

GUIDELINE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDELINE

The purpose of this Guideline is to provide members of Management and individual Homeowners, with guidance and instruction for the acceptable use of turfgrasses and other ground cover plants, as well as wood and bark chips, and rock ground covers to enhance the attractiveness of Stoney Brook landscaping

OVERVIEW

Stoney Brook has a long-standing reputation for the lush green appearance of its landscape. It is widely recognized among landscape professionals that the foundation of superior landscapes is a healthy thick grass turf. To add variety and texture to the landscape scene, deciduous and evergreen plants, trees and shrubs, and ground covers other than turfgrasses are used to create an infinite variety of shades of color and shapes that are pleasing to the eye and enhance to the value of Stoney Brook homes.

While grass is therefore the preferred ground cover in Stoney Brook and is maintained throughout the Community, in the common area and homeowner Lots, certain areas are not suited for grass.

Ground covers other than turfgrasses should be used under the following conditions.

1. Areas where watering and mowing are difficult.
 - **Narrow strips of land between sidewalks, curbs or buildings.**
 - **Steep slopes that are impractical to mow and do not lend themselves to terracing that will permit practical maintenance of grass.**
2. Areas where it is difficult to maintain healthy and attractive turfgrass.
 - **Hot dry areas along the southwest exposures of walls and fences.**
 - **Deeply shaded areas between or under trees or shrubs and along the north side of slopes, walls, and fences. (The Association is currently experimenting with a new turfgrass called Shady Lady that is designed for deeply shaded area. Please call the Office for more information.)**
3. Areas where tree roots grow close to the surface and prevent grass from growing properly.
4. Locations where a non-grass ground cover is preferred for aesthetic purposes to improve the appearance of the landscape.

In the event removal of turfgrass from the common area, is being considered the General Manager will consult with the Architectural Review Committee

Ground Cover Plants

Ground cover plants are a good alternative to turfgrasses in selected locations. They provide a variety of texture and color, provide an excellent transition between turfgrass and shrubs and flowerbeds, and help reduce soil erosion.

Creating the Ground Cover Bed

The ground cover bed is created by removing sufficient soil to lower the level of the planting surface 1 to 4 inches below the level of the adjoining turfgrass, or other barrier such as a sidewalk. The depth of the soil level depends on the type of ground cover. A 1 to 2 inch drop is adequate for most ground cover plants, but large bark chips may

require a 4-inch drop. A six-inch edging barrier must be installed where the ground cover bed adjoins turfgrass. If the barrier is metal, the top edge must be covered with a plastic bead to protect lawn mowers. Brick barriers must be level with the surface of the turfgrass. This bed construction rule applies as well to beds for flowers, shrubs, wood chips and bark mulches, or inorganic materials such as gravel, and rock.

Soils

Healthy ground cover plants grow in good soil conditions. Most ground covers spread by offshoots or runners and will fill in more quickly where the soil has good aeration, drainage and organic content. Soils in the Denver area are noted for heavy clay content, and compost must be added and worked into the soil deep enough to accommodate the growth of the plant roots.

Weed Control

Before planting ground covers, make sure that existing weeds are removed or killed chemically. Weeds can be a big problem later on if not eliminated before planting. Using weed barrier fabrics will also control weeds. The fabric is anchored at the edges with U shaped wire pins, and slits are cut into the fabric for planting.



Sun Exposure

Exposure to the sun affects the selection of all ground cover plants. Many do best in full sun, but others thrive better in shade or partial shade. Tables 1 and 2 indicate the plants that do best in sun and others that like shade, and comments on their quality and appearance.

