

# SUMMER-FALL



## A LETTER FROM THE HOA BOARD

Dear Owners & Neighbors,

I hope your late summer is going well. We have had, knock on wood, a pretty mild summer thus far despite some hotter days and a few hard welcome rains. This year is flying by faster than we would like it and will be fall in a few short months. Children are back in school, evening temps are dropping with snow on the Peak. Halloween candy has even made it into the stores as a scary sight. There has been considerable new commercial and residential development along Tutt and Dublin Blvds.

To all the owners affected by the Sand Creek Open Space fire back in May we wish the best as you get things back to normal. Some owners were displaced by this incident and repairs are still underway. If you are neighbor to those homes, please reach out and offer any assistance possible. A letter was sent to all those owners explaining rebuild timelines, standards of repair, and the Management Company and Board are monitoring the situation and assisting those owners as needed.

Thank you to all the owners that have made great improvements and repairs to their homes this year to include repainting, stucco conversions, siding & trim replacement, fence replacement, and landscaping restoration to name a few. These investments are surely noticed and appreciated by yours neighbors and certainly reflect pride of ownership into our Community despite it being over 22 years old. Homes require more maintenance as they age and delaying maintenance and repairs ends up costing more. Please ensure you keep up with exterior maintenance which also benefits you if you ever have to make an insurance claim.

Please extend a special welcome to the multitude of great new owners thus far this year. Thank you for making this your home. Home sales in the Community have been brisk despite the higher prices. This is a far cry from where the HOA was back in ~2008-2010 when homes were getting let go by the hundreds during the recession and home maintenance dropped off unfortunately. That said even though we have higher home values than 2009 we still must maintain our homes and Community for the next generation of owners and families to enjoy regardless of how long a property is owned.

The restoration of Dublin Blvd landscaping from Poudre to Black Forest/Shimmering Creek was completed. Stetson Hills Blvd and Charlotte is on the schedule for necessary tree maintenance. This area is among several common areas along arterial and collector routes encompassing the Community that is the responsibility of the HOA to maintain. If you see a maintenance concern and are unsure if the HOA is responsible please contact the Management Company or send in a work order on the HOA owner's portal.

This fall the HOA will provide another Landscaping clean up event with dumpsters in early September. This is an opportunity for owners to remove and clean up their landscaping and get rid of dead trees. The December windstorm and the typical late spring wet snow wreaked havoc on many of the already dead and dying trees. We still have many properties with 40ft tall dead trees that have to get removed before those trees come down on homes and fences like they did in the City downtown area. Please make arrangements to get those dead trees removed and replaced.

Continued on next page ...

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### **Community Website**

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### **Management Company**

HAMMERSMITH®

1155 Kelly Johnson Blvd, Suite 495  
Colorado Springs, CO 80920  
719.389.0700

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### **REMINDER:**

Quarterly assessments of \$48.50  
are due on October 1 and consid-  
ered late by October 10.

Starting in August some owners will have to receive certified mail notice for certain notices. Monthly mailed owners' statements will also be required for owners that have an account balance even if they elected to receive email statements for billing notification. Please pay assessments for the year to save the HOA mailing costs. For owners that are severely delinquent on assessments a physical notice will have to be posted at the property by law. Posting of required notices at a property will done by a third-party provider in a professional manner. These mail and processing costs come with an increased cost to the owners and HOA. Several of the State required HOA operational polices have been updated to reflect these changes and those polices are posted to the Owners portal.

Xeriscaping is a popular landscaping change this year and can dramatically save on water and improve the appearance of the property if done right. See the articles further on in the newsletter for great planning resources. We are nearing six weeks before typical first frosts at the beginning of October so be sure to get plants in so they have time to get semi-established during the warmer weather left.

As we head into fall please adjust your light timers, turn on porch and coach lights and report all non-functional street lamps. This promotes security and safety in the neighborhoods. If you have a street light out just let the Community Manager know. Crime doesn't take a holiday and expect the typical seasonal surge in the fall.

With school back in session drivers please take special care and time in the mornings and afternoons to help ensure children get to school and home safely.

Thank you for all that you do as owners to maintain your home and the Community. It is greatly appreciated.

