

Indian Paint Brush Xeriscaping Policy

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Opening Statement:

In light of frequent and persistent drought conditions in the area, and recent legislation regarding HOA's and Xeriscaping, the Indian Paint Brush Board has formulated the following guidelines to assist homeowners who wish to adopt water conservation friendly landscaping methods. We believe that it is in the best interest of the Association and our fellow homeowners to follow these guidelines as closely as possible to preserve both the beauty of our community and the value of our homes. The Indian Paint Brush board, the Indian Paint Brush Architecture Committee (ACC), and our contracted management company are available to answer any questions you may have. Please be advised that all Xeriscaping plans must be approved by the ACC BEFORE beginning any work on the project.

About Xeriscaping:

Xeriscaping means using native and adapted plants which grow and sustain themselves with low water requirements, and that can tolerate heat and drought conditions. The City of Austin is vigorously promoting Xeriscaping for resource conservation and environmental protection.

The advantages of Xeriscaping include:

- Saving on water bills.
- Conservation of diminishing water resources during drought periods.
- Prevention of pollution of surface and ground water from environmentally harmful runoff.
- Reduced yard maintenance requirements.
- Pride in knowing you are doing something substantial to protect and beautify our community.

About Our Pre-Existing Landscaping Guidelines:

In the past, the Indian Paint Brush HOA has always required full and green turf areas to cover the vast majority of our front yards. While many of us have been able to adhere to this requirement, we also understand that it is becoming unrealistic for a selection of homeowners due to several concurrent years of inhospitable climate conditions and the resultant city-enforced watering restrictions. Many of the Xeriscaping Guidelines are consistent with our Pre-Existing

Landscaping Guidelines. For example, the new Xeriscaping Guidelines are the same as the Pre-Existing Guidelines on where you can and cannot place new landscaping improvements. Remember, do not plant anything near electric panels or cables and beware of any utility easements while planting. The turf amount requirement is the only *substantial* change required to begin the transition to a more environmentally friendly landscaping policy. As such, Indian Paint Brush intends to manage Xeriscaping proposals as “Requests for Variance”, but NOT a replacement of our Pre-Existing Landscaping Guidelines. For your reference, our Pre-Existing Landscaping Guidelines will be denoted in this document with an asterisk symbol (*). The Xeriscaping Guidelines represent a new and un-tested policy for considering variances. As such, over the course of the next few years, there may be conflicts found between the two guidelines sets. These will be reviewed by the HOA Board, ACC, contracted management company, and the homeowner on a case by case basis, and any resolutions will be included in a revised policy document. Please notify us if you find any conflicts so that we can schedule a meeting to discuss the issue and make any needed determinations. We are determined that we can work together to provide a fair and even application of the requested variances.

About Requesting Variances:

All Xeriscaping plans must be approved by the ACC **BEFORE** beginning any work on the project. Failure to gain approval in advance of doing work on the project may result in fines being assessed and may necessitate the return of your property to previous condition at your expense. Approval may require up to a month of research and multiple site visits (depending upon the extent of the proposed changes), so it is best to begin the approval process 2+ months in advance to avoid excessive project delays. The winter months are the best time to plan these changes and improvements (which is also true in standard landscaping). The variance request should be submitted using our Request for Architectural Approval form, which can be found on our website by typing <http://www.indianpaintbrushhoa.com/> or by manually navigating to our website: indianpaintbrushhoa.com then going to Documents > Request for Architectural Approval and downloading the form. You may mail, fax, or email the form in. Again, please allow time for us to review and approve your request, but feel free to contact us to verify that we have received it and to check on the status.

You MUST Include the Following in Your Request for Variance:

- An overall written outline of your project (a synopsis of what you intend to do). This should draw special attention to any **major** changes that you plan to make (structural, drainage, etc.), and should reference the size and type of any trees and/or shrubs that you wish to remove.
- A drawing or photo(s) of your existing landscaping, with details about the size and type of your existing plants. Please also include any structural elements already on site (retaining walls, large rocks, etc.).

- A drawing of your Xeriscaping plan, clearly showing the existing plants you intend to keep as well as which plants will be added. The more details here the better. Though we know it will be subject to availability at the time of the installation, please try to include estimates of the type, size, and placement of any new plants. If any structural elements will be added (retaining walls, large rocks, etc.) you will need to sketch them to the best of your ability and add details about the materials you will be using, the dimension of the elements, their color, and their placement. If you will be adding a mulching substrate (bark, pebbles, etc.), indicate the type, color, and placement.
- If you are making any changes to your easement strip (strip of sod between the public sidewalk and the curb), please show this on the main drawing, or add it as its own separate drawing.

Specific Guidelines:

Turf Grass / Sod

You must continue to maintain at least 50% of your lawn as turf grass (this may be difficult to measure and may require site visits to ensure compliance). However, you may choose to re-seed your lawn with less “thirsty” varieties of grass such as Buffalo Grass, Zoysia, and Bermuda. There is not any one “perfect” turf grass for every situation, so you may wish to consult with a professional to determine which grasses are likely to do best with your soil and light conditions. You may choose any combination of turf grasses that work best for your site. Keep in mind that all grasses require regular watering when they are newly establishing themselves, and will require some amount of watering thereafter to remain healthy. The goal is to *minimize* the total amount of water and fertilizer needed each year to maintain them. You must continue to mow, weed, and edge your turf grass areas on a regular basis.

Alternative Lawns

There are some who advocate using a spread of low profile plants (such as Dutch Clover) as an alternative to a turf grass lawn. They maintain that the plants are more resistant to trampling and climate conditions than traditional lawns. However, some others feel these plants are really just invasive weeds. Because many of these alternative plants scatter seeds or creep into neighboring lawns, we generally do not recommend using them. Some of them also attract bees in great numbers, so they could potentially create a threat to individuals passing by on the sidewalk. If you have a good idea for a low profile alternative lawn, feel free to propose it in your request for variance along with as much information as possible about your suggestion. You may wish to have a backup option ready if we are unable to approve the alternative lawn choice.

