

HFCA LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

1. New construction and major landscaping changes require that a landscape plan be submitted to and approved by the ARC and the HFCA Landscape Committee. Landscape plans must show:

- existing trees and plants, with names
 - proposed trees and plants, with names
 - any fences, walls, water features, or walkways, showing design and materials
 - location of trees to be removed
 - location of the improvement on the property
 - artificial turf is not allowed in a home's exterior
- (BOD June 2023)

2. No topographic or vegetation characteristics of the property shall be altered by removal, reduction, cutting, excavation or any other means without the prior written approval of HFCA, except for routine maintenance. Failure to get written approval from HFCA could result in fines up to \$500 per violation.

Tree Policy

A homeowner requesting permission for a contractor to cut or otherwise alter a tree greater than 6 inches in diameter (or 20 inches in circumference) as measured at chest level or a tree that could pose a threat of damage to structures, driveways or roads, must ascertain that the contractor has the required insurance.

For trees on homeowners' property: Proof of current general liability insurance is required and must be submitted to the HFCA office prior to work being approved by HFCA.

For trees on HFCA property: Proof of current general liability insurance and current workers' compensation insurance is required and must be submitted to the HFCA office prior to work commencing.

Tree topping is not permitted except in very limited circumstances such as hedge maintenance for a privacy screen.

If tree removal is the only alternative for view enhancement, a replacement tree of a lower growing variety is to be planted in that approximate area.

Any pruning, thinning, or removal of trees must be approved in writing by HFCA.

3. When soil is disturbed, appropriate silt and erosion control measures must be taken as required by HFCA Protective Covenants and North Carolina State law. ARC and the Landscape Committee will do periodic inspections during a landscaping project; state or county inspectors may inspect areas where the potential for erosion or siltation exists.

4. Water conservation is imperative and the responsibility of each property owner. The following rules apply:

- Permanent yard sprinkler systems, hose sprinklers or soaker hoses are NOT permitted.
- Grass, if included in the landscape plan must not exceed 25% of the total footprint area of the house, including the garage (excluding porches).
- Installation of a water feature requires installation of a water meter by HFCA at the owner's expense. (1-2-09)

5. A five foot right-of-way, from the edge of the blacktop, must be reserved with no obstructions, such as rock columns or landscape plantings. If obstructions, existing prior to May, 2004, must be removed for HFCA improvements or maintenance, they will be removed at the owner's expense. Existing landscaped areas on this right-of-way may not be "donated" to HFCA and shall be maintained by the property owner. Any additional areas to be landscaped and maintained by HFCA will need the recommendation of the Landscape Committee and the approval of the HFCA Board of Directors.

Exterior Lighting Guidelines (BOD approved 6/22/2022)

Any exterior landscape lighting plans must be submitted on a site plan to the Architectural Review Committee for approval PRIOR to installation. The plan should be based on the most recent survey of the property. This policy pertains to landscape lighting, driveway entrance lighting and lights on the exterior of homes and other structures.

The primary purpose of all exterior lighting shall be for pedestrian and vehicle safety. To that end, low wattage stake mounted downlighting will be considered. Uplighting in trees shall not be permitted, in order to preserve our dark sky and prevent spillover of light to other properties. Downlighting in trees should be no higher than twenty feet except on properties which are very isolated and/or very steep or with other mitigating circumstances. Multiple lights in trees will be discouraged.

No exterior lighting in which the direct source (bulb) is visible to a neighboring residence or produces light spillover or glare to pedestrian or vehicular traffic shall be allowed. Direct source lighting limitations do not apply to existing driveway entrance lights. In addition, ground level uplighting may be permitted at low wattage levels with specific approval. All bulbs shall be "warm" lighting (2800 K or lower); daylight or "blue" lights will not be permitted. Eave, patio or deck lighting must be directed downward and into the property.

Highlands Falls Community Association may establish a policy

for hours of light usage as it deems appropriate. Specifically, exterior lights should not be left on all night and should also be off when the member is away for an extended period, such as the off season. Motion activated lights may be allowed as long as they do not adversely affect neighbors, e.g. being set off repeatedly by blowing limbs or remaining on for extended periods of time.

Due to the nature of lighting, in that it is not as quantifiable as buildings or plantings, ARC reserves the right to have members revise lighting after installation if the direction, brightness, or spillover is considered objectionable based on the above guidelines. Neighboring properties will always be considered when evaluating lighting plans.

In addition to consideration of the trespass of light in the community as it affects humans, ARC is committed to protecting the night environment for mountain animals and birds. Highlands Falls is a rural, mountain community and science has proven that the introduction of light into a night environment negatively affects wildlife.

Landscape Guidelines Appendix

Suggestions to homeowners for the preservation of nature's balance and biodiversity of the Highlands Plateau.

1. Learn what natural features and plants exist on your property. Large trees, rock outcrops and patches of wildflowers are valuable and irreplaceable landscape features. Community resources are available to help you with plant identification.

2. If you are building a home, involve your architect and landscape architect early in the process and let them help you blend your home into the natural contours of the land.

- For water conservation:
 - (1) landscape plans should consist of vegetation that normally requires only natural rainfall.
 - (2) flowers should not require an inordinate amount of water.
 - (3) installation of gutters and downspouts is encouraged. It is recommended that underground plastic pipes be connected to all downspouts to direct water to planting areas and sized properly with surge stone at the termination point to control erosion.
- Designate areas to be left natural. Require your contractor to provide construction barriers for protection of undeveloped areas of your property.

- Think before you cut! Clearly mark trees and shrubs to be removed. Preserve all other trees and the under story growth for wildlife habitat.
- Eliminate unnecessary removal of trees and shrubs.
- Stockpile topsoil for future use where it will not be compacted.
- Avoid unnecessary soil compaction and damage to trees from heavy equipment by limiting access paths on and off the construction site.

3. After construction is completed:

- Stabilize disturbed areas to prevent erosion. Maintain silt fences until mulch and ground cover are established.
- Create “windows” for a view by selectively trimming limbs leaving a canopy instead of topping, sacrificing entire trees or stands of trees.
- Enhance the natural look of your home by planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. Buy only nursery grown plants. Do not dig from the wild!
- Plant a replacement tree for every tree cut during the construction process..
- Know your North Carolina laws and understand the habitat need of fish and wildlife if you are building a water feature or pond.
- Beware of non-native plants that are invasive as they rapidly spread and displace native species.

4. Tree “topping” is a very undesirable practice. Preferred alternatives include proper early pruning or selective branch thinning leaving a tree’s canopy intact.

5. Information is available at the HFCA office to assist you with landscaping in the mountains. These lists and articles include:

- List of native trees, shrubs and perennials available at local nurseries
- List of perennials that can withstand drought
- Substitute trees to replace native hemlocks in your landscape plans
- List of invasive plants to avoid
- An article titled “The Case Against Topping Trees”
- A brochure titled “Blooming Times of Native Flowers of the Highlands Plateau”
- A brochure titled “Designing Your Home and Gardens to Preserve the Beauty of the Mountains”

Further assistance is available by contacting any member of the HFCA Landscape Committee. Their names and phone numbers are available through the HFCA office.