

# ROCK CREEK MASTER HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

## XERISCAPE, ARTIFICIAL TURF AND VEGETABLE GARDEN POLICY

**PURPOSE:** To establish standards and procedures for the installation of drought-tolerant landscaping materials, artificial turf, and vegetable gardens to ensure consistency with the community's architectural character, preserve property values, and promote the overall aesthetic harmony of the Association.

**AUTHORITY:** The following procedures have been adopted pursuant to the provisions of C.R.S. 38-33.3-302(1)(a)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 29, 2026

**RESOLUTION:** The Board of Directors of the Rock Creek Master Homeowners Association hereby adopts the following rules and regulations governing drought-tolerant landscaping materials, artificial turf and vegetable gardens for all properties within the Association.

### **Architectural Control Committee (ACC) PRE-APPROVAL REQUIRED**

Except for the addition of plants to a lot in accordance with the previously approved landscape plan, written permission must be obtained in advance by the ACC Request process. Any change or improvement to the dwelling exterior or lot requires written approval by the ACC by following the ACC Request process. Failure to do so may subject the homeowner to monetary or other penalty, and the homeowner may be required to change or remove any non-HOA compliant work performed – or to restore the lot or dwelling to its original condition – entirely at the homeowner's expense, which may include any legal costs incurred by the Association. The review and approval process generally takes 20 to 30 days but can take as long as 45 days if your request is not typical. Please build adequate time for ACC review approval when planning your project. In special situations and where possible, the ACC will try to accommodate requests to expedite the approval process. Such requests can be made to management.

### **ACC Request Requirements:**

1. Plot plan with the proposed changes drawn to scale. Please include measurements of the areas to be changed.
2. List of plants and non-living material to be used, including full grown size and color

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3. Artificial Turf information must include fiber type, color, face weight, backing type, pile height, subbase, blade shape, infill material, thatch material, sample or brochure specific to choice of turf, installation instructions, warranty information, documentation evidencing that the proposed product is PFAS-free, and maintenance information.
4. Additionally for Vegetable Gardens - indicate raised or in ground; if raised a design of the raised bed, including materials and color.
5. Design plan for the finished Xeriscape or if choosing a pre-approved design, indicate which design.
6. Photos of the area where the landscape will be changed.

## **XERISCAPE or DROUGHT-TOLERANT LANDSCAPING**

Subject to this policy, Members may use Xeriscape or drought-tolerant vegetative or non-vegetative landscapes to provide ground covering for their front and /or backyards. Such Xeriscape or drought-tolerant vegetative or non-vegetative landscapes may replace, or be combined with, traditional turf grass lawns, trees, and vegetation. Unless otherwise defined in this Policy, all other capitalized terms shall have the same meaning as set forth in the Declaration.

### **A. Definitions**

- 1) “Xeriscape” means landscaping that adheres to the principles of water-wise landscaping, as defined in section 37-60-135 (2)(l) as follows:
- 2) “Water-wise landscape” or “water-wise landscaping” means a water and plant management practice that:
  - a. Is intended to be functional and attractive;
  - b. Emphasizes the use of plants that require lower supplemental water, such as native and drought-tolerant plants; and
  - c. Prioritizes the following seven key principles:
    - i. Planning and design for water conservation, beauty, and utility;
    - ii. Improving soil;
    - iii. Applying efficient irrigation;
    - iv. Limiting turf to high traffic, essential areas;
    - v. Selecting plants that have low water demand;
    - vi. Applying mulch; and
    - vii. Maintaining the landscape.

### **B. General Xeriscape or Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Guidelines**

The following guidelines shall be used by Members in developing Xeriscape or drought tolerant vegetative landscape designs.

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## 1) 60% Rule

- a. A minimum of 60% of any Xeriscape design area in both the front yard and the back yard shall be landscaped with drought-tolerant plants.
- b. For definition, "Plants" may mean plants, ornamental grasses, shrubs or trees.
- c. For tree guidelines see the Association's Tree Policy.
- d. For a full list of acceptable drought resistant plants, please see the bulletins prepared by the Colorado State University Extension links on the Association's website.

