



Standards for Landscape

Introduction

DC Ranch is known as a community that blends into the magnificent surrounding Sonoran Desert. While this may seem like a simple thing, achieving and maintaining that seamless transition from the designed landscape to the natural landscape, is not.

The goal of Standards is simple: to ensure DC Ranch is as beautiful and enticing today as it was the first time you saw it. Standards enhance property values while enabling residents to enjoy not only the beauty of their property, but of all the neighboring properties as well. It is important for residents to understand the Standards and to voluntarily identify when landscape maintenance, enrichment, and/or replacement is needed on their property. Since some landscape standards vary by neighborhood, several of the following standards require that you review the attached or linked maps or lists that are applicable to your specific property.

To start a landscape modification, please call the Ranch Office at 480-513-1500 and ask to speak to a Community Standards Specialist. Modification fees may apply.

How is Compliance to DC Ranch Standards for Landscape Handled?

Property within DC Ranch will be routinely reviewed for compliance to the standards. In addition, a review will be conducted when a modification is complete, at time of sale, or upon request by an owner. ***Owners can save time and challenges by requesting a pre-inspection prior to putting their home on the market.*** A property is considered to be out-of-compliance with the standards, when discrepancies can be identified upon observation from the sidewalk, path, common area or adjacent property. Private areas (backyards, enclosed courtyards, etc.) will not be entered during routine reviews, but will be inspected as part of the modification process and at time of sale.

Non-compliance with the standards will start with a courtesy notice usually by email and a phone call, when possible. Next, a DC Ranch Community Standards Specialist will work with the resident to provide detailed information about the issue, a possible time frame for a remedy, and access to various resources needed to bring their property into compliance. No penalties are assessed to residents who willingly comply. Non-voluntary compliance shall progress from additional notification to possible legal action. Additional information concerning non-compliance procedures can be found at the end of this document and online at DCRanch.com.

Notwithstanding any of the guidelines or suggested penalties contained in this document, penalties may be escalated in certain circumstances, including the deactivation of transponders and loss of privileges, at the sole discretion of the Community Council Board of Directors or the Ranch Association Board of Directors.

*In neighborhoods managed by a sub-association, compliance to the Standards may be under the jurisdiction of the sub-association and may be more restrictive. Questions should be directed to the sub-association manager before addressing the issue.

Standards for Landscape as approved by the Community Council Board of Directors and the Ranch Association Board of Directors. To the extent there is a conflict, the standards and policies set forth herein supersede all previous standards and policies.



DC Ranch Standards for Landscaping

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DCRL-00 Arroyos

Arroyos are used on residential property to divert water and prevent erosion, not as decorative enhancements. They should be constructed and maintained to blend with the natural desert environment. All stones in arroyos should be DC Ranch Cobble and be set with 2/3 of their height in the ground. Large stones shall be fully integrated with fine material within the arroyo. Arroyos should be kept clear of debris and plantings. [Click here for brochure.](#)

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.3.2](#)

DCRL-01 Base Shrubs

In many zones, a required combination of base shrubs shall be planted to meet the required density for that zone. This creates a natural-looking transition from one zone to the next. [Click here to reference your neighborhood zone map and the full Approved Plant Palette. A listing of typical plants for your zone and all prohibited plants is also included.](#)

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.2.3-3.2.4](#)

DCRL-02 Boulders

If your approved landscape plan includes boulders, they should be maintained with 2/3 of their height in the ground. Addition of boulders needs prior approval through the modification process. Boulders do not occur naturally, and are discouraged, but may be used to solve grading issues. Modification forms may be downloaded online at DCRanch.com and submitted to The Ranch Offices for review and approval.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.3.2 \(c\)](#)

DCRL-03 Decomposed Granite

In specific neighborhoods where decomposed granite is used, a 2-inch screened layer shall be used and maintained as the ground cover in all areas of the front yards that are not Desert Pavement or turf. The size and color of the decomposed granite is as follows: Desert Parks – 3/8 " Apache brown, Arcadia at Silverleaf – 1/2" Madison Gold, and The Parks at Silverleaf – 3/8" Table Mesa brown.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. I, page 49 and Sec. II, 3.2.2 \(b\)](#)

