

Righetti Ranch Homeowners Association Landscaping Requirements Handbook

This document summarizes the HOA landscape program, describes and illustrates the landscaping requirements of the general areas in the association, the desired appearance of these areas, and acceptable and unacceptable landscape work.

Landscape Program

The landscape program has the following components

- Weed control and abatement – Control with pre-emergent and emergent granular and spray. Although the company's maintenance is done in a zone methodology, the HOA's expectation is that all zones are constantly monitored for weeds regularly and pulled or sprayed as needed.
- Irrigation system maintenance and improvement – Maintaining the drip irrigation system to maximize water use and minimize waste, improving the system's efficiency through regular landscape evaluation for over- or under-water issues
- Shrub and tree trimming – The HOA desires that all plants be allowed to grow to their natural size and fill in our landscape areas as designed by the landscape architect. This reduces both our future bark requirements and water use. Plants will require less water during dry season if they are at full size and well-rooted.
- Most trees and larger shrubs should never be pruned. This includes oaks, toyon, rock rose, and reeds planted in dry creeks. Reeds in other plantings may require topping to keep them under 3-4 feet.
 - Pruning exceptions are for trees next to sidewalks or streets. Prune trees so that lower branches do not hang lower than 6 feet over sidewalks. Street-side tree pruning will be done only to minimize the risk of a large SUV hitting branches as they drive through.
- Gas-powered equipment use – For noise, air pollution, and dust control reasons, gas-powered leaf blowers should not be used at any time, except when pre-approved by the HOA. For gas-powered shrub trimmers, they should only be used for two specific reasons – where grasses or shrubs intrude past curb or sidewalk edges and impede traffic or walking, or when an annual topping or pruning back of grasses is required to keep them healthy for the next growing season. No other use is allowed or approved. Gas-powered weed whackers are approved for large area weed/grass clearance on hillsides, trails, and fire-suppression areas above the homes on Hillside Drive.
- No shrub or grass pruning should take place from May 1 to October 1. This is the hottest part of the year and pruning during this time stresses the plants and can lead to an early death, which increases costs to the HOA.
- Ensure that the HOA property boundaries are understood. Unfortunately, the city (and developer) boundaries are easy to confuse; the HOA doesn't want to do work that is not our responsibility.

This document will be amended or modified as requirements change.

All photos were taken in July/August 2024.

The following pages provide descriptions and illustrations of the HOA's landscaping requirements

Bioswales



Bioswales require little maintenance. Landscape should be allowed to grow to full size, and if pruning is required, the plants should only be topped annually by 6-12 inches to minimize heavily trimmed appearance. There may be some areas, such as along Orcutt Rd. where bioswale pruning is required to keep plants off sidewalks or streets; see Curbside and Sidewalks on next page. Never use leaf blowers to clear out bioswales; the fill is very fine and easily blown into the street and on sidewalks. Rakes can be used to clean out trimmed grasses.

Medians



Medians generally require a single, annual pruning to reduce grasses down to 2 feet-3 feet high in the winter months. Never use leaf blowers to clear out medians, it causes bark to be blown into the streets

Curbside and Sidewalks



Curbs and sidewalk landscaping generally require pruning only where they intrude on driving or walkways. Plants do not require “shaping”, they should be allowed to naturally fill the planting areas.

Hillsides



Hillsides are being allowed to fill in, no pruning required. These plants should mature to two feet wide or more. As they grow, they will reduce the area needed for weed abatement and bark maintenance. Regular weed abatement in the winter/spring is required, with only spot checks necessary through the summer and fall.

Trails



Trail fencelines and edges should be kept weed-free. This is mostly a spring effort and requires minimal effort until the winter rains return. Trail shrubs should be trimmed to the curbline or trail edge.

Drainage Basins

Drainage basins require monthly weed abatement through the winter and spring, and winter rains preparation in the late fall/early winter. Prepare the basins by raking dead leaves and other debris from above the high-water mark down to the basin bottoms to minimize the risks of drains becoming blocked.

Traffic Circles

Traffic circles require regular weeding. The only pruning is to keep plants inside the curbs and although unlikely, keep plants under 3 feet high for traffic safety and visibility reasons.

Fire Suppression Areas

Because the city requires a 100-foot cleared area behind the homes on Hillside Dr., an annual, late-spring weed/grass clearing effort is required. This area will be marked by the HOA with stakes to indicate the 100-foot limit.

The other area is the eucalyptus tree/creek area bounded by Tiburon, Phyllis, and Imel streets. This area will require an annual removal of all eucalyptus leaves and fallen branches in the late spring.