Stetson Hills Master HOA Board

## **WELCOME NEW OWNERS!**

We are happy that you have chosen Ridgeview at Stetson Hills Master HOA as your home. We hope you are getting settled and checking out the area. We understand that buying a home and moving can be a stressful time. Once you are settled in, please take a few moments to review the Association's website at [StetsonHillsHOA.com](http://StetsonHillsHOA.com) for information about the Community. The Board of Directors is made up of owners who volunteer their time and whose function is to further HOA common interests, ensure the entire Community is properly maintained and managed in accordance with the Covenants, and to keep Ridgeview at Stetson Hills Master HOA a Community of which we can all be proud. We hope you will become involved in the activities of the Association. Options for keeping abreast of HOA news are our [Facebook page](#) and our email distribution list. If you would like to be added to the list, please send your contact information to [StetsonHillsMaster@eHammersmith.com](mailto:StetsonHillsMaster@eHammersmith.com).

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## COOLING THE HOUSE FROM THE TOP DOWN

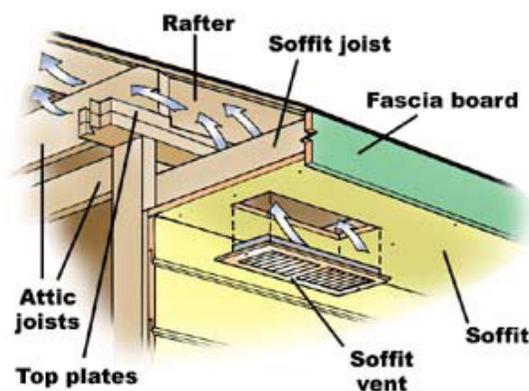
Summer brings great weather in Colorado Springs, but the higher temperatures and solar heating loads wreak havoc on keeping our homes cool during the hot summer months. When our homes were originally built, many did not come furnished with AC units installed if you can believe that, and HVAC ducting was poorly balanced throughout the home. Many homes suffer with very poor air return from the upper levels of two story homes and poor air flow to upper level rooms. These shortfalls create hot and cold areas in the home during the year. Couple that with the intense solar heating load on the roofs and attics and your upstairs bedrooms can be 5-10F degrees hotter than the main level. If you have southeast facing corner lot it can be even worse. No matter how much you run the AC the upstairs never cools down. You could have another common problem that is causing this issue, that thankfully is generally easy to check and rectify with minimal cost. A good ladder and maybe a handy neighbor to help is all that is needed to get started.

This huge shortfall when the homes were built was inadequate attic venting. Depending on your model and construction of home, you may have gable end venting or soffit venting that is supposed to provide cooler air into the attic. If you don't have the proper ventilation to your attic, you essentially have a convection oven in your attic heating your house from the top down, trapping ~150F air in your attic all day and night. This trapped attic heat also reduces the life span of your roof shingles.

Many of the homes with soffit venting were not installed properly. The number of soffit vents and corresponding square inches of soffit vent area to roof vent area was poorly calculated and very often disastrously installed by the builder. Removing your soffit vents you may find that there is no opening there at all or the hole cut was a fraction of the vent cover size (very common). If the hole was even cut properly, the vent is typically plugged and covered with blown-in attic insulation (rafter vents were often not used during construction), making the soffit vent worthless in allowing cool air up into the attic from the eaves. Correcting and/or adding additional soffit vents and clearing out the plugged insulation will allow the system to function properly and cool down your upper levels of the home immediately and noticeably. It will save on your cooling costs assuredly and your AC won't be running all night long. Filling in low uneven spots in your attic insulation and increasing up from R-39 to R-49 will also save on costs and keep your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Gaining careful access into your attic space is needed but is a worthwhile effort.

Here is a good article for figuring out the area and number of soffit vents needed: <https://todayshomeowner.com/adding-soffit-vents/>

Consult with a qualified and licensed roofing company or contractor for specific details and requirements for your home.



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## GRILLING SAFELY THIS SPRING AND SUMMER

- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use. Don't add charcoal starter fluid when coals have already been ignited.
- Never grill indoors – not in your house or any enclosed area, including your garage.
- Make sure everyone, including children and pets, stays away from the grill and never leave it unattended.
- Keep the grill out in the open, away from the house, the deck, tree branches, or anything that could catch fire.
- Use long-handled tools especially made for cooking on the grill to keep the chef safe.

