

LAKE ST. CHARLES MASTER ASSOCIATION, INC.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

These landscaping guidelines incorporate and supplement the Rules & Regulations dated January 11, 2010 sections pertaining to landscaping.

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General Landscaping Guidelines

“Landscaping” consists of all plant matter (bushes, trees, shrubs, plants, grass, sod, turf, etc.) as well as mulch, bedding, and objects located outside the physical dwelling.

Any **landscaping modification** to an owner’s property, except for that within the contours of already existing landscaping beds, must receive **prior approval** of the Architectural Control Committee (“ACC”) before implementation of such modification. See ACC Submittal Requirements on page 4.

Such modification will be considered by the ACC to (i) assure harmony of external design, materials and location in relation to surrounding buildings and topography within the Property, (ii) preserve the value and desirability of the Property as a residential community; (iii) be consistent with the provisions of this Master Declaration; (iv) be in the best interest of all Owners in maintaining the value and desirability of the Property as a residential community.

Each Owner shall be responsible for the **maintenance** and upkeep of all landscaping located on their Lot. Such maintenance means keeping all landscaping in good condition and repair, including, but not limited to, (i) the sodding, seeding, watering, mowing and edging of all lawns; and (ii) the pruning and trimming of all trees, hedges, and shrubbery so that the same does not become overgrown nor obstruct the right of way of pedestrians, view by motorists, or street traffic.

Landscaping Design Standards

All areas that are to be planted with sod or turf, and all existing areas with sod or turf must be planted with St. Augustine, Bahia or Zoysia sod. Other types of sod are not allowed.

There must be a planting bed(s) adjacent to the exterior front wall of the house. It must be at least 4 feet wide and may extend up to 1/3 (33%) of the distance from the house to the sidewalk. The planting bed must be landscaped with plantings limited to ornamental bushes, trees, shrubs, plants and grasses. When selecting plants, shrubs, etc. consider cold hardiness, drought tolerance and your site’s soil, light and drainage conditions.

The area between the sidewalk and the street (County Right of Way, Front Utility Easement or “island”) should be planted with sod. Any other plantings in this area require prior approval by the ACC. Trees and plantings in this area should be sufficiently mulched.

Florida Friendly Landscaping (“FFL”) may be implemented in accordance with the FFL Guidelines described later in this document.

Planting of trees must be consistent in variety, species and number within the neighborhood. Food bearing trees such as fruit trees and plants are only allowed in the back yard.

No trees, bushes, hedges, or any other plants or other objects may be placed in areas that obstruct the view of the street intersections or interfere with pedestrian traffic on sidewalks.

Landscaping or other alterations may not change, disturb, affect, or alter the drainage easements in any way.

Landscaping borders (concrete, decorative, landscaping bricks, etc.), lawn ornaments, fixtures, statuary and fountains over 4 feet high and/or 3 feet wide, or more than three in number, requires ACC approval.

Any furniture in the front or side yards, except for ornamental park benches, requires ACC approval.

Landscaping Maintenance

Lawns. All lawns shall be regularly watered, mowed, edged, trimmed, fertilized, and treated for pests. Lawns that become unsightly, discolored, or damaged in any way shall be repaired in a reasonably prompt fashion. St. Augustine, Bahia or Zoysia lawns shall be repaired with like materials. Significant lawn damage due to drought, infestation, etc... over 4'square must be re-sodded. Repairs to smaller areas of damage may be repaired with plugs or seeding.

Trees. Homeowners shall not remove any tree(s) without approval of the ACC. Further, removal of oak trees in excess of 6" in diameter, as measured two feet from the ground, requires both ACC approval and a permit from Hillsborough County. Trees in the area between the street and sidewalk must be trimmed and maintained to a height of 7' from ground level to the leaf canopy. Bushes, plants and groundcover in the area between the street and sidewalk must be maintained at a height of 2' or less.

Hedges and Shrubbery. All hedges and shrubbery shall be neatly trimmed and pruned. They must be kept so that they do not obstruct the view or pathway of motorists or pedestrians. No hedges may be higher than six (6) feet tall anywhere on the lot. A group (3 or more), row or line of shrubs placed closely together will be considered a hedge.

Flower and Plant Beds. Shrubs, flowers and plant beds must be maintained, mulched and weeded on a regular basis. Mulch must consist of generally accepted mulch products that are natural or synthetic products intended to appear natural. Examples of such are wood chips, shredded mulch, rock, and colored rubber products.

ACC Submittal Requirements

PRIOR to the commencement of implementing landscaping modifications on your property, you must obtain written approval from the Lake St. Charles Master Association (HOA) Architectural Control Committee.

