

VHPOA Architectural Committee Recommendations
re Turfgrass Replacement in Front Yards
September 30, 2015

In light of the current trend to remove turfgrass entirely from landscapes, the VHPOA Architectural Committee recommends that the Board adopt the following guidelines to be added to the Architectural Committee Guidelines and published on the website and in the next and following newsletters:

1. Per the Village Homes Architectural Guidelines, Architectural Applications MUST be submitted for any plans to modify landscaping in the front or street visible side yards. All Applications should contain a thorough description of the plants, grass and hardscape being removed. New plans should contain descriptions of plant and hardscape replacement including samples, sketches and/or photographs. The plans, at minimum, must show a drawing of the yard and the placement of plants, with names and sizes of the plants being installed.
2. When loose gravel, stones, rocks or mulch are requested, the Architectural Committee recommends that the shades and colors chosen closely mirror the natural soil and rock colors of our local environment. Red, black and bright white rocks or mulch are unlikely to be approved. It is recommended that loose gravel, stones, rocks and mulch do not comprise over 50% of the front yard area. Samples are required. Residents must ensure all loose products applied to their landscape stay contained in their yard and do not roll or spill onto the sidewalks and streets creating safety issues. Residents must replace gravel, stones, rocks and mulch that become sparse or no longer look attractive.
3. The Architectural Committee encourages landscape replacement that includes a variety of plants and plant sizes, but should contain at least one tree, with various shrubs and groundcovers in addition to hardscape items, such as stepping stones, boulders, decomposed granite pathways, dry streambeds, fountains, pottery, etc. The value of mature trees in our community (City planted trees, as well as homeowner planted trees), provide shade for our sidewalks, increase property values and add visual beauty to our neighborhood. Property owners must ensure that all trees receive adequate water during drought seasons.
4. The Board has adopted the attached City of Westlake Village guidelines for artificial turf. Please visit the clubhouse for samples that are approved.
5. There is a plethora of information available at our libraries, water companies, on websites, and from Ventura County Master Gardeners, regarding plants that thrive in our climate, in our clay soils and which need less water than some traditional plants. The Architectural Committee has submitted the Master Gardener list of books, organizations and on-line sites for reference so residents can choose wisely when they decide to re-landscape their properties with an entirely different and drought tolerant plan.
6. The Architectural Committee has adopted a "Completion of Work" form that must be submitted to ensure landscape plans are completed as specified in the Architectural Application.