Take extreme care when BBQ or cooking under a covered patio to prevent setting the patio cover on fire due to excessive heat, flare-ups or misuse of starting fluids.

Don't cook or BBQ during high winds and always have a fire extinguisher or garden hose available.

## OUTDOOR FIREPLACES & FIRE PITS

Spring and summer are great opportunities for outdoor entertaining in backyards and patios within our Community. Owners with outdoor fireplaces, firepits, and chiminea please be sure to inspect your equipment before firing it up for the season. Ensure you only burn permitted combustibles and always have a rated fire extinguisher nearby. Trash, plastics, and leaves are not permitted at any time. Fire pits and fireplaces must not be operated within 15 ft. of a neighboring structure or combustible material, such as a tree, bush, or fence. Stay current on City and County burn restrictions and bans. The [CSFD website](#) is a great resource of information. If burning wood, ensure that the fire is not smoldering and producing smoke into adjoining homes, and never leave a fire unattended. When cleaning residual fire pit ashes use a durable, heavy gage, steel container with secure lid, flood the ashes and store for a week before proper disposal. Please refer to the HOA Architectural Standard for construction and operation details. Have a great safe outdoor season!



## HOME FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY

One of the most important improvements you can do is investing time in fire prevention safety in and around your home. With the close proximity of homes to each other, a house fire can have devastating effects for owners and neighbors in just a few minutes. As spring takes hold, take an afternoon to do a fire prevention inspection of your home and action the following items to help prevent house fires:

- Inspect and test all fire and smoke detectors. Replace detectors if 10 years old. Install new high quality batteries once a year.
- Ensure every bedroom has a carbon monoxide detector that functions properly.
- Have a properly rated fire extinguisher accessible in the kitchen, and consider one for the garage and 2nd floor.
- Get rid of those mountains of discarded boxes and other combustibles taking up your garage.
- Properly dispose of old solvents, fuel, rags etc. Ensure proper containers are used at all times.
- Have a fire escape ladder for the upstairs bedrooms.
- Talk and rehearse through fire evacuation drills with home occupants twice a year.
- Ensure all exits from the home are not blocked and allow two exits from every room.
- Have your fireplace, furnace and gas water heater inspected annually.
- Do not store extra gasoline or propane tanks in sheds or garages.
- Ensure clear space around the home and between accessory structures is maintained.
- Remove daisy chained outlet strips and do not overload circuits. Contact an electrician if a breaker trips continually.
- Clean out the dryer exhaust hose and vent at least annually or more often if airflow is poor.
- Move sheds away from other houses and clear of required setbacks.

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## OVER THE FENCE

Our Community was built out with cedar privacy fences around homes. Many of these privacy fences were installed by the builder or original owners and are 16-20 years old and have seen better days. For the homes that do have cedar privacy fences there are some important points to consider when preparing to do fence maintenance or replacement as not all fences are the same and issues can arise. First many privacy fences are shared between two or more owners along the property line. Before you decide to rip down a fence and either replace it or change the best advice is **talk to all your neighbors** that could be affected. If you cannot prove that the fence is owned by one owner and set inside that owner's property the fence is most likely shared. If it is shared work with your neighbor(s) on sharing the cost of repair or replacement as it is a win-win for all neighbors. It is than not possible the next step calls for some prudent planning and consideration. Again, talk to your neighbors before altering shared fence.



If you are doing minor maintenance or simply re-staining with clear stain or previously approved wood colored stain then no request is needed. If you have a shared fence, you can do maintenance as necessary to the fence. If you are removing or replacing a fence or making changes to a fence such as height, location, gates you must obtain Committee approval. Issues result when changes are made that impact the owner on the other side of the fence or your surrounding neighbors that share that common fence. Irregular lot shapes further complicate this. Not all privacy fences are the common max 6ft and certain subdivision have different heights. Changing fence height on a shared fence can impact several neighbors which then impacts others. If you have the rail side of the shared fence in your backyard that does not have pickets adding pickets (the same height) on your side is permitted at which time that fence would then become a double facing fence since it now has pickets on both sides. What is not permitted are double fences which are two separate and distinct fences (post, rails, pickets) that run parallel along the property line each on their own side versus just having one shared fence. Adding pickets to a shared fence that are taller than the other side of the fence can also be very problematic as it makes transitioning the fences lines between adjoining homes very difficult and can impact numerous neighbors. If you have questions, please refer to the Architectural Standards posted on the HOA website or email the Community Manager.