To this end, you must provide a detailed plan which includes:

- A completed Application for Property Improvement (ACC Request form).
- A plot survey showing your design layout which indicates the dimensions and location of the area(s) you intend to create and/or modify.
- Percentage of sod to remain in front yards, side yards and back yards
- The specific type and quantity of each plant, shrub, mulch, turf, etc. you intend to use in each area.
- Spacing of proposed plant material.
- The plant material (whether turf, shrubs, plants or otherwise) in the areas you are not planning to modify.
- Identify planting bed edging material if applicable.
- Provide photographs of all existing landscaping.

The plan should provide the ACC with a complete and detailed understanding of exactly what you intend to do. Detailed planning will actually help you to crystallize and define what you will do and facilitate the process.

Approval by the ACC does not relieve the homeowner of obtaining all required County and Southwest Florida Water Management District permits, if applicable.

WHAT IS FLORIDA FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING (“FFL”)?

The Lake St. Charles Master Association supports Florida Friendly Landscaping in our community. **Please keep in mind, when preparing to implement FFL on your property, that you must still obtain prior approval from the HOA and follow the landscaping guidelines below.**

A Florida-friendly yard doesn't merely offer a beautiful landscape — it also becomes an asset to the environment, protecting natural resources and preserving Florida's unique beauty. Recognizing that the home landscape is part of a larger natural system will help in creating a Florida-friendly yard.

Florida Friendly Landscaping is based on nine principles suggested by the University of Florida. We encourage you, when following our rules and utilizing FFL, to incorporate these principles into your landscaping plans.

The principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping promotes the conservation of water by following these principles - planting the right plant in the right place, efficient watering, appropriate fertilization, mulching, attraction of wildlife, responsible management of yard pests, recycling yard waste, reduction of storm water runoff, and waterfront protection. These principles are explained in detail below.

Prior to developing your FFL design, choosing your plants, and submitting all to the Architectural Control Committee (“ACC”) for approval, we encourage you to first consult these sources of information:

- The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design developed by The University of Florida. This guide has everything you need to plan your FFL including the 9 principles of FFL, information and examples of FFL plan designs, and a FFL plant selection guide. Available at website <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>. Click 'Publications & Training' on the left sidebar.
- University of Florida's Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FYN) Program - provides science-based education to the public on how to create a Florida-friendly yard. Also at website - <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>.
- Hillsborough County Extension Office website - <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org>

The Nine Principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping

1. Right Plant, Right Place

Achieving a healthy, low-maintenance home landscape starts with putting the right plant in the right place. Select plants that match your site's soil, light, water, and climatic conditions. Plants selected to suit a specific site will require minimal amounts of water, fertilizers and pesticides. Almost any plant will survive in your landscape if you plant it in the right place. You can drastically reduce the need for water, fertilizer, pesticides and pruning if you follow these tips:

- Make a note of the type of soil, sunlight exposure and water conditions of the planting site before you shop.
- Choose plants that thrive under the conditions you noted.
- Limit the number of plants that need a lot of water or care.
- Plant beds and mulched areas use less water than grass.
- Remove invasive exotic plants so they don't steal water and nutrition from Florida-friendly plants.

2. Water Efficiently

Choosing the right plant for the right place goes a long way towards conserving water. So does grouping plants with similar water needs together and zoning your irrigation system appropriately. Watch for signs of wilt before you irrigate, be a weather watcher (don't irrigate if it's going to rain), and water early in the morning if you can, following any restrictions in your area. Hand-water when possible, using a watering can, pail, or hose. Check your irrigation system regularly; repair any leaks, clogs, or breaks; and make sure all sprinklers are irrigating your plants, not the sidewalk.

- By choosing plant materials with like water requirements that fit the site conditions, an efficient watering program can be developed to fit the landscape design selected for the property.
- Water your lawn and plants only when you know they need it or show signs of stress.
- Use a rain gauge or moisture sensor so you will know if rainfall has done the job.
- Install a drip or micro-spray system in your plant beds. They use water more efficiently than traditional spray heads.
- Install an automatic rain shutoff device to avoid watering when it's raining.
- Stop over watering! Over watered grass have short roots that make it harder to survive pest attacks, disease and drought.

3. Fertilize Appropriately

Fertilize according to UF/IFAS recommended rates and application timings to prevent leaching—fertilizer leaking down through the soil rather than being absorbed by plant roots. Look for fertilizers with slow-release nitrogen and little or no phosphorous. Never

fertilize within 10 feet of any water body, and don't fertilize before a heavy rain. Less is often best. Overuse of fertilizers can be hazardous to your yard and the environment.

- Fertilize lawns, trees and plants only to maintain health. Don't exceed recommended amounts. Fertilizer will not help poor growth caused by too much shade, disease or pests.
- Use slow-release fertilizers that make nutrients available to plants for a longer time. They are kinder to the environment and are usually more cost-effective.
- Use iron instead of nitrogen if you want to "green-up" your lawn.
- Hold off on fertilizing if a heavy rain is expected, and don't over irrigate after applying.
- Follow the directions on the fertilizer package and use a drop spreader instead of a rotary spreader to apply it.
- Avoid weed and seed products.

