

# Landscaping. . . What the City requires and what it means to me as a homeowner.



## Why does the City require landscaping?

Landscaping is not only aesthetically pleasing, but it reduces dust, heat, weeds, and improves property values.

## What is landscaping?

Does your idea of landscaping look like this?



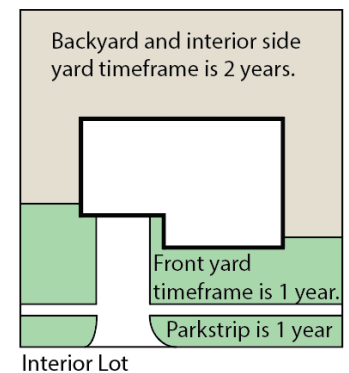
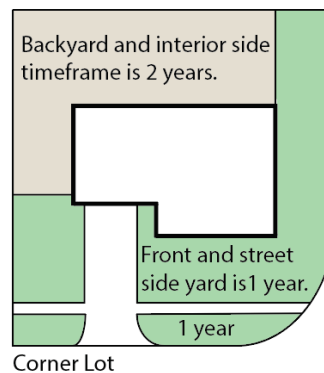
Yes, this is landscaping, but the **City does not require this much vegetation!** Landscaping can include plant materials such as trees, shrubs, grass, perennials, and vines, but also can include nonliving materials such as mulch, bark, decorative rock, ponds, fountains, statues, benches, pots, and earth berms. Here are some examples with less vegetation:



## The City requires. . .

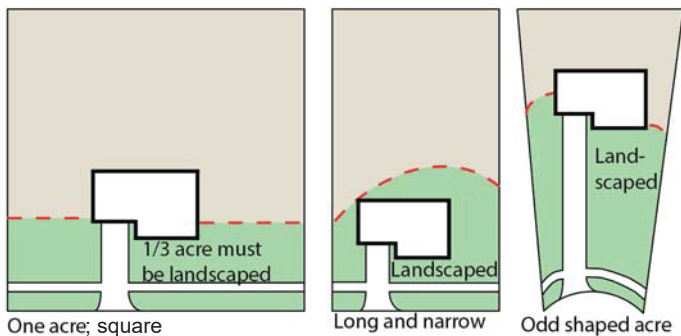
**Residential lots that are one-third acre or smaller** (excluding those in the A and RA-5 zones) must landscape the front and street side yard within one year of moving in. The interior side and back yard must be landscaped, or a six foot tall privacy fence that extends to the ground must be installed along with protective ground cover, within two years from the day you move in. Protective ground cover includes grass, living plants, rock and other nonliving material used to stabilize soils and minimize runoff.

*[Not sure what zone you are in? Not sure if your fence will meet the requirement? Call the Planning department at 801-766-9793 to find out].*



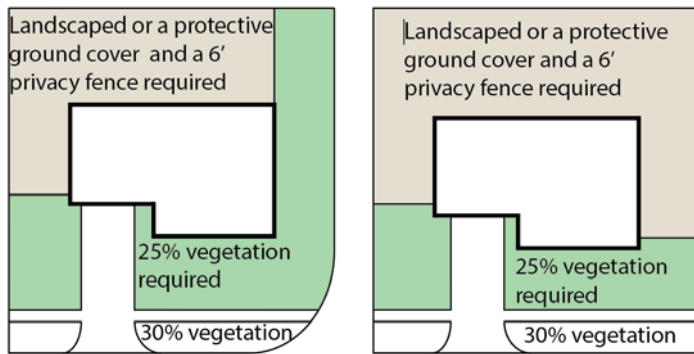
The graphic above outlines the timeframe for installation for each yard area. The timeframe begins the day you move into your home.

**Residential lots over one-third acre** in size must landscape at least one-third acre within the same time frame as stated earlier. The one-third landscaped acre must include the entire front yard; that also means that the building footprint, driveway, and parking areas all count towards meeting the requirement. The remainder of the lot may remain in a native state, but must comply with nuisance and fire requirements. This means that weeds may not exceed 6" in height and cannot create a fire hazard to any structure, or create a habitat for insects or vermin.



