
Sec. 10-29. Residential lot landscaping requirements.

(a) *Vacant residential:* For the development of vacant single-family residential lot/parcels, two-family residential lot/parcels, and mobile home lot/parcels:

- (1) *Clearing the lot:* Clearing the lot without a land clearing permit shall be unlawful. An application for a land clearing permit shall be submitted. The land clearing permit application shall include a land clearing plan.
- (2) *Approval of land clearing plan:* A land clearing plan shall be submitted to the county administrator or designee for approval. The plan will show the proposed natural vegetation areas to be preserved and the proposed areas to be cleared. Installed planting areas of high water use shall also be shown. The land clearing permit shall be posted on the site before construction commences.
- (3) *Minimizing water use:* No more than fifty (50) percent of the landscaping shall be in the high water-use-zone. No more than fifty (50) percent of the landscaping shall be turf grass unless varieties with excellent drought-tolerance are used. Turfgrass in excess of fifty (50) percent shall not have a permanent irrigation system and shall not be irrigated using micro-irrigation. Preserved natural vegetation shall be considered a drought tolerant landscape zone. All water restrictions of the Southwest Florida Water Management (SWFWMD) and Hernando County shall be obeyed. If an automatic irrigation system is installed, turf grass shall be irrigated separately from other landscaping. Drip, micro-spray, or other low-volume emitters are required in non-turf grass areas, that are outside of the high water use zone. An operational soil moisture sensor, or a rain sensor shut off device, that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred shall be installed, maintained and operated on all irrigation systems.
- (4) *Ground cover required:* Ground cover is required at all times for pervious surfaces except during construction. Gardens shall be excluded from this ground cover requirement.
- (5) *Specimen/majestic trees:* If existing on the lot, specimen and majestic trees shall be preserved. Specimen and majestic trees shall be drawn on the land clearing plan. Tree protection during construction shall include a method of well-marked trees-to-be-preserved such that these trees will not be removed.

The county administrator or designee shall review any petitions detailing the appropriate mitigating circumstances and may authorize a specimen tree or a majestic tree to be removed upon finding that any of the following conditions exist:

- a. The tree is an immediate safety hazard.
- b. The tree has an infestation of insects or pathogen that may reasonably be expected to lead to the death of the tree or spread to other trees.
- c. The tree is causing property damage, or may be reasonably expected to cause property damage.
- d. Where the location of the tree prevents direct access to the property.
- e. The tree is weakened by age, storm, fire or other injury so as to pose a danger to persons, property, site improvements or other trees. Removal of the tree pursuant to this criterion shall be exempt from the replacement criteria of this article.
- f. The tree prevents a proposed reasonable use of the site.

(6) *Tree requirements:* Trees shall be preserved or planted according to the following table:

Residential lot size	Minimum number of preserved or planted trees
Lots up to and including 7,000 square feet	Two trees

Lots over 7,000 square feet but less than or equal to 10,000 square feet	Three trees
For each additional 3,000 square feet above 10,000 square feet of lot size	One additional tree

If planted, at least fifty (50) percent of the trees must be shade trees and a minimum two-inch caliper. If the lot soil type is any of the coastal soils listed below, shade trees are not required:

Arents-Urban land complex;

Udalific Arents-Urban land complex.

(7) *Compliance inspection:* All landscaping, ground cover, water use, and tree placement requirements must be completed within thirty (30) days from prior to the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The county administrator Development Services Division, or designee shall inspect the site for compliance when the thirty-day period has elapsed upon final inspection and prior to the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. Failure to comply with this section shall be cause to notify the code enforcement division for action to ensure compliance.

(8) *Plant installations:* All plant installations in the low-water-use zones should be selected using guidelines as described in the Florida-Friendly Plant List current year publication. This book is available through the University of Florida, IFAS Extension office.

(b) Vacant rural-residential: For the development of vacant rural-residential lots/parcels:

(1) Clearing the lot: Clearing the lot without a land clearing permit shall be unlawful. An application for a land clearing permit shall be submitted. The land clearing permit application shall include a land clearing plan.

(2) Approval of land clearing plan: A land clearing plan shall be submitted to the county administrator or designee for approval. The plan will show the proposed natural vegetation areas to be preserved and the proposed areas to be cleared. Installed planting areas of high water use shall also be shown. The land clearing permit shall be posted on the site before construction commences. If an automatic irrigation system is used, turf grass shall be irrigated separately from other landscaping. Drip, micro-spray, or other low-volume emitters are required in non-turf grass areas that are outside of the high water use zone. An operational soil moisture sensor, or a rain sensor shut off device, that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred shall be installed, must be maintained and operated on all irrigation systems.

