

Villa Milano
Landscape Design Guidelines for Homeowners
June 8, 2017

Design Philosophy

Villa Milano is a small planned community (46 home sites) located in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains of the Sonoran Desert. It was designed around the concepts of architectural unity blended with Sonoran Desert character and environmental responsibility. As such, the landscape design philosophy is to ensure visual harmony along the streetscapes; protect vistas and solar access; encourage water and energy conservation; highlight the unique desert and mountain setting; and maintain property values.

The landscape design philosophy embraces principles of xeriscaping to create landscapes that

- use less water
- require minimal maintenance
- are environmentally friendly and healthy
- regionally appropriate

The long term goal is for Villa Milano to progress increasingly toward a xeriscape approach both in homeowner properties and the common areas.

The purpose of the *Landscape Design Guidelines for Homeowners* is to help retain and enhance the special look and feel of the community, while providing room for individual creativity. The intent is not to produce absolute conformity but to create a harmonious architectural approach. While Villa Milano supports a practical level of architectural diversity (both one and two story homes, varying building orientations, a palette of exterior paint colors, etc.), it is a planned community whose appeal and value are based largely on unity and harmony. It has been found that unplanned diversity in a community typically ages the look of the community and lowers the values of the real estate.

The following guidelines are intended to implement the design philosophy and explain approved plant material and hardscape features of homeowner front and back/side lot areas.

Grandfather Provisions

It is recognized that some of the design concepts of Villa Milano have not been fostered over time and some homeowners have invested in landscaping that may be inconsistent with these guidelines. Homeowners will not be expected to remove existing landscape elements but will be encouraged to transition toward consistency philosophy as feasible. For example, plants should be replaced with compliant plant material if and when a plant dies or is otherwise removed. It is further recognized that the common areas are not fully consistent with the landscape design guidelines and will also require transition over time.

Front Lot Area

The front lot area is defined as that portion of the lot which is not enclosed by a perimeter wall, fence or paved front entry sidewalk.

Planting Guidelines for Front Lot Areas

Landscape designs should draw on Sonoran Desert plants and near-native and adapted plants with desert character and drought resistance. To ensure visual harmony, species should be limited to those already in use in the community. Further, because of the small lot sizes, emphasis should be placed on use of distinctive, dramatic native accent plants and cacti.

Approved plants include only the following:

Cactus and Succulents

- Agave (all desert species)
- Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus* spp.), including golden barrel (*Echinocactus grusonii*)
- Candelilla (*Euphorbia antisyphilitica*)
- Cholla and Prickly Pear (*Opuntia* spp.)
- Desert Milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*)
- Hedgehog Cactus (*Echinocereus* spp.)
- Mexican Fence Post Cactus (*Stenocereus marginatus* (*pachycereus*))
- Moroccan Mound (*Euphorbia resinifera*)
- Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*)
- Organ Pipe Cactus (*Stenocereus thurberi* (*Lemaireocereus*))
- Pincushion Cactus (*Mamillaria* spp.)
- Saguaro Cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*)
- Senita (*Lophocereus schottii*)
- Slipper Plant (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*)
- Sotol, Desert Spoon (*Dasylirion wheeleri*)
- Totem Pole Cactus (*Lophocereus schottii*, ssp. *Monstrosus*)
- Tricocereus (*Trichocereus* & varieties)
- Yucca (all desert species), including *Hesperaloe parviflora* and *Hesperaloe funifera*

Trees

- Desert Ironwood (*Olneya tesota*)
- Mexican Bird of Paradise (*Caesalpinia mexicana*)

Turf, palm trees, leafy shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, and trees other than Desert Ironwood and Mexican Bird of Paradise are prohibited in front lot areas.

Trees must be trimmed to prevent blocking other homeowners solar access and views, and to avoid changing the natural desert skyline.

Hardscape Guidelines for Front Lot Areas

Mineral landscape features such as decorative rocks and boulders will be limited to materials indigenous to the Sonoran desert area or materials similar in color and appearance to these materials.

All front lot areas should be covered with one-half inch (3/8") screened decorative rock of the same color and origin of the original provided by the builder/developer. In areas of erosion, three-quarter inch (3/4") screened decorative rock may be used.

Native rock and river rock may be used in drainage swales and areas of erosion.

