1 ½” to 3” size. Small, pea-size gravel, bright or unnatural looking rocks or mulch will not be approved. (Bright white stone, red lava rock)

Additional resource for plant materials and ideas may be found at the California Native Plant Society:

<https://www.cnps.org/>

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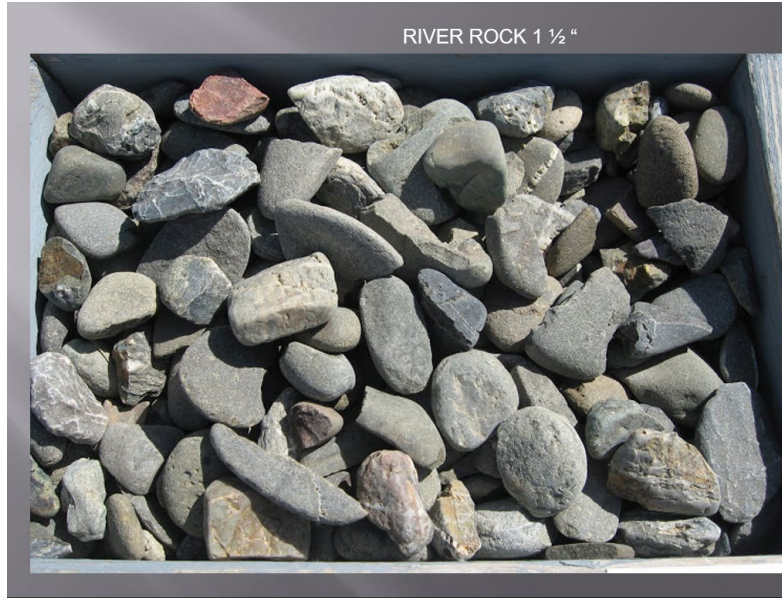
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Samples of the type of rock which the finds acceptable.



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Samples of rock the Board does **NOT** permit:



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Samples of natural colored bark/mulch which Board finds acceptable:



GOLDEN REDWOOD NUGGETS





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Samples of Bark/mulch the Board does **NOT** permit:

RED BARK



RUBBER BARK



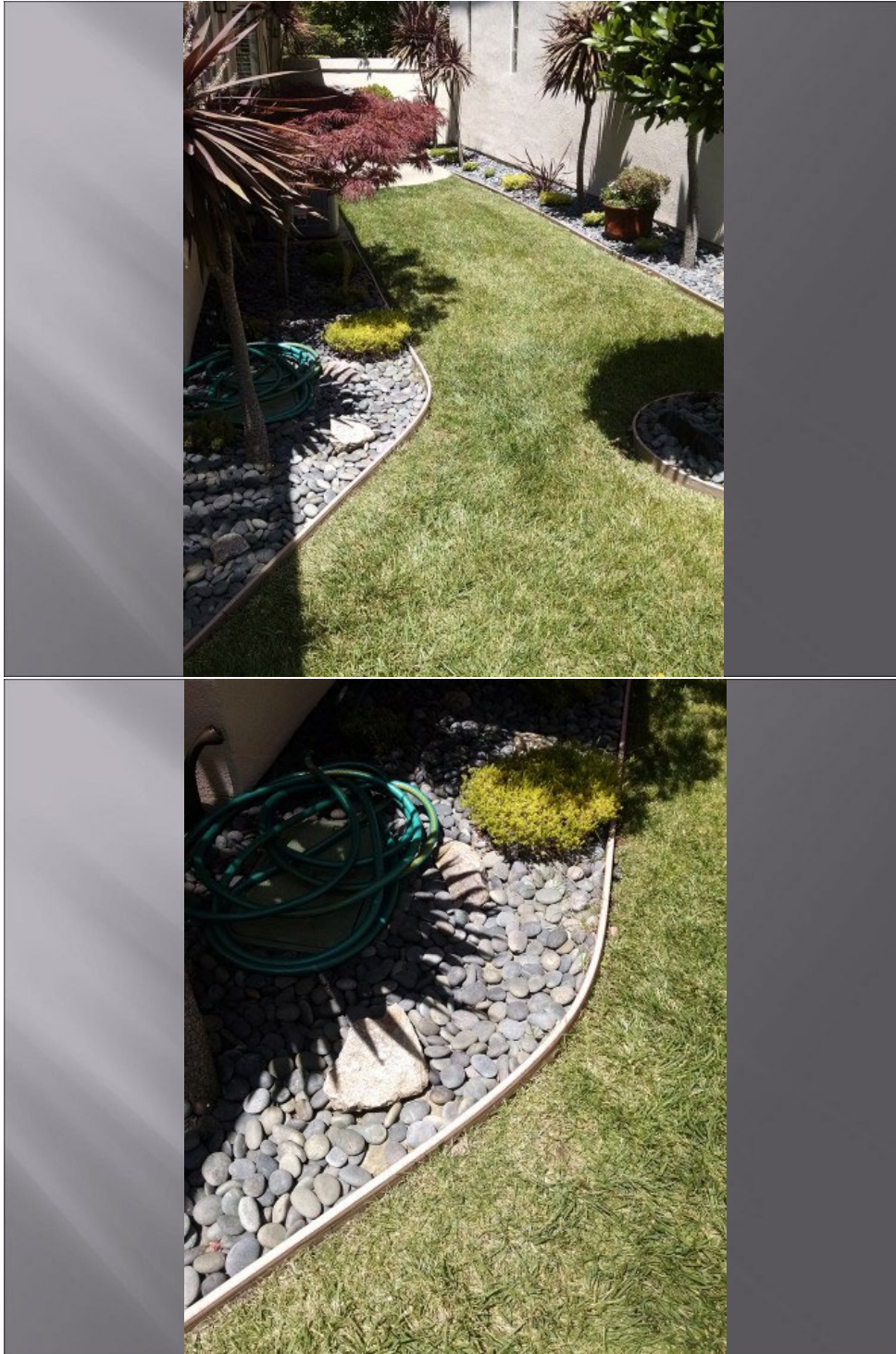
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## **Some photos for general design reference:**