## SAFETY & SECURITY

Summer is in full swing, which brings great weather and fun times. Not all the visitors to our community are welcome additions though. Petty property crime increases during the summer months, and our community is not immune to thievery whether its car burglaries or porch pirates. Ensure you are closing your garage door, removing all the visible belongings from your vehicle, rolling up windows and locking the doors every night. Ensure you remove your garage door opener from your car as well when parking in the driveway. CSPD has put out several public service announcements on this as well. Keep your garage doors down during the day and check them at night. Consider setting a reminder on your phone if you are prone to leaving it up by mistake. Ensure you are locking your door that leads into your garage. If you observe suspicious individuals wandering on foot or driving the neighborhood report them immediately to CSPD. Summer is a great time to get out and meet all your neighbors and talk about forming a Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP). The CSPD website provide all the details:

<https://coloradosprings.gov/police-department/page/neighborhood-watch>.

Please slow down and watch out for children playing as you drive.

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## KEEPING THE PEACE & BARKING DOGS

Residents that have a barking dog(s) in their neighborhood have a few options depending on your tolerance and level of frustration with the barking.

- **Option 1:** The HOA recommends reaching out to your neighbor and letting them know that the dog(s) have been barking excessively and your request to reduce the duration, time, or frequency of the barking. Please note dogs can bark for many understandable and justified reasons. Some possible examples which may cross over into a potential nuisance realm could include 1) being left alone outside and barking for hours at time or all day, 2) excessive barking at 4am, or 3) unprovoked barking such that neighbors can't go outside in their backyards. In dealing with these types of issues and concerns, it's suggested to use the neighbor-to-neighbor option as a first attempt. If you're unsure how your neighbor will react, perhaps consider sending a letter to them or leaving a note on their door. Sometimes getting to know your neighbor and dog may help or ask the owner to invest in a barking deterrent device. Neighbors that have dogs on both sides of the fence have a responsibility to manage barking such that other neighbors are not negatively affected as well. **In any event neighbors should always endeavor to be considerate, respectful and polite when dealing with this issue.**

- **Option 2:** Contact Hammersmith at 719.389.0700 with the barking dog(s) address, and we'll send out a warning notice advising the owner of the barking complaint and begin the violation process if the issue is not rectified. Keep in mind, while the enforcement process is confidential, it is subject to the Enforcement Policy timelines and thus, may take time to remedy. The Enforcement Policy can be found on our website at [StetsonHillsHOA.com](http://StetsonHillsHOA.com). Subsequent complaints do require verifiable details and all involved owners may be asked to attend a Board meeting to help resolve the issue.

- **Option 3:** If option 1 and option 2 above fail to remedy the situation, you can contact Animal Law Enforcement at 719.473.1741 with barking dog(s) address.

If no complaints have been made previously there are 2 options:

- Animal Law Enforcement can send a letter in the mail advising the pet owner of the barking complaint or,
- Animal Law Enforcement can dispatch an officer to issue a written warning giving the pet owner 72 hours from the date the warning was issued to abate the noise. The written warning requires the eye witness be identified by name only on the notice issued to the pet owner. Once the written warning has been issued any further complaints must be a signed complaint. The signed complaint is a penalty assessment or summons to court and requires corroborating evidence. Keep in mind, this process may not remain confidential. In order for a written warning to be issued the law requires an Animal Law Enforcement Officer to identify the eyewitness by name to the pet owner. The law also requires the Officer verify that the eyewitness is within 500 feet of the nuisance animal. This course of action results in the owner being put on notice immediately and less time for the barking to possibly continue unabated. If you have more questions or if you're a dog owner and would like to better understand your rights, please go to: <https://www.hsppr.org/law/animal-lawenforcement-faq>.