Stone and boulders may be used.

Fountains, decorative accents, garden sculpture, yard art and other outdoor décor are not permitted.

Landscape lighting may be used for pathway lighting and to spotlight distinctive plants. *Homeowners should be aware that a process is underway to develop more specific landscape lighting guidelines to ensure visual harmony along the streetscape and to preclude interference with the night-time views of the desert and mountains.*

Back/Side Lot Area

The back/side lot area is defined as that portion of the lot which is enclosed by a perimeter wall, fence, or paved front entry sidewalk.

For the most part, property owners may use their discretion in the choice of landscape material for the back/side lot areas. However they are encouraged to use Sonoran Desert plants and near-native and adapted plants with desert character and drought tolerance in areas that are visible from the street. The following restrictions apply:

- Trees that grow to excessive heights (expected to exceed 25 feet), or that cast shadows that may block other homeowners' solar access, impede views, or change the natural desert skyline
- Plants that are widely recognized as being highly allergenic or toxic
- Plants known to aggressively invade private property and/or create fuel for wildfires
- Plants that are known harborers of pests
- Plants that are susceptible to disease
- Plants that are aesthetically inconsistent or generally inappropriate within the desert environment

The following specific plants are permitted, but not recommended, for the reasons described:

- Large Oleanders/Thevetia. Use of large Oleanders/Thevetia is not recommended for aesthetic reasons, as well as for their profuse production of pollen, their toxicity, and susceptibility to disease. If oleanders are used, dwarf species are preferable. An alternative for the large forms of oleanders, is hop bush (*Dodonaea viscosa*). This drought tolerant native desert shrub has attractive, evergreen foliage and a similar growth habit to oleander. They can be used in the same ways that oleanders can in providing an attractive green hedge and/or screening.
- Large Citrus trees. Use of large citrus trees is not recommended due to their pollen producing and high water use characteristic. If citrus are used, dwarf trees are preferable.

The following specific plants are prohibited for the reasons shown:

- All Pines (*Pinus*), Cypress (*Cupressus*), False Cypress (*Chamaecyparis*), Juniper or Cedar (*Juniperus*) taller than, or expected to get taller than 15 feet in height will be prohibited for aesthetic and high water use reasons.
- Palm trees for aesthetic reason and general inappropriateness within the desert environment.
- Olive tree (*Olea Europaea*) will be prohibited for reasons of their profuse production of allergy producing pollen, as well as for aesthetic reasons.
- Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum Setaceum*) will be prohibited as a defined noxious weed with the potential to spread throughout the development and also as a fire hazard.
- Common Bermuda Grass (*Cynodon Dactylon*) will be prohibited as a defined weed and for its profuse production of allergy-producing pollen.
- Mexican Palo Verde (*Parkinsonia Aculeata*) will be prohibited as harbinger of pests and its ability to spread throughout the development, altering the natural desert.
- Eucalyptus will be prohibited for aesthetic reasons and general inappropriateness within the desert environment.
- Mulberrys (*Morus*) will be prohibited as a noxious pollen producer.

All plant material in back/side lot areas must be trimmed to avoid any overhang of the plant onto neighboring property or sidewalks, and to prevent casting shadows that may block other homeowners' solar access, impede views, create unsightly views, or change the natural desert skyline. Plants should be placed a distance from common walls and fences that is sufficient to prevent damage to walls and fences from irrigation, roots, etc. Trees generally should be maintained so as not exceed 25 feet and shrubs should not exceed 8 feet.

Approval Process

Article VIII of the Villa Milano Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions and Easements (CCRs) states:

No landscaping shall be installed or changed (except in enclosed rear yards), unless complete plans and specifications showing the nature, design, kind, quality, shape,

height, materials, color scheme and location of such landscaping shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Architectural Control Committee. The Committee shall exercise its best judgment to the end that all improvements conform to and harmonize with the existing surroundings and structures.

Homeowners should submit preliminary landscape plans and specifications to the Landscape Committee, who will make recommendations to the HOA Board.

Authority

Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions and Easements for Villa Milano at Rancho Sin Vacas, Article VIII: Architectural Control Committee.

Reference

Low Water Use Drought Tolerant Plant List: Official Regulatory List for the Arizona Department of Water Resources, Tucson Active Management Area