

RCHOA Requirements for Approval of Major Landscaping Projects **(September 2026)**

These Landscaping Requirements are intended to promote landscaping that is compatible with the Western North Carolina environment and the character of our community.

RCHOA **approval** is **only** required for **significant** landscaping projects and alterations, particularly those involving changes that could affect drainage, or impact neighboring properties, or common areas.

When planning a significant landscaping project, do not begin work until you have received written approval via email or letter from the RCHOA's Architectural Committee (ARC) – Frank Eaton, Chairman. (Contact info- frankeaton801@gmail.com, 305-975-0027).

NOTE- In conjunction with these Landscaping Requirements below, please also refer to the RCHOA Educational Guidelines for Invasive and Native Plants AND Outdoor Lighting Guidelines on the website.

Requirements for Significant, Major Landscaping Changes (*RCHOA's ARC Committee approval required*) :

What is considered to be a major or significant alteration to your landscape?

- Removing healthy mature trees measuring more than 6 inches in diameter (measured at the 2 foot level above ground), planting trees, or substantially removing or altering large shrubs, hedges or landscaping screening.
- Installing or substantially modifying hardscape features, including retaining walls, edging that materially changes the appearance of the landscape, boulders, decorative rocks, pavers, patios, walkways, stepping-stone paths, decorative gravel, or drainage swales.
- Installing landscape structures, including pergolas/arbors, trellises attached to the home, raised planters, fountains, ponds, statues, large planters visible from the street, or play structures that are visible from neighboring properties and/or the street.
- Installing or materially modifying irrigation systems in a manner that could affect runoff, water use, or adjacent properties.

- Converting lawn areas by replacing them with a different turf type, groundcover, artificial turf, xeriscaping, or substantial rock or mulch conversions.

NOTE-Routine Landscaping Not Requiring ARC Approval

ARC approval is ordinarily not required for routine landscaping activities, provided the work does not materially affect drainage, easements, neighboring properties, common areas, sight lines or the exterior appearance of the community.

Submitting a Landscaping Change Request

1. **Do not begin work** until you have received written approval via email or letter from the RCHOA's Architectural Committee – Frank Eaton, Chairman. (Contact info-frankeaton801@gmail.com, 305-975-0027).
2. Submit a site plan and/or sketch showing your property lot lines, easements, home, and proposed changes. Clearly identify new planting beds, trees, structures, lighting, irrigation zones, and drainage features. Include photos of the existing area. If relevant, include photos of street views and neighboring properties.
3. A plant list needs to be included in your plan, if relevant. Please include the common name and botanical name (if possible), quantities, projected mature height/spread, and installation sizes of any plants. To assist you, a list of native trees, shrubs, vines, and grasses is included in the RCHOA Educational Guidelines for Invasive and Native Plants on the RCHOA website. Although not required, it is recommended that plant replacements be selected from this list.

Note: Residents should select plant sizes appropriate for the site and use qualified professional assistance when installation conditions or plant size warrants.

4. Drainage and grading information are also needed in your plan if the work could affect runoff. Include manufacturer cut sheets if using channel drains or similar systems. Contractor information (company name, license/insurance, and estimated start/end dates) is also needed as part of your plan. The ARC may require additional plans, surveys, photographs, specifications, contractor information or other documentation reasonably necessary to evaluate the proposed project.

5. Do not place installed plantings, structures, or other landscape improvements within utility or drainage easements without written confirmation from the RCHOA's ARC and, when applicable, the relevant utility provider.

6. Permits: Confirm whether town/county permits are required.

7. Projects Abutting the Golf Course: If your landscaping project abuts the golf course, the homeowner and their landscaper should confirm with the owners of the Reems Creek Golf Course whether any golf course landscape easements or maintenance areas affect the rear of the property and ensure that any such easements or maintenance areas are clearly reflected in the landscaping plan. Any landscaping plan should also clearly show the required setback distances from the rear property line. We would suggest that you review your property survey in advance of designing the landscaping.

NOTE-The ARC will ordinarily acknowledge receipt of a request within five (5) business days and will endeavor to provide a decision within fifteen (15) business days after receiving all requested information needed to evaluate the request.

Emergency Work

- **Emergency work necessary to address a hazardous tree, active erosion, storm damage or an immediate drainage problem may proceed when reasonably necessary to protect persons or property. The resident should notify the ARC as soon as practical.**

After Approval of the Project by the ARC:

- Complete the project as approved. If changes become necessary due to material availability, site conditions, or other circumstances, obtain written approval from the ARC before making substitutions or modifications.
- Keep construction materials, equipment, and debris contained. Protect sidewalks, curbs, storm drains, and common-area landscaping from damage.
- Maintain clear sight lines for vehicles at intersections, corner lots, and at driveway entrances.
- Addition of invasive plants should be avoided. Residents are encouraged to replace existing invasive plants with native or non-invasive alternatives. An invasive species is considered invasive when it can aggressively spread, outcompetes native vegetation for light, water, and nutrients, and lacks the

natural controls, like insects or diseases, that help control its growth. Invasive plants typically also serve as hosts for invasive insects and pests.

- Prevent runoff, erosion, or sediment from affecting sidewalks, streets, neighboring properties, or common areas. Promptly repair any erosion, settling, or drainage issues resulting from your project.
- When work begins, be considerate of your neighbors by managing work hours, contractor parking, and noise.
- **Ongoing Maintenance and Responsibility:** Maintain irrigation to prevent overspray or other nuisance conditions. Minimize the use of herbicides and insecticides whenever practical and apply all products in accordance with label directions and applicable laws.