4. Mulch

Mulch helps retain soil moisture, protects plants, and inhibits weed growth. It gives your landscape a neat, uniform appearance and is a great Florida-Friendly choice for hard-to-mow slopes and shady spots. Be sure to choose sustainable harvested mulch like melaleuca, pine straw, or eucalyptus. The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program does not recommend the use of cypress mulch, as its origins may be difficult to determine.

- Keep the level of mulch up to 2–3 inches by applying it once or twice a year.
- Keep mulch 2 inches from the base of plants to avoid disease.
- Let fallen tree leaves stay under a tree to create self-mulching areas.

5. Attract Wildlife

In the backyard, consider using plants that provide food, water and shelter to attract Florida's diverse wildlife.

- Plant shrubs and trees to create cover, nesting areas and food.
- Provide wildlife shelters such as a birdhouse.
- Protect the health of wildlife. Limit pesticide use by spot-treating only areas that need attention.
- Flowering plants or plant material with flowers and berries can be used.

NOTE: LSC documents prohibit fruit-bearing trees in front yards.

6. Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

To prevent disease and insect outbreaks, select pest-resistant plants and put them in suitable locations. Use appropriate amounts of water and fertilizer, and mow grass at its proper height. When problems do arise, remove the affected leaves or plant parts. Unwise use of pesticides can harm people, pets, beneficial organisms and the environment

- Learn to identify beneficial insects and let them do the work for you.
- Be tolerant! Low levels of pests will do minimal damage.
- Check plants regularly and prune off a plant's infected areas or pick off insects when possible.
- Use pesticides only to spot-treat affected plants and lawn areas. Avoid blanket applications.
- Choose the least-toxic pesticides such as horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps and *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT).
- Read and follow pesticide labels carefully for safe use and disposal.

7. Recycle

Grass clippings and leaves provide nutrients to the soil and reduce waste disposal when reused on the landscape.

- When possible utilize a mulching mower to recycle nutrients back into the existing turf areas. Grass clippings should not be visible after mowing.
- Use fallen leaves and pine needles as mulch under trees and shrubs, in bedding areas in your rear yards.

8. Reduce Storm Water Runoff

Florida-Friendly Landscaping seeks to retain and use as much of the rainfall and irrigation water that lands on our home landscapes as possible. Creating shallow rain gardens, or shaping the earth on slopes with berms (rises) and swales (dips), can help slow runoff from heavy rains and allow the water time to soak into the ground. Make sure your downspout is pointed into the garden, not towards a sidewalk or driveway. Water running off your landscape can carry pollutants such as soil, debris, fertilizer, gasoline and pesticides that can adversely impact water quality. Reduction of this runoff will help prevent nonpoint-source pollution.

- Direct downspouts and gutters into your lawn and plant beds.
- Sweep grass clippings, fertilizer and soil onto the lawn so they don't get washed into storm drains.
- Clean up oil spills and leaks on the driveway and roadways. Use cat litter to absorb oil and clean up litter after they have done their job.
- Pick up pet waste to help reduce bacterial and nutrient pollution.
- Remove trash from street gutters before it gets washed into storm drains.
- Use swales (low areas) to hold and filter water.

9. Protect the Waterfront

Waterfront property, whether on a river, stream, pond, bay or beach, is very fragile and should be carefully protected to maintain freshwater and marine ecosystems. One of the most important steps you can take to protect any water body is maintaining a 10-foot "maintenance-free zone" around it. Do not mow, fertilize, or use pesticides in this zone.

Don't let any grass clippings or pet wastes get into the water, as these carry nutrients and harmful bacteria.

- Never prune aquatic vegetation or remove any aquatic vegetation without first seeking proper permits and guidelines.
- Establish a 10–30 foot “no fertilizer, no pesticide” zone along your shoreline.
- Remove invasive exotic aquatic plants by cutting, pulling or raking.
- Plant a buffer zone of low-maintenance plants between your lawn and shoreline to absorb nutrients and to provide wildlife habitat.

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES & REGULATIONS

THE KEY TO FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING –

PLAN FIRST, PLANT LAST

The secret to creating a successful landscape design is using a logical planning process. Designing an aesthetically pleasing Florida-Friendly Yard begins with good decisions based on what you and your landscape require.

- Consider your needs and desires. Determine how you will use your property.
- Know your site's conditions. Conduct a site inventory and analysis to determine the opportunities and constraints of your yard.
- Maintain a healthy environment. Pay attention to soil type, existing vegetation, shade patterns, drainage patterns, views, and utility locations.