**General requirements for residential lots no matter of size.**

- At least 25% of your front yard and corner street side yard needs to be covered with live vegetation such as planter beds, shrubs and grasses. This includes tree canopies.



Corner Lot  
See below for clarification on backyard landscaping requirements.

Interior Lot

- Artificial turf is allowed. For more information see code: 19.06
- It is best not to plant trees directly under or in close proximity to power lines, poles, or utility structures.
- You may have limited areas of bare dirt in a garden, under a trellis, or under a tree.
- The back yard needs to be landscaped unless there is a 6' privacy fence and some kind of protective ground cover to reduce dust, erosion, and the spread of weeds.

**Park strips**

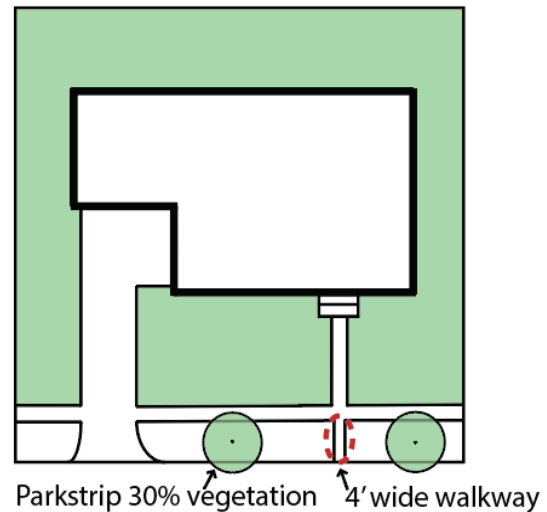
Park strips must be landscaped at the same time as the front yard. Park strips may contain the following items.

- Live vegetation (trees, shrubs, etc.)
- Landscape rock
- Cobble
- Removable pavers

Even though landscape rock, cobble, and removable pavers are allowed, 30% percent of each park strip shall contain plantings.

The following items are **not** allowed in park strips.

- Weeds and dead vegetation
- Fruit trees
- Fruit and vegetable gardens
- Gravel
- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Large boulders



Four foot wide concrete walkways are allowed in the park strip if they line up with the main walkway to the front door.

Please keep in mind that these are the minimum City requirements. Your HOA may require more landscaping. If you believe your HOA requirements are too much, please work with your HOA.

**What does this all mean for me as a homeowner?** Yes, the City has rules concerning installation timeframes, and how much vegetation is required. However, for the most part, it is entirely up to the homeowner to decide what type of landscaping to put in.

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## FAQ

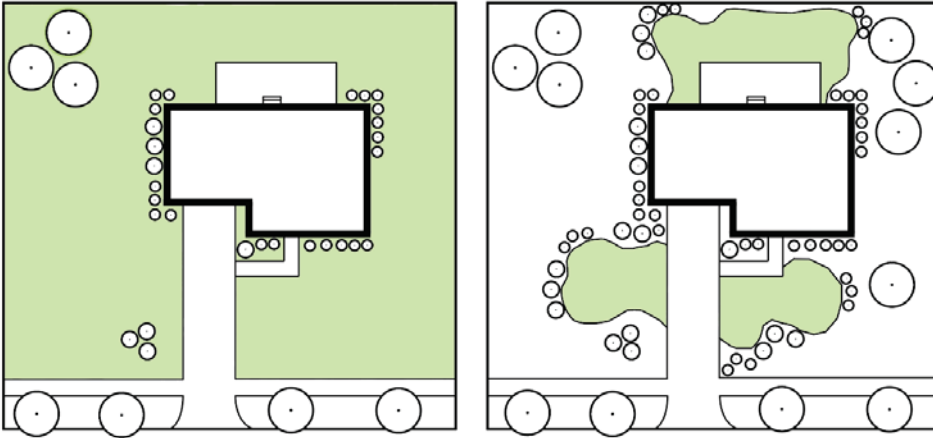
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### I want to be water-wise, but I enjoy lawn. . .

Most of us enjoy a nice green lawn where we can play games, have a picnic, or just relax under the shade of a large tree. The main problem with lawn is the amount of water it requires to keep it green.