# PREVENTING COMMON VIOLATIONS

Owners, please help prevent and avoid the following violations to help maintain the Community. The following list comprise the bulk of complaints and observed violations during the summer and fall months. If you are working on correcting an issue, please let the Community Manager know. Thank you.

1. RVs/Campers/Boats—ensure you parking only for expedient loading and unloading only. No storage or extended parking on streets, lots or driveways.
2. Weeds—they cannot just be sprayed and left behind dead. They must be completely removed and disposed of properly. A few minutes every few days prevents an infestation during peak rain season. Spray early. Replace weed fabric under the rocks. Use a leaf blower to blow out the dirt that accumulates into the rocks thus prevent more weeds. Corner lots have responsibility for side yards and parkway.
3. Landscape & Lawn maintenance—landscaping and lawns must be well kept and presentable, free of weeds, dead plantings and bare dirt. Xeriscaping changes must be approved. Dead trees must be cut to the level ground, stump removed and tree replaced. Backyards must be maintained free of weeds, rodents and debris.
4. Maintenance of home—missing house trim pieces, failed paint on siding, sheds, porch stairs, railing painting and trim/accents, fence repair, replacement and restaining.
5. Trimming of trees/shrubs—they may not overhang low over the sidewalks preventing pedestrian safe passage. Proper pruning is important for the overall health of trees and shrubs.
6. Trash cans—must be stored out of sight on non-trash days. They cannot remain in driveways or on the side of the house.
7. A/C units—window mounted A/C units that protrude to the exterior of the home are not permitted.
8. Basketball Hoops—cannot be left in the street or within 10 ft. of the sidewalk as they pose liability. They must be put away when not in use. Hoops must be properly weighted or secured down per the manufacturer. Rocks, concrete blocks, propane tanks etc., are not acceptable ballast.
9. Architectural changes without approval—any exterior modifications require approval prior to being started. The request can be downloaded from the Association website or submitted electronically.
10. Trash, debris, and construction materials may not be stored or dumped on sides of home or in backyards.

## PARKING RULES

Ensure you are parking in accordance with HOA Covenants and City Code. This includes disabled, wrecked, abandoned vehicles, stored vehicles, RVs, trailers and oversize commercial vehicles parked on or off the lot. Please ensure you are not blocking other owners' driveways or posing safety hazards on busy streets. Vehicles cannot be parked in front lawns or landscaped area not in an approved driveway. As always safety and being considerate of your neighbors and your neighborhood is the most important thing at the end of the day. Given the exponential increase in motor vehicle and parts thefts across Colorado Springs and the State parking in the garage reduces crime risk, lowers insurance rates, and helps maintain the Community. Please Contact the Community Manager if you have additional questions.

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## PROTECTING AND PRESERVING AGING CONCRETE:

With the homes now 16-21 years old, our concrete flatwork has seen thousands of freeze and thaw cycles over the years. Some concrete surfaces across the Community are showing their age and deterioration in the form of cracks, delamination, and spalling. Frost heave and soil swell also cause concrete damage in the form of large cracks and broken slabs. Even the best concrete mix and poured slabs don't last forever. Harsh winter deicing compounds greatly accelerate wear on concrete surfaces, leading to severe deterioration. To help preserve your concrete, and get the longest life possible, consider sealing with a clear penetrating water-based concrete sealer formulated with a concrete densifier. Concrete densifiers are products that help increase the density of concrete slabs. A densifier is a substance applied to the surface of concrete in order to fill pores and increase surface density. They are chemical solutions designed to improve surface hardness and density. They react with free lime and calcium hydroxide present in the concrete. This solidifies it, making the concrete surface much less permeable and more resistant to stains. This is not garage floor paint. It's a special chemical formulation that penetrates deep into the concrete microscopic pores and strengthens them against freeze thaw damage, salt, etc. This project is best done before winter comes. If you have recently replaced your driveway, patio or other concrete flatwork, this improvement can add decades to the life of your concrete for a very low cost and effort.

