

River Oaks Association Landscape Guidelines

Revised 3/14/10

Before initial landscaping is installed, the plans must be approved by the Association trustees. These guidelines are meant to provide general direction to homeowners, and are subject to change. Specific needs and requirements of each home will be taken into consideration as the plans are reviewed.

Foundation Plantings: Front yard landscape is an important element used to reinforce the character of a community. A cohesive and unified landscape appearance is achieved by extending the planting elements of the front yard to the side of the home. The front and sides of the residence should be completed within 30 (weather permitting) days of residence completion.

- The landscape planting should include a mixture of evergreen, broadleaf evergreen and deciduous shrubs and trees. The recommended percentage of evergreen plant material to deciduous plant material is 40% evergreen and 60% deciduous. This selection recommendation will provide excellent alternating seasons of display and color. The planting of annuals is encouraged but does not replace the above requirements.
- Minimum plant material requirements will be as follows: A minimum density of plant material in highly visible front and side yard areas (excluding turf areas) is 3 trees and 15 – 20 shrubs. Allocated at owner's discretion between the front and side yards. Installed tree size requirements are as follows: Shade Tree 2 ½" caliper, Ornamental Tree 1 ¾" caliper and Evergreen Tree 6' height. Shrubs 3 gallon container. Perennial and ornamental grasses may be substituted for shrubs at 3 one-gallon perennial or ornamental grass species per one five-gallon shrub. Trees may be substituted for shrubs, (or perennials and ornamental grasses at the aforementioned rate). Shrubs may not be substituted for trees.
- Owners are responsible for the consequences of any landscape material they install in their yards. Plant material that does not survive shall be replaced by the owner within twelve (12) months after the material dies.
- Owners shall maintain their lots in a satisfactory and sightly manner. This includes applying weed killer and fertilizer to the extent necessary to maintain an appearance appropriate for the development, regular mowing, and regular maintenance of trees and shrubs. It should be free of weeds and debris; lawn shall be neatly mowed and trimmed; and shrubs pruned.
- Front yard turf areas shall be the dominant character along street frontage of all lots, including both sides of the driveway. Accent planting along driveways or front entry walks is encouraged. However, locate plants away from driveway curbs and walk (30" minimum) to minimize long-term maintenance requirements and allow plants to maintain natural character. A lower ground cover type plant often works well in this area.
- Special design features such as low walls; trellis, water features, upgraded driveway, or other structures are encouraged and must be approved in advance.

Design Recommendation

A common practice on many house lots is to line up new foundations in a strict single file parallel to the building walls. Not only does this often look awkward and stiff, but it also presents a layout that may prove intrinsically weak, sparse, and often out of scale with the structure and its site. A more suitable approach is to enlarge these frontage beds to hold at least two rows or groupings of different sized plants-and even three lines are not out of place for sizable houses with the tallest plants placed nearest to the building to create a stepped-down arrangement toward the walk. To visually anchor and soften the strong vertical lines at outer house corners, include a small flowering tree or chunky evergreen.