

## WINDSOR PARK CLUSTER ASSOCIATION

### LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES: Amended February 23, 2011

The Windsor Park Cluster is an award-winning community with a strong design element of consistency among residences. It is important to maintain this design element and to promote individuality to the extent it enhances the overall appeal of the cluster. Many of us bought in Windsor Park because we were attracted to its design, and we should do what we can to promote this design well into the future.

The following guidelines are just that: guidelines, but specific items have been incorporated into Cluster Standards. The Board and the Landscape Committee feel strongly that certain elements of the original design be maintained, and we encourage residents to comply with these guidelines unless you feel very strongly to the contrary (You must comply with the Cluster Standards). Should you object to the guidelines, however, members of the Landscape Committee would like to talk to you about your opinions so they can be incorporated into the guidelines if at all possible.

Topics covered below:

- Remove and/or replace dead plants
- Weed your garden and lawn
- Use appropriate garden edging
- Use shredded hardwood mulch in plant beds and mulch at least in spring
- Provide 1" of water a week to your lawn and plant beds (if nature doesn't); help water common areas near your home
- Keep strips between driveways attractive. Several alternatives suggested.
- Keep plant beds to a size you can easily take care of
- Use clear, incandescent bulbs in outside fixtures; halogen lamps in post light.

Residents are required to keep their property in repair under the Reston Covenants. There is a Windsor Park section in the covenants that specifies certain things: color schemes for houses; external light fixtures and acceptable light types (incandescent); deck and porch designs; deck stair design; and fence design. Variation to any of these standards requires a variance from the Reston Association, and this must be obtained in writing (based on a written submission). If you don't have a written variance from the Reston Association from these standards, they can require you to remove the non-conforming items at your expense. It is worth seeking a variance.

The Reston Covenants also place restrictions on things like retaining walls, outside (deck and garden) lighting, the use of white stones as a landscape element, and other things. It is worth learning what is covered and what is not. See the Cluster Landscaping Standards.

The Windsor Park Landscape Committee recommends that residents follow these requirements and that they also consider the following in maintaining their property.

Please maintain a neat appearance to your front yards. While our landscape contractor (Currently Sunrise Landscape and Design) will mow, fertilize, aerate, and reseed the turf, plant beds near most residence entrances are the owner's responsibility. Some suggestions:

**Dead Plants.** Remove and replace dead plants, especially shrubs and trees. Remember, however, that the plants died for a reason: they got too little (or too much) light, too little fertilizer, too little water, or were infected by disease or insects. So when deciding what to replace plants with, keep these things in mind. Different plants may be more appropriate for your location. The Landscape Committee can help you choose appropriate plants for your garden and provide information on care. If you are not able to care for your garden yourself, the Landscape Committee can help you organize care. The committee can also provide suggestions for appropriate ground covers, flowers, shrubs, and trees, should you desire to change what you have.

**Weeds.** Keep your garden as weed free as possible. Given the growing conditions in this area, weeds can quickly overtake your garden. Taking a few minutes each month to remove weeds (all unwanted plants) generally improves the attractiveness of the area. Specific areas to evaluate: the strip between your driveway and your neighbor's driveway; the plant bed next to your entrance; the mulch rings around trees.

**Edging.** With a couple of exceptions, spade edging (a "moat" around your trees and plant beds) is appropriate. The major advantage of this kind of edging is that the landscape contractor will maintain it for you (remove grass, for example) during normal lawn care. In addition, it provides a consistent look among all homes. If you want to provide a "special" appearance to your plant beds (please do not put edging around tree rings), a low flagstone wall can be attractive—there are a number of examples in Windsor Park. On the other hand, if you choose to use stones, remember that they are not "no care." Stones will slip out of place, and weeds will grow through the stones. This requires repair and weeding to look neat. Other forms of edging (for example, plastic or metal edging) can be appropriate, but if you use plastic or metal, please ensure that it is at ground level to avoid making the edging a "feature." In general, wooden edging is appropriate only when it is part of a retaining wall surrounding a raised bed.