Create a Florida-Friendly Master Landscape Plan for your yard that includes all elements in precise locations and takes into account the nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping principles.

In developing your plan, it will be beneficial to first consult the University of Florida's Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FYN) Program at website - <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>. Click 'Publications & Training' on the left sidebar, and then select *The Florida-Friendly Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design*. This guide includes the 9 principles of FFL, examples of FFL plan designs, and a FFL plant selection guide.

1. Florida-Friendly Landscaping.

“Landscape” consists of all plant matter (bushes, trees, shrubs, plants, grass, etc.) as well as mulch, bedding, and objects located outside the physical dwelling.

The Association may not prohibit any Homeowner from implementing Florida-Friendly Landscaping on the Homeowner's private property in accordance with this document and Florida Statutes Section 373.185 (2010).

The Homeowner will employ the nine principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping as developed by The University of Florida and described in this document.

2. Design and Layout for Homeowners

- **Bedding areas** – are considered areas that surround plants, trees, or other areas including mulch or other approved bordering material.

- **Front Yard** - is the area between the sidewalk and the front wall of the dwelling and inside the property line. This excludes the front utility easement (see below). For corner lots, the front yard includes any property adjoining or bordering the street whether on the front or the side of the dwelling.
- **Side Yard** – is the area between two houses which runs from the front wall of the dwelling to the rear most portion of the dwelling and inside the property line
- **Front Utility Easement** (County Right of Way) - the area between the sidewalk and the street and as further defined on the lot survey.
- **Size of FFL “Bedding areas”**
 - **Front Yard** – Bedding areas located in the front yard may be landscaped as Florida Friendly Landscape (FFL) up to 1/2 (50%) of the total grass area. At least 1/2 (50%) of the front yard, closest to the sidewalk, must remain as grass lawn planted with any variety of St. Augustine, Bahia or Zoysia grass.
 - **Front Utility Easement** (County Right of Way or “island”) - The area between the sidewalk and the street inside the property line should be planted with sod or other ACC approved ground cover. Trees and plantings in this area should be sufficiently mulched. Existing trees shall not be removed without prior approval of the ACC.
 - **Side Yard** - Bedding areas adjacent to the exterior wall of the house will be allowed up to 1/2 (50%) of the total grass side area.
 - **Rear Yard** - Bedding areas in the rear yards have no size restrictions.

3. Existing Native Vegetation. Homeowners will retain and incorporate existing native vegetation into the landscape whenever feasible.

4. Landscaping Selection. In accordance with the relevant local government landscaping ordinances and the most current version of the UF/IFAS Florida- Friendly Landscaping Plant Selection Guide, the Homeowner will select landscape plants suited to the soil and other site characteristics utilized by the Florida-Friendly Landscaping concept. The Homeowner should have a variety of at least 3 types of plants in the yard.

Homeowners will try to use plants listed in the most current version of the UF/IFAS Friendly Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection and Landscape Design. The UF/IFAS plant list is not all-inclusive, and many plants not listed may be Florida-Friendly as long as they match site conditions and are not invasive exotics. By the same token, many plants that are listed may be unsuitable in some locations. Where doubt exists, the Homeowner should refer the matter to a UF/IFAS County Extension Service Florida Yards & Neighborhoods agent for assistance. However, the role of these agents is strictly educational, and all final decisions about plantings are to be made by the Association.

5. Mulching. Mulch and other ground coverings are not to be used as a substitute for vegetation. Mulch is intended to enhance planted areas and to help retain moisture.

- **Placement.** Mulch will be placed at least 2 inches from the trunks of trees or the stems of landscape plants and will be maintained at a depth of 2–3 inches. Mulched areas that slope to impervious surfaces or water bodies will be bordered by a turf or other groundcover to slow and absorb nutrient-laden runoff from the mulched area. Mulched areas should be kept free of weeds.
- **Surface Below Mulch.** Impervious surfaces, including plastic sheeting, will not be placed below mulch. This does not prohibit the use of woven or other pervious ground cloth. Placing plastic sheeting or any other impervious substance below mulch prevents water from being absorbed into the ground and can increase flooding.
- **Prohibited Ground Coverings.** Use of artificial turf, gravel, shells, shredded tires, or other similar materials, or any man-made material are prohibited as major landscape ground coverings in lieu of vegetation.

6. Flowering plants or plant material with flowers and berries can be used for front yards and side yards for corner lots ***Fruit-bearing trees are restricted to back yards only.***

7. Community ButterflyScaping. Homeowners are encouraged to preserve and enhance existing butterfly host vegetation on their properties. For more information, please see "Community ButterflyScaping: Community ButterflyScaping: *Move beyond butterfly gardening to create a large-scale butterfly habitat.*" available at http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/Butterfly_FlyerPrint_may_2010.pdf