

Landscaping in residential neighborhoods should be designed as an essential part of your property which includes your house, accessory buildings, parking and driveways, turf and plant materials. The impact of a well-landscaped property is immediate and obvious. It adds property value and is a source of lasting personal enjoyment and neighborhood pride.

Following a few simple and cost effective planting techniques, your landscaping choices can also include water conservation measures. This is good for the environment and will save you money every month in the form of reduced water bills.

Where is landscaping required?

For single family houses landscaping is required in the front and corner front yards. Side and rear yards are required to be landscaped in zoning districts which allow apartments.

What type of landscape materials can be used?

Existing homes are not restricted in their choice of landscape materials. However, use of water-conserving plants and materials are strongly encouraged in the planting and replanting of existing homes. Newly built homes must use low-water use plants.

What do I do about water conservation?

Water is a precious resource in the Salinas Valley. Saving water depends on individual responsibility and regulations that assure adequate water supplies while avoiding waste.

Landscaping typically takes up to 50 percent of a household's total water use. City Zoning Regulations have been adopted to make sure that property owners observe certain planting requirements when landscaping, including:

1. *All new housing must apply "xeriscape" principles including techniques and materials to significantly reduce water consumption such as: minimum turf area, water-conserving plant materials, grouping plants with similar water requirements, and low water use irrigation systems.*
2. *Plant materials must be selected for drought tolerance and adaptability to Salinas' environment. A minimum of 90 percent of non-turf material must be drought resistant.*
3. *Turf has to be limited to 20 percent of the total landscaping area. Turf is not permitted in areas with a dimension of less than 8 feet, or on slopes exceeding 10 percent.*
4. *All new automatic irrigation systems must have sprinkler heads with application rates which do not exceed the infiltration rate of the soil. These systems must be installed with dual or multiple program controllers which permit cycles of 5-10 minutes per hour.*

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5. *Landscaping requiring intensive watering has to be watered by hand or drip irrigation.*

Are there other landscaping requirements?

Landscaping in your front and corner side yards must be permanently maintained. This includes: watering, weeding, pruning, insect control, and replacement of plant materials and irrigation equipment needed to preserve the health and appearance of plant materials.

Your landscaping should not interfere with safe sight distances for cars, bicycles and pedestrians. It should not grow into overhead utility lines or street lights and should not block pedestrian and bicycle ways.

How can I get more information?

Call the Department of Community Development at 758-7206.

Xeriscape Guidelines	
Saving water makes sense. Here are five simple landscaping techniques that will beautify your home, conserve water and save you money:	
1.	Use landscaping features and techniques that reduce the demand for and consumption of water, including appropriate low water using plants, non-living ground cover, a low percentage of lawn coverage, a high degree of paving permeability and water conserving irrigation techniques and systems.
2.	The use of turf should be minimized or substituted altogether with groundcovers. Don't plant turf in narrow median or sidewalk strips and other areas which are difficult to irrigate. Use of grass varieties requiring low water usage are encouraged.
3.	Water efficient irrigation systems, such as drip, low output sprinkler heads, zonal systems and automatic timers, should be provided. Planting should be according to water needs, and the irrigation system matched to these needs.
4.	Plant varieties should be low water consuming, suited to the local soil and climate and grouped according to their water requirements.
5.	Mulches should be used generously and reapplied as part of a regular maintenance program to reduce evaporation, soil compaction and weeds.