**Mulching.** Most plant beds need mulch at least once a year to help eliminate water loss and to discourage weeds. If not mulched twice a year, beds should be mulched at least in the spring. The landscape contractor will mulch the major trees in front yards, but smaller trees and flower beds are your responsibility. Please use shredded (or double shredded) hardwood mulch to maintain a consistent appearance. This is available (in bags) at Meadow Farms Nursery and Home Depot (both off Route 7) at reasonable cost. You can also buy it in bulk.

**Strips between Driveways.** The strips between driveways are a shared responsibility between adjacent residences. You should work with your neighbor to determine what can be done and who should do it. This is an area that is often overlooked by both residents, so please take special notice of this area.

These areas have been hard hit by drought, and many shrubs have been lost over the years. If you are sick of the way this area looks, here are some suggestions:

1. Dig up all the plants and replace them with grass (Kentucky blue), *Ajuga* (sunnier areas), or, in shadier areas, *Pachysandra* or periwinkle (*Vinca*).
2. Replace shrubs with the same kind (most are *Euonymus* [fire bush]).
3. Replace with different shrubs, but make sure they won't grow too large. The strips planted with *Viburnum* are likely to become a problem as the shrubs get large. Some

evergreens that are attractive as small plants become unruly with age. Read the plant description carefully, and keep full plant size to less than 4 feet high and 2 feet wide. Place taller shrubs closer to residences, with shorter shrubs nearer the street if more than one type is used. Keep same shrubs together—don't alternate types.

4. Replace with annuals or perennials, but remember these generally require more attention than shrubs and ground covers.
5. Replace plants with mulch (shredded hardwood, renewed twice a year).

If you are replanting the strip, however, you probably should dig up the soil and amend it with Compro, compost, or manure. The soil is generally terrible, and plants don't respond well with poor soil. Mix in the amendment (at least 25 % of volume) to at least six inches, but twelve inches is much better and will require less upkeep in the long run. Mulch around shrubs; grass or ground covers don't require mulch.

**Plant Beds.** Don't plant larger beds than you can take care of. All plants require some attention, but nothing looks worse than an overplanted and uncared for bed. Shrubs and perennials must be periodically pruned, the bed must be weeded, and dead or diseased plants need to be removed or treated. This takes time, so if time is one of those things you have little of, keep it small. Also, when selecting plants for the beds, make sure that the plants are suited to the location (amount of sun, water, soil conditions). Unshaded southern exposures get more sun than northern exposures, and late afternoon sun is more drying and hotter than early morning sun. If the plant description says "full sun," however, it means just that. Unless the plants get full sun for most of the day, they probably won't do well. Plants that require shade should get no more than an hour or two of direct morning sun. Some plants are more tolerant of dry conditions, and others require "wet feet." Ask a member of the Landscape Committee for suggestions or assistance if you don't know whether certain plants will do well or not. We may not be able to help with specific plants, but we'll do what we can.

**Lighting.** While not really a "landscaping" issue, lighting outside residences is one of the most important aspects of the night landscape. The Reston Covenants require incandescent lights in the porch, outside garage, and post lights. The Landscape Committee recommends that porch and garage lights be clear (not frosted), 60 watt, incandescent bulbs. Some residents find it difficult to keep a workable bulb in the lamp post fixture. The Landscape Committee recommends a Philips, 75-watt, halogen post bulb, available from Home Depot. This bulb, while expensive, often lasts much longer than regular clear light bulbs. Under the Reston Covenants, a fluorescent fixture is not permitted.

**Summary.** The Windsor Park Landscape Committee would like residents to enjoy their surroundings to the fullest extent possible. By using the guidelines in this flyer, we believe that the overall appearance of the cluster can be maintained easily and effectively. Please use them whenever you are considering changes to your landscape.