

Landscaping/Xeriscaping Guideline

(VEC) Effective December 6, 2023

Front Yard Landscape Guidelines:

Landscaping is required for all residential front yards and side yards visible from neighboring properties, streets, and common area and maintained.

Turf: The District encourages water conservation. It is recommended that turf installation be considered in areas where it can be used for play and high-plains desert landscaping in the remaining areas of the front and side yard property.

All grass must be mowed regularly and remain disease and weed-free.

Vegetable Gardens: Vegetable gardens are allowed in the front, back, or side yards and are defined as a plot of ground or elevated soil bed of which pollinator plants, flowers, vegetables or herbs, fruits, leafy greens, or other edible plants may be grown.

Xeriscape

Xeriscape refers to a landscape that incorporates plants, hardscape, and turf. While the Village East Community Metropolitan District is considered high-plains desert, the landscaping of yards and common areas should not be restricted to appear barren or without vegetation. A Xeriscape yard, planted with many species of beautiful drought-tolerant plants, can be lush and beautiful while enhancing the beauty and function of landscapes in the District. Xeriscapes cannot only beautify the neighborhood, but reduce cooling costs, create a sense of place, attract wild birds, butterflies, and many other desirable wildlife. Xeriscape yards make sense because they are one of the best water-efficient landscaping options.

Xeriscape is a mispronunciation of the word Xeriscape. Xeriscape is a yard landscaped predominantly with gravel and dirt, containing few or no plants. This is not allowed for front yards in the district.

The District provides the following guidelines to help in Landscaping/Xeriscape design. Please refer to Exhibit B at the end of the DRC Guidelines for suggested Xeriscaping examples.

1. Plant material in the xeriscape area (both newly installed and/or retained plants) must be identified as drought-tolerant plantings, at a typical mature size, and be allowed to consist of up to 80% of the area.
2. A minimum of 50% of the total land area to be landscaped must be in non-grass; it is recommended to use the CSU Extension Plant Select website (plantselect.org) to help identify low water use plants that are preferable for our ecosystem, in unison with an organic and/or inorganic top dressing.
3. Drought-resistant trees and shrubs must be the primary accent plants. (trees might provide a large percentage, but cannot account for all.)
4. Inorganic top dressing includes gravel, river rock, and decomposed granite.

Organic top dressing includes bark, shredded bark or mulch.

5. Fountains are allowed in the xeriscape area only if they are of a recirculating, cascading and non-spraying design.
6. The landscape must be covered with a minimum of a 2" deep layer of organic or inorganic mulch (such as granite or rock). Other materials may qualify.
7. A concrete surface cannot take up more than 20 percent of the area in the front yard, excluding driveways.

Rock Ground Cover: If decomposed granite or other landscape rock is used, it must be of an "earth tone" color not white, green, blue, purple, red or other bright colors. All rock areas shall be treated with pre-emergent weed control at regular intervals to prevent weed growth.

Non-Vegetative Turf Grass (Artificial Turf): Non-vegetative turf may be considered in backyards by the DRC, provided it is warranted for a period of 10 years against discoloration and wear and is professionally installed. A sample of the product and a copy of the warranty must be submitted. If the non-vegetative turf deteriorates to an unacceptable condition, as determined by the DRC, the homeowner will be required to remove and/or replace it.

Artificial Plants: Artificial plants **are not permitted.**

Irrigation: A drip irrigation system is strongly encouraged for all xeriscape areas. Turf areas are encouraged to be watered with pop-up spray or rotating sprinkler head type of irrigation.

Fine Grading & Mounding: Fine grading is a critical aspect of landscaping. Each lot has been graded such that all stormwater will drain away from the house. It is important that this drainage pattern is maintained when preparing the landscape design, especially if mounds and berms are proposed in the landscape design. In all cases, the installation must comply with the District's grading and drainage plan.

Mounding and other proposed grade changes will be closely scrutinized by the DRC to assure that mounding will appear natural.

Boulders: The use of accent boulders is encouraged. All boulders are to be buried 1/3 in the ground.

Hardscape: Any additional areas, including patios, landscaped walkways, sitting walls, retaining walls, water features, fire pits, landscape lighting, grill surrounds, pergolas, and other custom-built living spaces, will be considered hardscape. Bollards, chairs, and ropes are prohibited in front yards. Headers may not exceed 12" in width and shall be flush where they abut other paved areas and must be of the following materials: brick, Saltillo tile, Mexican tile, slump block, paver, concrete, steel, aluminum, or 2" x 4" redwood.