Additional resource for plant materials and ideas may be found at the California Native Plant Society:

<https://www.cnps.org/>





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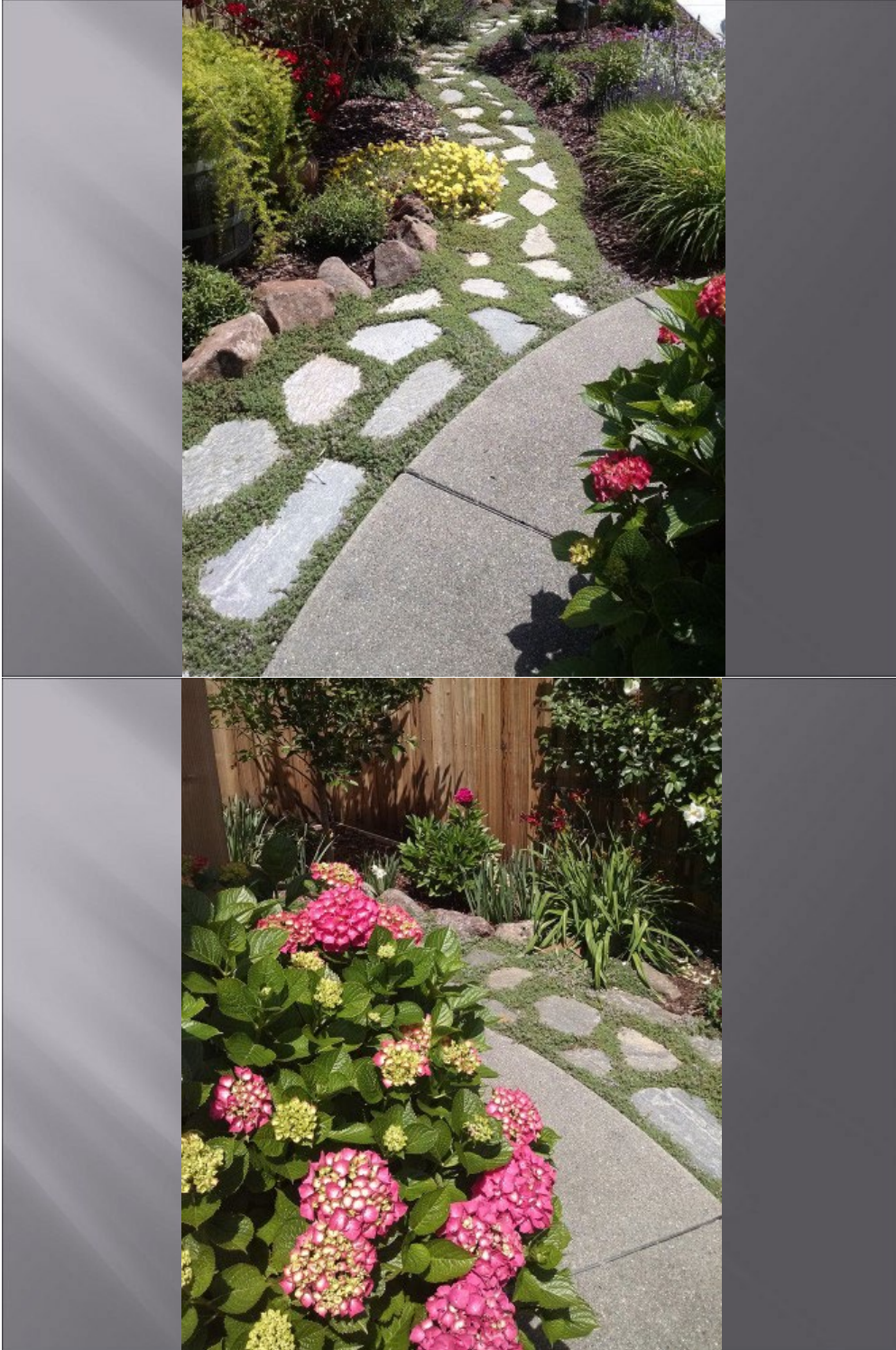
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## **Artificial Grass - Synthetic Turf**