Suggested Perennial Ground Covers

Including Evergreens

Plants that take full sun to partial sun

Plant Name	Height	Remarks
Archillea tomentosa Woolly yarrow	2-4"	Grayish foliage in low mats
Artemisia spp. Sage	10-15"	Silvery foliage; A. schmidtiana (silver mound sage) most common
Cerastium tomentosum Snow-in-summer	6"	Gray foliage; white flowers, very aggressive
Delosperma nubigenum Yellow ice plant	1-2"	Succulent, light green foliage; yellow flowers
Duchesnea indica Mock strawberry	4-6"	Aggressive creeper; looks like strawberry yellow flowers, inedible, red fruit
Euphorbia marginata Snow-on-the-mountain	4-8"	White bloom, very aggressive
Festuca ovina glauca Blue fescue	6-8"	Tufts of grayish, grassy foliage
Juniperus horizontalis Creeping juniper Some common clones		Perhaps the best year-round cover Many foliage hues available
Bar Harbor	10"	Bluish foliage year-round
Blue Chip	10"	Silvery-blue radial branching
Wiltoni (Blue Rug)	10"	Low silver blue creeper
Phlox subulata Moss pink or creeping Phlox	6-8"	Reddish, white or lavender flowers Moss like foliage
Himalayan border Jewel	4-12"	Cover for dry areas
Potentilla verna Creeping potentilla	-1"	Very low mat Yellow showy flowers; aggressive
Veronica prostrate Speedwell	1-2"	Dark green foliage; deep blue flowers in short spikes
<u>Ground Covers for Shade</u>		
Ajuga Ajuga reptans	1-3"	Fast growing; Evergreen blue spiked flowers
Arctostaphylos ura-ursi Kinnikinnick	4-6"	Evergreen; red edible berries; use under established evergreens in Acid soils
Galium odorata Sweet woodruff	6-8"	Very aggressive; one of best covers under shrubs; white flower
Mahonia repens Creeping Oregon grape	6-12"	Evergreen; yellow flowers in spring holly-like foliage
Vinca Periwinkle	4-6"	Semi Evergreen; white or purple flowers in spring

Rock and Wood/Bark Chips Ground Covers

Rock and gravel are available in varying sizes and a variety of colors. Mulches made of wood and bark chips are also available in varying sizes. Both types of ground cover are used extensively in Stoney Brook.

Benefits of Mulching

Depending on materials used, mulches have many benefits, including the following:

- **Reduces evaporation from soil surface, cutting water use by 25 to 50 percent**
- **Organic mulches promote soil microorganism activity, which in turn, improves soil condition and helps lessen soil compaction.**
- **Stabilizes soil moisture;**
- **Prevents soil compaction;**
- **Controls weeds, which rob soil moisture;**
- **Moderates soil temperature extremes;**
- **Controls erosion; and**
- **Gives a finished look, improving aesthetic quality.**

Chips

Wood or bark chip mulch is best around trees, shrubs and perennials. Chips can reduce the need for water by as much as 50%. Mulching materials that mesh together are most effective at reducing water evaporation from the soil. Do not mix chips or sawdust into the soil as this will tie-up soil nitrogen and can decrease soil oxygen levels and reduce the ability of the soil to nourish plants.

Wood chips decompose faster than bark chips, thus enriching the soil, but must be replenished more frequently. Primary selection is based on desired appearance and cost.

Depth

The depth of the mulch bed for smaller chips should not exceed a depth of 1 to 2 inches. Larger chips may require 3 to 4 inches. Deeper layers may reduce soil oxygen. Additional mulch needs to be added every few years to maintain the desired level.

Failure to properly lower the level of the mulch bed will increase maintenance expense because the mulch material will spread onto adjoining areas requiring frequent raking or sweeping to maintain an attractive appearance. Rock mulches that spread into adjoining turfgrass will ruin lawn mower blades.

Around Trees

Do not make mulch volcanoes around tree trunks by not applying chips up against the trunk. Wet chips piled up against the trunk can cause problems with the tree's bark and interfere with the growth of the natural trunk taper. Do not place chips directly over the root ball of newly planted trees. Apply the chips just outside the root ball. After the tree is well rooted, keep the mulch back about six in. from the trunk.

Rock Cover

Pea gravel over a weed mat will reduce evaporation from the soil surface. However, rock beds located in full sun can become a heat sink and may increase water requirements when used in shrub or plant beds.

Rock over black plastic is very undesirable for planting areas and will reduce air infiltration into the soil and create soil moisture problems.