DCRL-04 Desert Pavement

In Desert Camp, Country Club and in the Silverleaf neighborhoods of Arcadia, Horseshoe, and Upper Canyon, the final surface of your front yard shall mimic the naturally occurring desert surface, which is referred to as Desert Pavement. (Graded areas do not constitute a naturally occurring surface.) Desert Pavement should be maintained to consist of clusters of various sized small stones, a thin scattering of decomposed granite and natural windblown plant debris. In these neighborhoods, to maintain the natural appearance, use of a blower or heavy raking is discouraged. [Click here for the Desert Pavement brochure.](#)

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.5.4 \(2\) and 3.2.2 \(b\)](#)

DCRL-05 Grading and Drainage

DC Ranch homes were built with grading to carry the water away from the house. This slope should not be disturbed and as erosion occurs, should be built back up. The relationship between the finished landscape grade should be maintained at 1" lower than any hardscape (driveway, walkways, etc.). Drainage patterns shall be maintained as set forth in the approved civil-engineered or landscape plans. As erosion occurs, maintenance will be needed to ensure that hardscapes remain dry and that roof run-off continues to flow into a planting area or the drainage flow pattern.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.4.5](#)

DCRL-06 Irrigation

Landscaped areas shall be maintained on a permanent, automatic, drip irrigation system with the exception of turf which may use spray irrigation. Valve or other flush mounted boxes shall be painted to match the color of the ground surface (desert tan). Wall mounted equipment, visible from adjacent views, shall match the exterior paint of the home. Paint shall be in good condition. Irrigation lines should be in good repair, remain buried and should not water beyond the property line or create runoff onto hardscapes.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. I, page 99 and Sec. II 3.2.2 \(e\); Sec. II, 3.7.2](#)

DCRL-07 Landscape Lighting

Landscape lighting shall be complementary to architecture, metal, in operable condition and free of damage, oxidation and other visible defects. Landscape lighting shall be shielded to accent planting areas or tree trunks. A maximum of three shielded light fixtures may be used to upright larger trees or cacti, and only one for smaller cacti or shrubs. Bulbs should not exceed the equivalent of 20 watts and 3000 Kelvin (warm). Pathlights used on pathways and driveways shall not be symmetrical in placement. Landscape lighting should not be placed near the street (approximately 15 feet back from curb). Altering a landscape lighting plan requires prior approval through the modification process. Modification forms may be downloaded online at DCRanch.com and submitted to The Ranch Offices for review and approval. Contact the Ranch Offices at 480.513.1500 for the unique lighting requirements in Silverleaf.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 2.9.1 and 2.9.4; Sec. I, page 101](#)

DCRL-08 Landscape Zones

Homes have three to five designated landscape zones that vary by neighborhood. Each zone has a specific plant density requirement and approved plant palette. [Click here for the zone map of your neighborhood.](#)

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. I, page 85; pages 85-88 and Sec. II, 3.2.3](#)

DCRL-09 Natural Open Space (NOS)

Some homes have NOS areas on their property which are regulated. No improvements may be made in an NOS area, to include lighting. The only maintenance that should be done is removing foreign debris and any plant on the DC Ranch prohibited list (invasive grasses, etc.). Trees and shrubs may not be pruned or hedged to enhance views. Trimming for safety concerns require prior approval by calling The Ranch Offices at 480.513.1500.

RE: Design Guidelines, Sec. I, pages 85-86 and Sec. II, 3.3.5

DCRL-10 Outdoor Sculpture and Yard Ornaments

Outdoor sculpture and yard ornaments shall be maintained to their original condition. Adding sculpture that is visible from any public area or an adjacent property requires prior approval through the modification process. Modification forms may be downloaded online at DCRanch.com and must be submitted to The Ranch Offices for review and approval.

RE: Design Guidelines, Sec. I, pages 72, 74

DCRL-11 Plant Composition

Plant composition refers to the percentage of various types of plant groups (trees, cacti, shrubs, etc.) required to be planted within a property. All landscapes in DC Ranch were designed, approved, and originally planted, and should be maintained to meet the requirement. Plant composition should include species from at least four plant groups to create interest and provide a range of size and texture as plants mature. Plant composition requirements vary by neighborhood and often by landscape zone. If you are replacing more than a couple of plants, it is recommended that you call a Community Standards Specialist at 480.513.1500 to assist with your plant composition requirement.