## 2) Non-living Materials

- a. The remainder of the Xeriscape area must be landscaped with non-living materials such as decorative rock and/or mulch.
- b. Color and style of such rock and/or mulch must be in harmony with the property and the HOA community.
- c. A Member may not rock or mulch more than 40% of the front or back yard.
- d. Non-living materials can include large boulders and other natural materials that are used as part of the xeriscape design.
- e. Except for flowerpots, no "decorative items" such as birdbaths, statuary, urns, or other man-made ornamentation or other similar items may be used in the front yard.
- f. Artificial or synthetic plants of any type shall not be used in the front yard.

## 3) Lighting

- a. No colored lighting may be used in the Xeriscape design area.
- b. Lighting that enhances the Xeriscape design area may be used if it doesn't create a nuisance or public safety issue, e.g. overly bright.

## 4) Pre-Approved Design Plans

- a. The Association has a set of pre-approved Xeriscape Design Plans posted on the website.
- b. Members may use a similar drought-tolerant substitute plant when a plant in a pre-approved design is not available.
- c. An ACC Request must be submitted for any of the pre-approved designs.

## 5) Borders

- a. Xeriscape areas must be surrounded by a border to clearly define the xeriscape area and help prevent weed and grass encroachment.
- b. Borders must be maintained, edged, and kept in an attractive condition.
- c. Brick and masonry borders must be approved for color and style.
- d. No "common concrete blocks" are permitted. Common concrete bricks are those used in construction and not designed for landscape purposes.

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- e. Metal borders must be no higher than 2 inches above grade and have no sharp edges or corners exposed.
- 6) Maintenance
  - a. Xeriscape areas must be maintained at all times to ensure an attractive appearance.
  - b. Dead or dying Plants must be replaced.
  - c. All plants must be maintained, trimmed, pruned.
  - d. Xeriscape areas must be kept weed free.
  - e. Seasonal dieback must be cut back by the start of spring.
- 7) Safety
  - a. For public safety, no plants with thorns, spines, or sharp edges can be used within six feet (6') of the public sidewalk.

## ARTIFICIAL TURF

Artificial Turf (non-vegetative turf grass) may be installed in the backyard of a Lot as a replacement of, or addition to, natural grass. The following guidelines shall be used when installing Artificial Turf.

### A. Front and Side Yard

- 1) Artificial Turf is prohibited in the front and side yards of the Lot.

### B. Color

- 1) Artificial Turf must be green in color.

### C. Type

- 1) The use of indoor/outdoor plastic or nylon or other type of carpeting as artificial turf is prohibited.
- 2) Artificial Turf must:
  - a. Be made of polyethylene.
  - b. Have a Pile Height with a minimum height of 1.5 inches and a maximum height of 2.5 inches. The Pile Height of artificial turf refers to the height of the blades.
  - c. Have a Face Weight of at least sixty (60) ounces. The "Face Weight" is defined as the weight in ounces of the Non-vegetative Turf Grass fibers found in one square yard of Non-vegetative Turf Grass as defined by the manufacturer.
  - d. Have antimicrobial, anti-odor, and cooling properties.

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- e. Contain an infill material of clean silica sand or zeolite material that is brushed into the synthetic turf to keep the blades upright and achieve a natural grass look. Any replacement infill shall be silica sand or zeolite material.
  - 1. Rubber infill is prohibited.
- f. Have a back weight of at least 26 oz.
- g. Have a backing that is 100% fully permeable and shall allow for the free movement and drainage of water and pet urine through the system to prevent runoff, pooling, and flooding.
- h. Be free of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).
- i. Be fire retardant.

## D. Installation

- 1) Artificial Turf shall be installed pursuant to manufacturer's requirements by professionals who are experienced and trained by the manufacturer in the installation of the Non-vegetative Turf Grass.
- 2) Any improper installation will be subject to removal or repair at the Member's expense.
- 3) The Artificial Turf shall be installed over at least three inches (3") of a compacted aggregate base that provides adequate drainage. The base material shall be installed over subgrade that is compacted to a firm condition to ensure stability and maintain adequate drainage.
- 4) Seams shall not be visible and shall be fastened in a manner that ensures they are firm, tight and permanent.
- 5) The Artificial Turf shall be anchored over the entire coverage area and shall be installed with a nailer board or any such substitute recommended by the manufacturer intended to conceal edges and ensure proper anchoring of turf.
- 6) All existing irrigation infrastructure in the Artificial Turf area including piping and sprinkler heads that are no longer used must be capped or removed and shall not be visible.
- 7) All reasonable efforts shall be made to protect existing trees and tree roots from damage during installation.
- 8) Installation may not change or interfere with the existing grading or drainage.

