OAKMONT

IN THE VALLEY OF THE MOON

OAKMONT VILLAGE ASSOCIATION (OVA)
ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE (AC)

# LANDSCAPE POLICY

The Landscape Policy preserves the open and natural character, aesthetically pleasing appearance, and value of the community.

OVA policies also acknowledge our exposure to risks from wildland fires. OVA is a member of Firewise USA which promotes community fire preparedness and risk reduction. Note that insurers' requirements may exceed regulatory and Oakmont policy requirements.

**All changes to landscaping in front, rear and side yards require application to, and prior approval from, the Architecture Committee**.

1. This policy applies to those areas of your lot not covered by structures, walks, driveways, decks or patios. Creek bed landscaping is not the responsibility of the AC and is governed by California and Federal agencies from which permits will be required.
2. Landscaping changes to front, side and back yards require prior written approval by the AC. This includes enclosed side and rear yard landscaping. Other than ordinary maintenance, no work, including demolition, shall commence prior to AC approval.
3. Any street frontage landscaping should present an aesthetically pleasing and attractive appearance. This will be accomplished by the combination of plant materials such as trees, shrubs, flowers, natural or artificial turf, ground cover plants, and a few decorative elements. Decorative elements may include faux (fake) riverbed, small rock pond, large boulders, small areas of gravel or rock, or a small sitting area.
4. The choice of plants for all landscapes must take into consideration the mature size of each plant. A standard target at original planting time should be about one plant (or small grouping of flowers, bulbs, etc.) for every 25 square ft of landscaping. Too many plants can be a burden for water usage, maintenance, fire hazard, and visual appearance.
5. Front yard plantings and side-yard street frontage plantings shall be mulched with AC approved rock, gravel, or composted mulches. Combustible mulch is not allowed within the 0-5 ft Defensible Space (Zone 0) that borders the home and attached combustible structures. Noncombustible rock, gravel, concrete, and pavers are allowed within Zone 0. Rock used as mulch in Zone 0 and used between plants in front and side-yard plantings is exempt from the 15% rock rule calculation. Wood mulch must not be used in a widespread or continuous manner and must be separated with non-combustible material such as concrete, gravel, and rock. Samples of previously approved rock mulch are available in the AC office. Finely shredded redwood or cedar bark, such as Gorilla hair, or rubber mulches are not allowed on the property. A sample of mulch material must be submitted with application and must be

approved by the AC.

6. Knowing the watering requirements of trees and plant material before planting is essential. Watering should be kept to a minimum consistent with our climate. Native plants are favored; they are adapted to our seasonally dry climate, tend to be disease resistant, and provide habitat value.
7. Any material used as a border at the back of a public sidewalk shall be installed so that the top of the material is flush with the top of the sidewalk.
8. Vegetable gardens should be confined to the rear yard because of their seasonal appearance.

**New and Replacement Landscape Applications:**

9. Landscape plans should aesthetically harmonize with and complement the surroundings.
10. Where the landscaping of a new project is to adjoin an existing landscaped area, the new landscaping should form an appropriate transition between the two.
11. A goal of street frontage mature landscape shrubs or tree canopies representing 50% of the total landscape area is suggested. Crowding or too many plants will not be approved.

**Maintenance:**

12. Existing Landscape must be upkept and maintained to preserve the appearance of our community throughout the seasons.
13. Landscape areas shall be kept free of weeds and in a vigorous and thriving condition through the appropriate use of irrigation, cultivation, pruning and any other necessary operations. *Landscape Criteria for Drought Conditions* is available in the Architectural Office.
14. Shrubs, bushes or trees of different varieties that grow together should be pruned to separate the plants.
15. A hedge or line of shrubs constitutes a fence and must adhere to the applicable fence policy height requirements.
16. If landscape fabric is used for weeding control, it must be covered with rock or wood mulch and maintained to prevent showing of the fabric. Barrier/fabrics, either woven or non-woven, must be water and vapor-permeable for soil health. Impermeable barriers will be considered for engineered solutions when the objective is to maintain slope stability above roads or structures.
17. All landscape areas shall be maintained to minimize weeds.