DCRL-12 Plant Density

Plant density defines the minimum number of plants required in a set amount of square footage, for example 1:25 means 1 plant required in a 25 square foot area. Density requirements vary by landscape zone. Density is too low if it is below the minimum required. Plant density is too high if it presents an unnatural look. As plants die, they should be replaced with another shrub from the Approved Plant Palette/List and be consistent with the home's approved landscape plan to maintain the minimum plant density in that zone.

RE: Design Guidelines, Sec. II 3.2.3, 3.2.4 and 3.3.6

DCRL-13 Plant Palette/List, Approved and Abbreviated

More than 300 plants are approved for planting in DC Ranch. These plants complement the Sonoran desert in which we live. All plants in the landscape should be from the approved list and be consistent with the home's approved landscape plan. A recommended list of typical, approved plants chosen for their availability and durability for your neighborhood, along with the full Approved Plant Palette/List, can be found on DCRanch.com/standards. [Click here to access your neighborhood lists.](#)

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.2.2](#)

DCRL-14 Plant List, Prohibited

Plants on the prohibited list do not integrate well with DC Ranch's natural desert environment. All properties shall be maintained free of plants on this list. [Click here for the list of prohibited plants.](#)

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. I, page 84](#)

DCRL-15 Pots & Planting Containers

Decorative pots or containers may be used on porches/patios and in the enhanced and private yard zones. They should complement the architectural design of the home. Irrigation lines shall be provided to pots and adjusted to result in little to no water leakage. Pots and containers shall be maintained with healthy, living plants from the approved plant list or annuals (no artificial plants) and be in good repair.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.2.2 \(d\)](#)

DCRL-16 Shrub Maintenance

Pruning may be needed to maintain the shrub's health and should be done in a manner that provides for a natural look. Hedging and/or sculpting does not provide a natural look; sculpting is permissible in The Parks neighborhood of Silverleaf only.) When shrubs die, they should be replaced with another shrub from the Approved Plant Palette/List and be consistent with the home's approved landscape plan.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.4.6 \(a\) and 3.3.8](#)

DCRL-17 Streetscape Trees

Several neighborhoods require specific streetscape trees, generally located six to eight feet from back of the curb, or between the curb and sidewalk. In Desert Camp and Country Club, these trees are owned by the homeowner whose lot on which they are situated. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining irrigation to the tree(s) along with trimming, removal, and replacement as needed at the homeowner's expense. In the Silverleaf neighborhoods of Arcadia, The Parks, and parts of Horseshoe Canyon, streetscape trees are owned by the homeowner whose lot on which they are situated. Ranch Association is responsible for maintenance, replacement, and irrigation (when needed). All related expenses are neighborhood expenses. In some neighborhoods, streetscape trees are owned by the homeowner, who is responsible for irrigation, removal, and replacement; however, routine clearance pruning is provided by Ranch Association and paid for in the neighborhood assessment. The maintenance, replacement, and irrigation of other landscaping situated on the homeowner's lot, other than trees in the streetscape, is the responsibility of the homeowner in all neighborhoods. Contact a Community Standards Specialist at 480-513-1500 before removing or replanting a streetscape tree, or with any questions regarding maintenance.

RE: Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.7

DCRL-18 Trees

Tree trimming is needed to maintain a tree's health and should be done in a manner that provides for a natural look and includes an 8 foot clearance over walkways and 13.5 foot over driving areas. Trunks should be maintained free of starter branches. Trees should never be topped by removing just the upper foliage. Tree stakes and/or ties should be removed after 6 months. When trees die they shall be replaced with a tree from the Approved Plant Palette/List and consistent with the home's approved landscape plan. Do not trim trees in common areas, parks, or within an NOS. As trees mature, they may encumber a neighboring property. Residents are asked to consult with their neighbors to coordinate trimming which may be conducted from the property-owned side only. To trim inside of a neighboring property, the property owner must first grant permission. Trimmings should be disposed of in Scottsdale's regularly scheduled, monthly bulk trash pick-up, or by your landscape maintenance contractor.

RE: Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.5.1, 3.5.3 and 3.5.4 (10)

DCRL-19 Turf

Lawns should be mowed at regular intervals to provide a well-manicured appearance. Clippings should be removed. Lawns should be neatly trimmed around plant beds, walkways, foundations, and other design elements. Front yard turf shall be over-seeded with perineal rye grass by November 1 and be maintained within the turf border. Adding or altering lawn requires prior approval through the modification process. Modification forms may be downloaded online at DCRanch.com and submitted to The Ranch Offices for review and approval.