Owners may consider synthetic grass for water conservation and to reduce maintenance. Artificial turf varies considerable in manufacturing quality, life, and durability. The association has developed guidelines to accommodate the installation of artificial turf so the finished product looks as close as possible to actual grass.

**Guidelines:** Artificial lawns need to be realistic looking turf. “Astroturf” or other synthetic green carpet-type materials are not allowed. The application for artificial lawn must include the following information:

1. Color. Turf comes in various-color options. Three-color turf provides the most realistic looking grass.
2. Color Retention rating/warranty period. The colors in artificial grass will fade over time because of exposure to UV sunlight. Nylon tends to break down faster than other materials and should be avoided.
3. Pile and Weight. The higher the face-weight of the product, the better the product's appearance. Turf in the 20 to 30 face-weight is less desirable than products in the 40 to 60 face-weight range.
4. Toxic Materials. Turf manufactured with nylon typically incorporates lead into the manufacturing process to keep the color from fading. Avoid any materials, including infill products, that use lead or any other heavy metal materials.
5. Permeability. Water needs to drain through the product. The board requires products with completely permeable backings so that drainage through the turf is uniform and complete.
6. Water Absorption. Owners should avoid products that absorb water (another problem with nylon). If the product absorbs water, that means it absorbs pet urine. This creates odors and discoloration.
7. Infill Materials. Once the artificial turf is installed, “infill” is used to make the turf stand up. The Board requires in-fill that does not absorb urine, that does not raise the temperature of the product (such as rubber), and does not contain heavy metals.
8. Base and Drainage. Artificial turf cannot be installed over the top of existing grass. Sod and dirt must be removed and an aggregate base and soil stabilization fabric installed to allow for proper drainage.

## **In Summary:**

Properly designed and implemented California Friendly design can significantly reduce (but not eliminate) maintenance and it has been estimated that it can reduce water use by up to 60 percent. While a successful California Friendly design may look informal, it requires a keen design eye both to create the design, then to review/approve it. We highly recommend that you hire a design professional and adhere to the design guidelines presented in this booklet. In doing so we believe it is possible that your application will be well received by the Board. In addition to text, we hope the photo examples of acceptable and unacceptable design solutions will prove helpful.

Additional resource for plant materials and ideas may be found at the **California Native Plant Society:**  
<https://www.cnps.org/>