**Lawn and Grass:**

18. Lawns must be mowed on a regular basis. Lawn height not to exceed four and one-half (4 ½) inches.
19. Lawn grass shall be kept at least twelve (12) inches away from the trunk of a tree to avoid damage to the bark from mowing and trimming equipment.
20. Bermuda grass lawns are prohibited.

**Artificial Turf:**

Refer to the Artificial Turf Policy

**Shrub Care:**

21. Shrubs shall be pruned and maintained in a manner consistent with the neighborhood. Shrub pruning is intended to keep the plants in normal bounds, including off sidewalks and curbs and to remove dead or twiggy branches.
22. Dead shrubs or shrubs that have exhausted their natural life, shall be removed and replaced.
23. Shrubs with visible woody areas exposed should be removed and replaced if they cannot be restored to health in a reasonable period of time.
24. Mature shrubs need to be pruned and should not overly obscure the front of the home.
25. Topiary pruning is discouraged.

**Ground Covers:**

26. Ground covers shall be pruned or trimmed neatly away from shrubs, trees, walks, curbs, light standards, other plants, header boards and valve box lids.
27. Ground covers along the edges of walks and streets shall be edged as often as necessary to not encroach on the walks and streets.
28. Old ground covers that have developed a layer of dead material should be removed or replaced.

**Vines:**

29. Vines shall be pruned regularly to control growth and direction and are not permitted in trees or bushes. Ivy growing into trees or bushes shall be removed.
30. Vines on perimeter fences must be kept to the height of the fence, trimmed and free of dead material. Vines must be trimmed away from the Fire Protection Zone 0, 0-5 feet from the residence. Vines on fences bordering the golf course must be selected and maintained to meet the requirement for an open design, as specified in the Fence Policy.
31. Dead twigs and branches shall be removed annually.
32. Vines shall be kept from engulfing windows, doors, gates, or other structural features.

**Tree Care:**

33. Trees shall be pruned and maintained in a consistent manner with the neighborhood.
34. Dead trees shall be removed and may be replaced with AC approval.
35. Mature trees need to be pruned as needed to be safe and presentable. Branches overhanging the sidewalks or streets should be pruned with eight (8) feet of vertical clearance over a sidewalk and thirteen (13) feet over a street.
36. Trees are to be maintained in a shape as close to their natural form as possible.
37. Avoid topping trees. Remove dead or diseased branches or trees as soon as possible.

38. California native oaks have special needs; the use of summer water under the canopy can kill them. Digging around oak roots is harmful, and machine trenching under free canopies is prohibited. Fallen oak leaves should be allowed to accumulate under the oaks to maintain the soil health.

**Heritage and Protected Trees:**

Also refer to the Tree Planting and Removal Policy.

39. The City of Santa Rosa regulates removal or alteration of heritage and protected trees by city code under Title 17 Environmental Protection, Chapter 17-24 Trees. Heritage trees are defined by species and size. A list of heritage trees is available from the Architectural Office or the city's website. Work may require a city permit and inspection, and oversight by a certified arborist.

**Firewise:**

Refer to the Firewise Landscape Policy for requirements regarding:

- Do Not Plant list
- Allowed plantings in 0-5 ft Defensible Space (Zone 0)
- Tree and shrub clearances from buildings, roofs, chimneys, other trees and shrubs, and ladder fuels
- Use of combustible mulches
- Distance requirements between your home and combustible garden/tool/potting sheds, gates and fences, stored wood

**Related Policies**

- Artificial Tuft Policy
- Firewise Landscape Policy
- Fence Policy
- Plant Enclosure Policy
- Tree Planting and Removal Policy
- Landscape Criteria for Drought Conditions