RE: Design Guidelines, Sec. I, page 90 and Sec. II, 3.2.1

DCRL-20 Turf, Artificial

High-quality artificial turf may be used in an enclosed private yard area only and shall be maintained in good repair. Adding artificial turf requires prior approval through the modification process. Modification forms may be downloaded online at DCRanch.com and submitted to The Ranch Offices for review and approval.

RE: [Turf Guidelines Document, Oct. 2, 2014 \(Covenant Commission\)](#)

DCRL-21 Vines

Vines create an added dimension to landscape. Vines should be maintained to not infringe on neighboring properties or common area property. To prevent damage, vines should not touch, climb or cling to fascia or roof areas. Nursery stakes should be removed six months after planting. Vine support structures should be in good repair.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. II, 3.2.4](#)

DCRL-22 Volunteer Plants

Volunteer plants in the landscape refer to plants or weeds that self-populate themselves. Some species of volunteers are considered invasive and as such are listed on the DC Ranch prohibited plant list. Yards should be maintained free of invasive volunteers. Volunteer plants that are on the Approved Plant Palette/List should be removed as needed to control plant density and variety.

RE: [Design Guidelines, Sec. I, pages 99-100 and 3.5.5 \(d\)](#)

Prohibited plants:

The intent of this list is to preserve DC Ranch's integration into the magnificent Sonoran Desert environment in which it was built.

1. Any species of plant, shrub or tree whose mature height may be visible above private walls or from surrounding property, unless it is on the Approved Plant Palette/List, or has been previously approved by the Covenant Commission.
2. Palms (Palmae)
3. Pine Trees (Pinus)
4. Cypress (Cupressus), False Cypress (Chamaecyparis), Juniper or Cedar (Juniperus)
5. Olive Trees (except Swanhill Olive)
6. Mexican Palo Verde (Parkinsonia aculeate)
7. All variety of Citrus
8. Oleander (Nerium Oleander) and Thevetia species
9. Desert Broom (Baccharis sarothroides)
10. Fountain Grass (Pennisetum setaceum)
11. Common Bermuda Grass (Cynodon dactylon) in seed, sprig or sod form
12. All plants on the Arizona Noxious List (list changes)

Enforcement Guidelines for Violations of Standards for Landscape

(Step 1 is used in all situations; 2-5 used when owner responds to Courtesy Notice)

1. Courtesy Notice of Non-Compliance
 - a. Letter states the importance of standards for keeping the community beautiful.
 - b. Letter states the infraction (along with photo in most cases).
 - c. Letter requests owner to contact Ranch staff within 10 business days to discuss options and obtain information about possible resources for potential solutions.
2. Owner and staff will develop a mutually agreed-upon plan to remedy the infraction within 10-180 calendar days; consideration will be given to cost and complexity in deciding number of days.
3. If the infraction is not remedied within agreed-upon time, a final reminder will be issued, including a specified number of calendar days (between 10 and 30) by which the infraction shall be remedied to avoid potential legal action. Information on how to appeal will be included.
4. If the infraction is not remedied within the time specified in the final reminder, the Association's attorney will issue a letter stating the legal consequences (as agreed to by attorney and staff) for continued non-compliance. Information on how to appeal will be included.
5. The Association reserves the right to proceed with legal action or other penalties in the event a reasonable and timely plan for remedy is not reached or important benchmark dates are not met.

(Steps 6-8 apply when Owner fails to respond to Step 1 Courtesy Notice)

6. If there is no response to the Courtesy Notice of Non-Compliance (action step 1) after 10 business days, a final reminder letter will be issued stating the requirement to remedy the infraction or contact staff to develop a plan. This must be done within 10 business days of this second letter in order to avoid possible legal action. Information on how to appeal will be included.
7. If no response to the final reminder, the Association's attorney will issue a letter repeating the requirement to remedy or to contact staff in order to avoid potential legal action. Information on how to appeal will be included.
8. If no response to attorney's letter, staff will work with the attorney to determine legal action (appropriate for the situation) for failure to remedy the infraction.

Note: Notwithstanding any of the guidelines or suggested penalties contained in this document, penalties may be escalated in certain circumstances, including the deactivation of transponders and loss of other privileges, at the sole discretion of the Community Council Board of Directors or the Ranch Association Board of Directors