To help protect your garage floor, strongly consider a drive-in car floor mat. This mat holds all the snow slush, water and road salts for quick squeegeeing out. Keeping CDOT magnesium chloride and salt brine off the garage floor will prevent damage. If your garage floor has never been sealed or not had the garage floor epoxy paint coating, applying those will help protect the floor. The drive-in floor mat also provides another benefit as well. The drive-in floor mat keeps all the water from seeping into the floor expansion joints preventing soil swell and flooding your garage with slush, road salts, sand, and gravel. If you have open expansion joints in your garage and your slabs are sinking and/or heaving, strongly consider sealing those joints and keeping the water from draining under the garage floor slabs. When buying ice melts look to choose types that are more concrete and pet friendly and use those products sparingly. Clearing snow before it melts and refreezes will help keep the driveway and sidewalk clear without the need for harsh chemicals.



# LANDSCAPING & XERISCAPING

With summer in full swing, maintaining your landscaping is a labor of love. Sod to xeriscaping conversions is a popular alternative but require planning. The following provides a simple breakdown of the xeriscaping principles. Ensure you refer to the Architectural Standards for design requirements. Expanded information about each of the Xeriscape fundamentals may be obtained by logging onto our utility website. Colorado Waterwise Program and the Colorado Springs Utilities Xeriscaping webpages have a plethora of information, sample downloadable designs and pertinent tips at

<http://plantselect.org/garden/coloradosprings-utilities-xeriscape-demonstration-garden-colorado-springs/>.

All of our local landscaping material supply companies also can provide expertise on ground prep.

## WHAT IS XERISCAPE?

It's not a specific look or specific group of plants. Rather, xeriscape is a combination of seven common-sense gardening principles that save water, time and resources while creating an aesthetically attractive landscape that adds value to the property and blends well with our Rocky Mountain Front Range region.



## The Seven Principles of Xeriscape are:

1. Plan and Design for water conservation and curb appeal from the start. A design makes it easy to complete your project in phases. First, draw a base plan, which is an outline of the complete yard area landscape drawn to scale. It includes the house, driveway, site conditions, and any plants that are already there. If you are unsure of what will look good hiring a Landscape Architect will enable you to install yourself with a higher sense of confidence. There are hundreds of great examples in the HOA. Scale, proportion and area coverage are important. Planting the wrong species of plant or too close to the house or foundation can lead to future issues. Maintain grades and drainage.
2. Create Practical Turf Areas of manageable size, shape, and grade. Grass lawns use more water to maintain – but this doesn't mean you can't have any grass in your Xeriscaped yard, it just means you have to use it strategically. A design will consider where grass will be most useful and enhance the landscape and integrate with other plants. Unless you have amended the soil with organic material well under your sod it will continue to have habitual problems. Think about where kids will play and how it blends with your neighbors.
3. Carefully select Low-Water and drought tolerant Plants and group them according to their water needs (hydro zoning). Ensure you factor plant types for sun exposure and protection from the elements. Enlist the aid of our local nurseries for plant selection, get a Front Range guidebook, and choose plants that work for our elevation. This part is often the hardest to choose plants that will fit, look good and survive. Ensure you allow for proper growth spacing. Water later in day or early in morning to prevent evaporation. Be sure to include trees. Trees provide substantial enhancing visual impact and directly save on home cooling costs. Be sure to check the city listing of suitable street trees when planting in streetscapes.
4. Use Soil Amendments as you plant. Much of the soil in the HOA is a dense clay. Amending the soil with organic material is crucial for plants to thrive. Proper soil preparation will help keep plants cool, reduce evaporation, and retain moisture.

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## The Seven Principles of Xeriscape, Cont'd:

5. Use Mulches like cedar mulch, bark mulch or cobble rock to reduce evaporation, keep the soil cool and prevent weeds. Choose organic wood mulch that doesn't blow or wash away and use edging and borders to separate areas. Too much rock mulch can bake and reduce moisture for certain plants killing them so it's best for shady areas. Too much surrounding rock can also heat your house increasing your utility bills.



6. Irrigate Efficiently with properly designed systems (including drip system, house or water can) and by applying the right amount of water at the right time. Some plants may be able to live on rainwater alone, but some will still require additional water especially as they get established in the first year. Don't over or underwater. Ensure you plan out your drip system. Converting existing sod irrigation sprinkler head to drip can be done very easily and cheaply. Ensure you check your drips to ensure they are functioning.

