**Xeriscaping in Presidential Meadows**

Xeriscaping means using native and adapted plants that grow and sustain themselves with low water requirements, and that can tolerate heat and drought conditions. The advantages of xeriscaping may include:

* Cost savings on water bills
* Conservation of diminishing water resources during drought periods
* Prevention of pollution of surface and ground water from environmentally harmful runoff
* Pride in knowing you are doing something substantial to protect our fragile environment

Presidential Meadows will allow up to 50 percent of the front yard to be transformed into a xeriscape. The easement strip between the public sidewalk and the street curb does not count toward the 50 percent turfed area.

Approval for Changes

Prior to changing landscape, homeowners must submit an ACC Architectural Approval Application available on the Association’s website at [www.presidentialmeadows.org](http://www.presidentialmeadows.org). The request must include an outline of the project and a design plan, as well as details on the types of plants, the ground covers, border materials, and hardscape materials to be used. Allow at least 30 days for ACC to respond to the request; the ACC may request additional information. **Installation of the new xeriscaping cannot begin until the application has been approved**.

Ground Cover

Non-turf areas may contain decomposed granite, ground hardwood mulch, crushed limestone, flagstone, or other loose stone material for a ground cover. The ground cover must be maintained to prevent weed growth, preferably without using toxic or environmentally harmful chemicals. Paver stones may be used to create walkways. Concrete surfaces are limited to driveways and sidewalks only.

Plants

Plants must not impede over the edge of the public sidewalk or the street curb. In the easement between sidewalk and street curb, plants may be no more than 24 inches in height at any time as this causes a safety hazard to pedestrians and vehicles. All plants placed in the easement must be approved by the ACC prior to installation.

Use plants adapted to the pH soil conditions created by the non-turf materials used. For example, don’t use acid-loving plants along with alkaline crushed limestone. Acid-loving plants would do well with ground hardwood mulch. Native plants would do well with limestone or crusted granite.

For information and recommendations on appropriate plants, turf grasses, and trees to use in your yard, pick up a copy of the City of Austin’s free 52-page booklet *Native and Adapted Landscape Plants: An Earthwise Guide for Central Texas*, commonly known as the “Grow Green” book, free at most nurseries. You can also download the book in PDF form from the website [www.growgreen.org](http://www.growgreen.org). Certain plants determined by the City of Austin to be invasive should not be planted. See Page 50 of the “Grow Green” book, or see “Invasive Plants” at [www.growgreen.org](http://www.growgreen.org). Common examples include berrying forms of *Nandina*, running varieties of bamboo, *Ligustrums* (Privet), *Photinia* plants, *Vitex*, and Chinaberry trees.

Borders

Xeriscaped areas must be surrounded by a border to clearly define the xeriscaped areas from turfed areas. Borders can consist of metal edging or masonry products. These include stone, clay brick pavers, or concrete masonry units manufactured as edging shapes. Any proposed masonry edging must receive approval of the ACC. Brick masonry must be approved for color and type. No "common" concrete blocks are permitted. If iron edging is used, it must be properly staked and set with top edge not more than 2 inches above grade. Borders must be maintained as part of the landscaping, must be kept in attractive condition, and must be edged.

Turf Grasses

Homeowners should consider replacing “thirsty” turf grasses such as St. Augustine with turf that has lower water requirements. Residents should also consider converting the narrow easement strips between the public sidewalks and the street curb from turf grass to xeriscaped areas, as these areas are difficult to water without street runoff.

Good turf grasses for our area include Buffalo grass, Zoysia, and Bermuda. However, no one turf grass is ideal for all situations, so carefully consider the amount of sunlight your lawn receives before choosing a new turf grass. More information on turf grasses can be found in the “Grow Green” booklet.

Hardscapes

Hardscapes can include large boulders or other natural materials that are used as part of xeriscape landscaping design. Urns, pots, and other man-made ornamentation can add variety, but are not to exceed four (4) items in public view. Any proposed landscape "decorative items" such as birdbaths, statuary, or other similar non-vegetative items must be approved in advance. No boulders or large rocks should be used on the easement strips between the public sidewalks and the street curb.

Landscape Maintenance

Xeriscaped areas are subject to the same maintenance requirements as other landscaping and must be maintained at all times to ensure an attractive appearance. Plants must be trimmed, beds must be kept weed-free, and borders must be edged. No plants may encroach on public sidewalks. Sickly and dying plants must be removed or replaced. Perennials that die back during winter must be cut back to remove dead material. This includes most ornamental grasses and other flowering perennials that go dormant in winter.