## E. Buffer Area

- 1) When installing Artificial Turf there must be a three-foot (3') buffer area between the Artificial Turf and all property lines and structures on the property.
- 2) Buffers shall be permeable, consisting of wood mulch, gravel, or rock.

## F. Warranty

- 1) Artificial Turf must have at least a ten (10) year warranty.

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## G. Maintenance

- 1) In addition to following the manufacturer's maintenance guidelines, the following maintenance activities are required for Artificial Turf:
  - a. Cleaning, sanitizing, brushing, and removal of dirt, mud, stains, weeds, debris. Cleaning shall be done with biodegradable products.
  - b. Hand raking of worn turf areas as needed.
  - c. Repairing of depressions and ruts to maintain an even visual surface.
  - d. Brushing back any loose infill that has been washed or moved off the turf.
  - e. Regular maintenance to eliminate any odors, flat or matted areas, weeds, looseness at edges, seams or elsewhere.
  - f. Replacement of the artificial turf when maintenance or repair is unable to simulate a healthy living turf.
  - g. Replace Artificial Turf if it falls into disrepair with fading, holes or loose areas. Replacement and repairs shall be done with like materials from the same manufacturer and done so in a manner that results in a repair that blends in with the existing artificial turf.

## VEGETABLE GARDENS

### A. The following guidelines shall be used with planting Vegetable Gardens.

- 1) For purposes of this policy, the term "Vegetable Garden" means a plot of ground or an elevated soil bed in which pollinator plants, flowers, vegetables, herbs, fruits, leafy greens or other edible plants are cultivated. Any fruit bearing trees are addressed in the Tree Policy.
- 2) Vegetable gardens may be planted or installed in the front, back or side yard.
- 3) Vegetable gardens in the front or side yard must be located at least five feet (5') from the street, sidewalk or neighboring property lines and may not change or interfere with the existing grading or drainage.
- 4) All vegetable gardens must be well maintained throughout the growing season, and clean at the end of the growing season.
- 5) Any raised (an elevated soil bed) vegetable garden bed must be made of material that is in harmony with the property and community and must be kept in neat repair.
  - a. No metal containers, such as stock troughs, are permitted in the front or side yard.
- 6) For safety reasons, plants, including but not limited to, grapevines, hops, corn and other plants that grow in heights more than three feet (3') may not be used in the front or side yard vegetable gardens.
- 7) No vegetable garden may create a nuisance for neighbors or the community as determined by the Association.

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## **SAFETY/NUISANCE**

For safety purposes, if the Association determines at any point in its discretion any Xeriscape area, Artificial Turf or Vegetable Garden causes any obstruction, nuisance or safety hazard, the Member will be asked to modify the Xeriscape, Artificial Turf or Vegetable Garden to eliminate the issue. If such an issue is not rectified or cannot be rectified, the member will be asked to remove the Xeriscape, Artificial Turf or Vegetable Garden. Any necessary modification or removal will be at the Member's own cost.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

The Association may enforce violations of this Policy in a manner consistent with its covenant violation policy. The Association may require proof from the Member that the landscape or Vegetable Garden be watered in a manner that is consistent with the maximum watering permitted by the restrictions or guidelines then in effect.

## **SUPPLEMENT TO LAW**

This Policy shall replace and supersede all previous policies of the Board related to the installation of Xeriscape or drought-tolerant landscaping materials, Vegetable Gardens, and Artificial Turf or Non-vegetative Turf Grass by Members. The provisions of this Policy shall be in addition to and in supplement of the terms and provisions of the Declaration and Colorado law.

## **PRESIDENT'S**

### **CERTIFICATION:**

The undersigned, being President of the Rock Creek Master Homeowners Association, Inc. certifies that the foregoing Policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Association at a duly called and held meeting of the Board on April 29, 2026, and in witness thereof the undersigned has subscribed his/her name.

**ROCK CREEK MASTER HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_