

COURTYARDS @ RIO HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

These guidelines were established by the original builder/developer of the community at the time of initial construction and serve as the basis for all landscaping within the community

Landscape Architecture

This Community has been built in the style of a planned development with certain architectural and landscape architecture signature features. The intent of this approach is to create an environment - similar to that in Georgetown, Old Town or Annapolis. The high density of this neighborhood makes a coordinated and well maintained landscape a mandate for homeowners individually, and for the association for all common ground.

Generally all professional landscape contractors understand the unique condition of your particular lot, light conditions and soil conditions and growth habits of plants. Generally the HOA Board is available for advice and exceptions - which must be presented in writing accompanied by plan, sketches or photos. The landscape sub group is available on a voluntary basis. If in doubt, request information through Abaris Realty, the property management agent for the HOA.

Landscape Planting Material

The landscape is to be composed of environmentally responsible plant materials e.g. drought resistant and not invasive. The plant quality and size is guided by generally accepted horticultural standards (which can be obtained through a licensed landscape contractor or a local nursery specializing in landscape architecture and design). Native plants are preferred.

Plant material is to be of mature size, thus blending in to the overall design and growth patterns established over time. Overgrown plant material is to be removed or trimmed, volunteer material (seedlings. etc) are also to be removed. Generally, all groundcover must cover the entire ground - or spread within one growth season to accomplish this.

Yard design

Each individual yard is designed to blend into the community as a whole, which is coordinated, clean and maintained. General guidance for front yards is guided by existing community landscape architecture and plant materials. Deviations must be pre-approved. Unapproved changes will be required to be corrected to fit the intended architectural style of the community. Homeowners who purchase a home in this community, where the landscape is not up to standard, are responsible immediately after taking possession of

their new property. Landlords are responsible for the upkeep of their property since their renters have no legal relationship with the HOA. Damage created by renters is the responsibility of landlords.

Architecture: foundation plantings and a cover in front of the water meter which is present in the front of each house is required. Groundcover, which serves as erosion control - closest to the sidewalks, perennials, annuals, bulbs and flowering shrubs between ground cover and foundation bed. Larger yards generally have a tree (columnar and without large root forming habit) and more groundcover, to create a shaded and energy sufficient environment so as to provide a conducive bird breeding ground. Smaller yards may include highly ornamental trees and less groundcover. All sidewalks are bordered by groundcover.

Hardscaping

Border materials are generally not accepted, fountains, statues, river rock, benches and other ornamental non plant material is to be pre-approved. Walls - such as stacked stone walls have been approved previously. The condition was the use of natural stone, and pre-approval from the Board. Integration of individual containers is approved, while larger containers and groupings of containers need pre-approval. Watering hoses and drainage pipes have to be covered to be invisible. All standing water is to be discouraged to avoid the creation of involuntary breeding grounds for mosquitoes which can carry disease. Bikes, strollers, toys and furniture are not allowed in front yards.

Plant Materials

Generally a homeowner has the right to choose preferred plant materials, as long as they meet the general guidelines mentioned above.

Foundation plantings: the neighborhood currently uses the following: Yew, Rhododendron, Azalea, Hydrangea, Laurel and some others. Yews have not been doing very well in our clay soil and are being phased out. For groundcover the neighborhood currently uses: Grass, Pachysandra, Liriope, Ivy, low growing evergreen (mugho pines, and other conifers).

Perennials: the neighborhood has established a series of options, as long as they are not overly invasive and appropriate is size. Low maintenance options currently used, include Black-eyed Susan, Hosta, Coneflowers, Astilbe, Aster, Asylum, Carnations, Iris, Lilies. Each yard should have at least 3 perennials. It is recommended to plant these plants in groupings, to ensure a showy display during seasonal prime times. Other options are allowed and do not require pre-approval. If in doubt, ask the landscape committee prior to planting.

Roses and other high maintenance plants are allowed but discouraged; Vegetables and fruit trees, or bushes, bee bushes are not allowed.

Bulbs and annuals: Generally all types of bulbs are allowed, however tulips have not been doing well and thus are treated as annuals. Each yard should have three groupings of bulbs (5 each). Type and species is up to homeowners.

Annual flowers are encouraged, grouping of winter annuals such as pansies are currently used, and summer annuals are used throughout. Type and species is up to the homeowner.

Ornamental trees: Generally, every second yard has been planted with columnar maples, Cherry trees, Dogwoods, Redbuds, Pines and other similar native trees. Addition of similar tree material is allowed - granted no overcrowding or excessive root growth is ensured. Damage caused by these additions to the neighborhood infrastructure such as sidewalks, roofs railings etc. is to be the responsibility of the individual homeowner. Removal of trees is only allowed with written approval from the HOA. Violators have and will be charged for replacement.

Alley landscape: Every space between two homes - which does not house the heat pumps, has been provided with a columnar tree. The architectural approach for this was to ensure an environmentally friendly, green screen as a divider between two decks and to lower energy costs (shade). These trees will have to be maintained. Removal of these trees is only allowed with written approval by the HOA and must be replaced. Violators have and will be charged for replacement.

Mulching

Each yard has to be mulched twice a year (early spring and late summer). The standard used in our neighborhood is either shredded pine or small bark chips. Stone, straw, pine needles and other options are not allowed. All old much - that has not composed - is to be removed prior to distribution of new much. Mulch is not to exceed 3 inches so as not to choke your plants. Mulch has to be applied so as to facilitate proper water runoff and to avoid erosion of the ground.