Ground Covers / Mulch / Pebbles

Non-turf areas can contain decomposed granite, ground hardwood mulch, crushed limestone, paver stones, flagstone, and pebbles of varying sizes (pea gravel). Colors should be in earth tones * (white, tan, brown, etc). Materials to avoid are colored glass mulch, nut shells and husks, red or black lava rocks, concrete or cement spans larger than a paving stone, and anything that may be sharp or toxic to animals. Additionally, due to the risk of being washed off and filling the local gutters with sediment, gravel and other crushed stone should not be installed close to driveways, streets or sidewalks where it can easily be washed away. This means that it is necessary to keep

all crushed stone two (2) feet from all driveways, sidewalks, and streets. To make sure the crushed stone will not runoff, border all crushed stone or gravel with something like grass, larger stones, a retaining wall, etc., to prevent runoff into the streets. All ground covers must be maintained to prevent weed growth*, preferably without use of toxic or environmentally harmful chemicals. Ground cover style, color, design, or arrangement must not be offensive or pose a distraction to passing motorists*. Keep in mind that any large spans of ground cover material affect drainage because there is no grass root systems to prevent erosion of the soil. For this reason, we request that there is at least one plant used in each 4 square foot span. This may be difficult to measure, and may require site visit(s) to verify compliance.

Structural Elements / Retaining Walls / Raised Beds / Large Rocks

These elements can reflect a lot of creativity and bring a design vision together. Retaining walls and raised beds must be crafted using mortared masonry units. Masonry products include stone, clay brick pavers, or concrete masonry units manufactured as edging and retaining wall shapes. Cinder blocks (also known as common concrete blocks) may not be used. In general, red bricks may not be used (but an exception may be made for lawns in front of red brick houses). Individual stones can be “dry-fit” (do not need to be cemented together) as long as they do not exceed two and a half (2.5) feet in height, and are positioned in a way as to maintain stability if kicked, nudged, or run into with a lawnmower. If the ACC determines there is any safety risk in your design OR finished project, you will be required to modify or remove your structural element / retaining wall. Keep in mind that soil frequently erodes out through the cracks between individual stones, so you may want to line your raised beds with landscaping fabric, and top up the soil once or twice a year. Be careful if creating a raised bed around an established tree, because raising the soil level too high around the trunk can be very harmful and potentially deadly for the tree. Large rocks should be used sparingly and positioned as focal points in your design, not the entire attraction. This will depend on the size of the area you are Xeriscaping, and can be a matter of taste to some extent. However, designs involving twelve large rocks in a bed of pea gravel are very unlikely to be approved. Avoid causing trip hazards and impeding visual sight lines. Large rocks used in the sidewalk strip may not exceed six (6) inches in height.

Borders / Edging

Xeriscaped areas must be surrounded by a border to clearly define the Xeriscaped areas from the Turf areas. You may use metal edging in colors of green, black, brown, tan, and terra cotta (brownish red). It must be properly staked in place, and set with the top edge not more than two (2) inches above grade. You may also use mortared masonry units. Masonry products include stone, clay brick pavers, or concrete masonry units manufactured as edging shapes. You may NOT use wood elements like 2x4's or railroad ties to enclose your Xeriscaped areas. These decay too fast and are often treated with toxic chemicals. A Xeriscaped area entirely enclosed within a retaining wall or raised bed qualifies as sufficiently defined.

Decorative Items

Residents should not have an excessive amount of items such as urns, pots, birdbaths, statuary, and other man-made ornamentation. The amount of decorative items will be deemed excessive at the board's discretion. If any such items are to be used, they must be approved in advance. Indicate the items on your request for variance using inserted pictures or links to the items online

so that we may review the size, type, and color to ensure it meets with the standards of our community*.

Plants / Trees

Your local plant nursery, or a landscaping professional, can assist you in making a determination of which plants to use in your design. Many nurseries provide a free booklet called “Grow Green” which has an extensive list of suggestions of drought tolerant, non-invasive, and wildlife friendly plants and Trees. You may also download the booklet at www.growgreen.org. Try to steer clear of using any invasive plants listed on page 50 of this booklet, like the berrying forms of *Nandina*, running varieties of bamboo, *Ligustrums* (Privet), *Photinia* (Red Tips), *Vitex*, and Chinaberry trees.

All plants have different light and soil requirements, so your first choices may not survive. You need to be prepared to remove and replace them if they die immediately, or if they do not show signs of coming back during the next growing season. Perennials that naturally die back in the winter must be trimmed to remove any dead plant material. Tall and excessively bushy plants (many shrubs and ornamental grasses) usually require pruning to keep them healthy. They also can hide evidence of pest invasions (like termites) so it is best to plant them a little further away from the house. Spiky and thorny plants pose a risk to people and animals so they should not be planted near sidewalks, driveways, or easements (place at least 6ft away from these areas). Some plants like Oleander and the Caster Bean plant are toxic to animals and humans and should be avoided. No plants should be positioned where they would obstruct the view of pedestrians or motorists*. Plants taller than 12 inches are prohibited for use in the sidewalk strip because it constitutes a visual safety hazard to pedestrians and drivers*. Plants in sidewalk strip must not run or encroach into the walking path. You must keep at least two (2) trees in your front yard*. Any trees removed will need to be replaced if there are fewer than two remaining. Stumps must be pulled and backfilled with soil or ground down to or below sod level (so they do not pose a trip hazard).

This policy was adopted on August 20, 2013 at the Indian Paint Brush Board of Directors Meeting.