#### Kentucky Bluegrass. . .

Kentucky Bluegrass is a popular lawn in Utah. It thrives in cooler temperatures; thus, it requires a lot of water to keep it green in the summer. If it is used, it is recommended that the lawn area be reduced and replaced by more water-wise plants as shown below.



The graphic above shows how lawn area may be reduced in favor of more drought tolerant plants.

#### Alternatives. . .

For those that love their lawns, but want to save water there are alternative grasses such as Cody Buffalograss, which provides a nice, short lawn, and uses half the water of Kentucky Bluegrass. For lawn ideas please visit [conservationgardenpark.org](http://conservationgardenpark.org).

#### Lawn tips. . .

- Water brown spots in your lawn with a hose instead of increasing the irrigation time.
- Avoid watering your lawn on windy days.
- Change your lawn mower to a 3-inch clipping height.
- Apply as little fertilizer to your lawn as possible. Applying excess fertilizer increases water consumption and actually creates more mowing for you!
- Use iron-based fertilizers to simply “green up” your lawn.

For more tips on lawn care and water conservation please visit [conservewater.utah.gov](http://conservewater.utah.gov).

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## FAQ

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### I want to decrease my water usage, but I am not sure where to begin.

There are many great resources out there if you want to start creating a water-wise yard.

For tips, advice, and classes please visit the websites listed below.

- For tips and advice please visit [conservewater.utah.gov/tips](http://conservewater.utah.gov/tips).
- Want more than just tips? Conservation Garden Park offer classes including landscape design, creating waterwise parkstrips, and yard maintenance.
- For more information on these classes please visit [conservationgardenpark.org/events](http://conservationgardenpark.org/events).

Did you know that there are local nurseries near Saratoga Springs that place a yellow tag or label on their water-wise plants for easy identification?

The list of participating nurseries and gardens that provide this service is available at [waterwiseplants.utah.gov](http://waterwiseplants.utah.gov). The site also contains lists of water-wise shrubs, trees, perennials, groundcovers, and more.

Want to see what other homeowners have done in their yards? Please visit [waterwiseplants.utah.gov](http://waterwiseplants.utah.gov) and click on “water-wise landscaping” to see examples .

Looking for conservation tips? Wondering how much to water each week? Looking for rebates? [Conservewater.utah.gov](http://Conservewater.utah.gov) is an amazing source for homes owners and general members of the public.



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## More Information

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### More Information:

According to the Division of Water Resources, "Utah is the second driest state in the Country. Utah uses the most water per capita in the US, but we receive the second lowest annual rainfall." ([Conserwater.utah.gov](http://Conserwater.utah.gov)).

Heat is a contributing factor to Utah's water issues. Cities have a lot of hard impermeable surfaces such as concrete and asphalt. When all of these hard surfaces are clustered in an area the temperature becomes warmer than the surrounding areas. This is referred to as the Heat Island effect.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, "Heat islands can affect communities by increasing summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emission, heat-related illness and mortality, and water quality." ([epa.gov/heat-islands](http://epa.gov/heat-islands))

Landscaping is a great tool to combat the heat island effect.

### Water Wise Landscaping

A water-wise plant is one that requires regular watering until established, but then requires less water than traditional plants. Some familiar examples include Rocky Mountain Juniper, Bigtooth Maple, Buffalograss, and Lamb's Ear. For a full list please visit [www.waterwiseplants.utah.gov/](http://www.waterwiseplants.utah.gov/)

Water-wise landscaping has the ability to decrease both water usage and the effects of our manmade surroundings. For those that love their lawn, a water-wise approach does not require you to get rid of your lawn, but to minimize lawn area in favor of water-wise plants.

### What about Xeriscaping. . .

Many people believe that Xeriscaping is a collection of rocks without vegetation; however, that is actually "zero-scaping." The whole idea behind Xeriscaping is to create a landscape - full of color, various scents, and a variety of plants - that requires very little water through the use of drought-tolerant plants, plant clustering and efficient irrigation.

Want to learn more? There are some great resources out there including the following link.

<http://slco.org/millionTrees/html/rightTree/XeriscapeDesign.html>

