

# VENETIAN GARDENS ASSOCIATION

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## VGA Planning Committee Guidelines on Lawn Removal and Drought Tolerant Landscape Changes

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1. Low- watering or no watering of lawns is allowed during the California drought emergency declared by the Governor, and to also comply with the current water-conserving ordinances of the City of Stockton, California. When the drought emergency is declared over, then those who still have their visible lawn turf will need to get it back to a healthy appearance, as was covered under VGA Master Restrictions. If approved, new drought tolerant plant landscape was installed; it would stay and fall under the VGA Master Restrictions rules of maintaining their visible lawns.
2. Artificial turf is also allowed as of August 2015. An artificial turf landscape plan still must be submitted and approved by the Planning Committee before work commences. Standards for this will be provided to those planning to install artificial turf.
3. The VGA Master Restrictions still require that even if you choose to not water your turf, that it is kept free from weeds, debris, mowed, etc. Fines may be imposed for these non-water violations unless corrected in a timely manner.
4. All changes to the "visible landscape" (*defined as front yard, and side yards that are open to view from the street and sidewalk*), must be approved by the Planning Committee. Changes to back yard landscapes do not have to be approved. The exception is that backyard landscapes bordering the golf course still need approval. (*The City of Stockton Code may affect any landscape/maintenance of the backyard*).
5. In a major turf removal using a water-efficient landscape replacement plan, drought resistant living plants (*at maturity*) and/or approved drought resistant turf must cover at least 60% of visible landscape area on the ground, not including tree canopies. Most plants, other than trees will reach approximate maturity in 2-3 years with good care. This would not include the driveway and approved parking areas. The remainder of the landscape surface must be covered with suitable ground covers and permeable "that allow water to seep into the ground" materials approved by Planning Committee. A majority of the visible landscape living plants must also be approved which include evergreen, perennial, native California plants, or California-friendly plants that require minimal water.
6. Mature trees and significant shrubs that are healthy should be kept and maintained. If large trees or shrubs create a problem in the new low- water landscape plan and you want to remove them and or replace them with a more suitable tree, the Planning Committee must approve that change. Plants that die must be removed and replaced with similar plants within 30 days.
7. Your submitted plans must include:
  - Present site drawing (*plan view or overhead view*) showing visible yard being re-landscaped, location of your house, of present trees, shrubs, and other features, drawn to approximate scale and

with major dimensions.

- Proposed new landscape plan view drawing including locations of major plants, trees (*drawn at estimated mature size*), groundcovers, garden beds, landscape, other features, etc.
  - Irrigation plan (*plan view or description of irrigation for various zones in yard*)
  - Information on method of turf removal, grading, raised areas, soil amendment materials are required before new landscape installation.
  - A list of new plants (*scientific or common name*), including quantity, container size being planted, along with indicating basic locations on landscape plan.
  - Description of ground covers, mulch, rock and gravel landscape materials and decorative features, including color.
  - Installation plan and time frame including projected beginning and ending dates and who will install landscaping.
  - Color, elevations (*street view drawings*) will be helpful, but not required.
8. After the landscape plans are approved, the landscape must be completed within 60 days. The Planning Committee will consider variances on the timing. The owner will contact the Planning Committee for a final approval inspection. The main criteria for final approval will be that the finished landscape is the result that fully reflects what was in the approved plans. The Planning Committee will then send out a letter of approval or non-approval on finished landscape within 30 days to the Owner.
9. If the decision on the finished landscape was “not to approve,” the decision and reasons will be stated in writing. The Owner will have 30 days from the postmark of the approval/non-approval letter to comply, unless the Owner appeals for an extension to the Planning Committee with a compelling reason, before the deadline. A hearing and fines may also apply for continued non-compliance.
10. The new low-water landscape should ideally project a natural, California native plant or California friendly plant environment that fits into the character of the neighborhood. No painted or dyed rock will be allowed. Very limited architectural features, structures, large areas of non-porous hardscape and decorative objects must be approved. Mulches must be at least 3 inches deep. Non-porous hardscape must be kept to minimum. Artificial turf is not allowed.
11. The new turf removal/water efficient plant replacement rules will apply if a major portion or all of the visible landscape will have turf removed. If only a minor portion of the visible landscape is to be changed, and the remainder of the turf will be left intact, the Planning Committee will still need to approve any landscape changes, and decide if or what turf removal/ low water plant landscape rules will apply.

If you have any questions or concerns on how to do plans and where you may be able to find information on drought-tolerant landscaping, contact the Planning committee at 209-477-3871. Your Association’s Planning Committee wants you to be able to create a beautiful and functional drought-tolerant landscape that you and your neighbors will enjoy and be proud of.

Board Approved: 12/9/2015