7. Maintain the Landscape Properly by mowing, weeding, pruning, fertilizing and watering properly. The first year is critical for establishing plants.

## WHAT XERISCAPE IS NOT

### **-XERISCAPE IS NOT ANTI-LAWN.**

Even though xeriscape landscaping can be spectacularly colorful, even lush, limited areas of more highly watered landscape-like grass lawns are consistent with wise water use. Sometimes a lawn is the best option. For example, turf grass is the best option for an athletic field since it stands up to heavy use. Xeriscape is "less lawn landscaping" rather than "lawn less landscaping."

### **-XERISCAPE IS NOT JUST ROCKS AND GRAVEL.**

It's not a "Zeroscape"; plants are a vital part of a beautiful xeriscape. And although rock gardens can add beauty, there are many wonderful choices other than rock for Xeriscape designs. There are dozens of kinds of organic mulch to choose from. By definition, Xeriscape means some water applied in well-controlled amounts and locations in the landscape.

### **-XERISCAPE IS NOT NATIVE PLANTS ONLY.**

Although there are vast arrays of wonderful plants indigenous to all regions, non-invasive introduced plants, that are well adapted to the local regional climate, are wonderful additions to landscaping that uses water frugally. For example, many iris, tulips, and even roses are examples of introduced plants that are well adapted to non-irrigated landscaping in the Rocky Mountain region.

### **-XERISCAPE IS NOT A BORING MONOCULTURE OF SPINY PLANTS.**

On the contrary, well planned Xeriscapes are splendid examples of the beauty and diversity.

# TREE SELECTION FOR EL PASO COUNTY

By Fredricka Bogardus, Colorado Master Gardener

March and April are a good time to start thinking about adding some trees to your garden. Trees are an investment which if grown well, will add value and beauty to your landscape for decades to come. Trees provide shade, shelter for birds, sometimes spectacular spring blooms, fruit, or good fall color.

There are several factors to consider when selecting a tree. Scale is probably the most important factor. Pay close attention to mature size when selecting trees. Large trees can exceed 50', small trees may reach maturity at 20'. Like Goldilocks you need to find the size that is 'just right' for your garden. Growth rate is a factor to consider, while fast growing trees may seem like a good idea, they typically are more brittle, making storm damage a bigger problem.

If you are considering a flowering tree, think about fruit. Flowering trees that produce fruit can make a major mess in your landscape; are you willing to do the clean up every year? Some varieties produce no visible fruit, others have fruit that politely stays on the tree through winter (persistent fruit), providing a food source for birds and requiring little clean up. There is no right or wrong; just know what you are getting.

For an extensive list of recommended trees for our region consult the:

**Front Range Tree Recommendation List:** <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/treereclist.pdf>

**Approved trees for use in Colorado Springs right of way plantings:** <https://coloradosprings.gov/sites/default/files/inline-images/approvedstreettreelist19.pdf>

Trees not recommended for our region:

-Ash trees because of susceptibility to Emerald Ash Borer.

-Aspen trees are not recommended for Front Range urban landscapes, due to disease concerns and growth habit that can be difficult to manage in smaller gardens.

## YEAR-ROUND GARDENING: ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

By Debra Stinton Othitis, Colorado Master Gardener

Grasses can fill large or small spaces in any type of landscape with dramatic color, texture and movement that changes with the seasons. Ornamental grasses are adaptable and are easy to grow.

Grasses can tolerate a wide range of soil types, even poor, and few pests bother them, including deer. Grass heights range from less than 12 inches to over 6 feet and their shapes vary from the stiffly upright Karl Foerster (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster') to the flowing and fountain-like Mexican Feathergrass (*Nassella tenuissima*) to mounding types in the Fescue genus (*Festuca* spp. consists of over 300 perennial grasses). Foliage color ranges from dark green to blue-gray and some have red tones.

Grasses need regular watering until established, but after that, several species can be drought tolerant, and fertilization is not necessary. The most important maintenance is annual spring cutting of the previous year's foliage before new growth begins. There are a few species such as Blue Oat Grass (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) that are evergreen and not cut back.



Mexican Feather Grass, Photo Credit: Debra Stinton Othitis

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