(3) Specimen and Majestic trees: If existing on the lot specimen and majestic trees shall be preserved. Specimen and Majestic trees that are within proposed areas to be cleared shall be drawn on the land clearing plan. Tree protection during construction shall include a method of well-marked trees-to-be-preserved such that these trees will not be removed. The county administrator or designee shall review any petitions detailing the appropriate mitigating circumstances and may authorize a specimen or majestic tree to be removed upon finding that any of the following conditions exist:

- The tree is an immediate safety hazard.
- The tree has an infestation of insects or pathogen that may reasonably be expected to lead to the death of the tree or spread to other trees.
- The tree is causing property damage, or may be expected to cause property damage.
- Where the location of the tree prevents direct access to the property, or where the tree constitutes a hazard to pedestrian traffic.

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- e. The tree is weakened by age, storm, fire or other injury so as to pose a danger to persons, property, site improvements or other trees. Removal of the tree pursuant to this criterion shall be exempt from the replacement criteria of this article.
 - f. The tree prevents a proposed reasonable use of the site.
- (4) Tree requirements: Regardless of development site acreage, the total number of trees existing on the development site up to a maximum of fifteen (15) shall be either preserved or planted. If less than four (4) trees exist at the time of development, a minimum of four (4) trees shall be preserved or planted. Planted trees must be shade trees and a minimum two-inch caliper.
 - (5) Compliance inspection: All landscaping, ground cover, water use and tree placement requirements must be completed within thirty (30) days from the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The county administrator or designee shall inspect the site for compliance. Failure to comply with this section shall be cause to notify the code enforcement division for action to ensure compliance.
 - (6) *Minimizing water use*: No more than fifty (50) percent of the landscaping shall be in the high water-use-zone. No more than fifty (50) percent of the landscaping shall be turf grass unless varieties with excellent drought-tolerance are used. Turfgrass in excess of fifty (50) percent shall not have a permanent irrigation system and shall not be irrigated using micro-irrigation. Preserved natural vegetation shall be considered a drought tolerant landscape zone. All water restrictions of the Southwest Florida Water Management (SWFWMD) and Hernando County shall be obeyed. If an automatic irrigation system is installed, turf grass shall be irrigated separately from other landscaping. Drip, micro-spray, or other low-volume emitters are required in non-turf grass areas, that are outside of the high water use zone. An operational soil moisture sensor, or a rain sensor shut off device, that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred shall be installed, must be maintained and operated on all irrigation systems.
 - (7) *Plant installations*: All plant installations in the low-water-use zones should be selected using guidelines as described in the Florida-Friendly Plant List current year publication. This book is available through the University of Florida, IFAS Extension office.
- (c) Existing residential homes: A single-family residential lot/parcel with an existing residence, two-family residential lot/parcel with an existing residence, or mobile home lot/parcel with an existing residence, is exempt from the provisions of this article. This applies so long as:
- (1) The above residential tree requirements per acre are maintained.
 - (2) The landscaped area in the high water use zone is not increased or no more than fifty (50) percent of the lot/parcel landscaping is in the high water use zone. No more than fifty (50) percent of the landscape shall be turfgrass unless varieties with excellent drought-tolerance are used. Turf grass in excess of fifty (50) percent shall not have a permanent irrigation system. Turf grass shall not be irrigated using micro-irrigation.
 - (3) Specimen and majestic trees are preserved.
 - (4) Ground cover is maintained.
- If an automatic irrigation system is installed, drip, micro-spray, or other low-volume emitters are required in non-turf grass areas, that are outside of the high water use zone. Turf grass shall be irrigated separately from other landscaping. An operational soil moisture sensor, or a rain sensor shut off device, that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred shall be installed, must be maintained and operated on all irrigation systems.
- (5) Proper pruning techniques in accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI A300) must be met when pruning shade trees on public or private property. See section 10-31.

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- (d) Existing rural-residential homes: A single-family rural-residential lot/parcel with an existing residence or mobile home lot/parcel with an existing residence, is exempt from the provisions of this article, this applies so long as:
- (1) The above rural-residential tree requirements are maintained.
 - (2) Specimen and Majestic trees are preserved.
 - (3) The landscaped area in the high water use zone is not increased or no more than fifty (50) percent of the lot/parcel landscaping is in the high water use zone. No more than fifty (50) percent of the landscape shall be turfgrass unless varieties with excellent drought-tolerance are used. Turfgrass in excess of fifty (50) percent shall not have a permanent irrigation system. Turfgrass shall not be irrigated using micro-irrigation.
 - (4) Ground cover is maintained.

If an automatic irrigation system is installed, drip, micro-spray, or other low-volume emitters are required in non-turf grass areas, that are outside of the high water use zone. Turf grass shall be irrigated separately from other landscaping. An operational soil moisture sensor, or a rain sensor shut off device, that will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred shall be installed, must be maintained and operated on all irrigation systems.
 - (5) Proper pruning techniques in accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI A300) must be met when pruning shade trees on public or private property. See section 10-31.

(Ord. No. 2008-02, § 14, 1-15-08)