

The City of Greenacres – A good place to live

by Seretha George, Planning and Engineering Department

Edgar Allan Poe defined landscape design as poetic, presenting characteristics of trees, flowers, and grass not only as aesthetically pleasing to a community, but as a mesmerizing art to the individual eye.

Just for a moment, stroll with me through our wonderful City of Greenacres and, along the way, witness the breathtaking sights of diverse landscaping designs and maintenance that cultivate artistic individualism and community pride.

Take a look at the City's medians and right-of-ways consisting of native trees and shrubs. Another artistic landscape design almost seems surreal – the grass is velvety plush green, embedded with tall trees and exotic flowers.

The fundamental nature of landscaping is that properly maintained trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses are beautiful designs. The City strongly believes that landscaping is an important element in preventing neighborhood blight, as well as preserving the investment within the community. The City of Greenacres proudly and proactively places great efforts in preserving and enhancing the appearance, character, and value of the City's neighborhoods and has many programs in place to assist residents and business owners in creating and maintaining their landscapes.

The mission of the Planning and Engineering Department is to support the City of Greenacres' citizens and Council in their vision to live and work in a healthy, safe, and attractive community. This shared vision encourages a strong sense of community pride, continued dedication, and genuine care through public awareness, City policy, and community practice. The City's public awareness campaign focuses on educating, informing, and familiarizing our citizens, business owners, students and developers, as well as the rental and homeowner communities, about the landscape standards and maintenance requirements within the City. Thus, the Planning and Engineering Department created professionally designed, full-color brochures and, to date, has distributed over 1,700 copies.

- In 2003, staff mailed landscape maintenance guides to all of the registered homeowner associations and landscape companies within the City.
- In 2004, landscape maintenance guides were sent to commercial property owners within the City. Staff noted that in many cases, commercially zoned properties are owned by non-residents who may not have current information on the City's maintenance requirements. Consequently, property can remain in non-compliance due to dead, dying, diseased, or missing trees and plant materials, resulting in the property and neighborhood becoming aesthetically unattractive.

The long-term goal of this project is to preserve and protect the appearance, character, and value of the City's communities by promoting a sense of pride in the appearance of the community for those who live in the area, as well as those who visit. The City believes that a continued commitment to public education helps create a more positive and supportive environment. The intent of the City's Landscape Maintenance Guide is:

- to provide public awareness of the trees and shrubs both prohibited and preferred with requirements for their maintenance,
- to encourage innovation in the use of landscape materials in cost-effective and low-maintenance ways,
- to educate citizens and interested parties about the importance of continuously interrelating general maintenance and beautification initiatives.

The Landscape Maintenance Guide is available at City Hall and on the City's website (<http://www.ci.greenacres.fl.us/>) under Planning and Engineering Department. A few of the excellent information tools located within the guide include a list of trees and shrubs currently prohibited and those currently preferred:

Prohibited Trees In All Circumstances

- Australian Pine
- Brazilian Pepper
- Earleaf Acacia
- Melaleuca
- Schefflera

Prohibited Species for Satisfying Required Landscaping

Trees

- Areca Palm
- Black Olive*
- Calophyllum
- Ficus*
- Golden Rain Tree
- Hibiscus
- Hong Kong Orchid
- Sea Grape
- Silk Oak
- Toog

Shrubs

- Ficus*
- Hibiscus*
- Ixora*
- Scaevola
- Selloum

*May be allowed under specific circumstances and with city approval.

Preferred Species

- Bald Cypress
- Dahoon Holly
- Laurel Oak
- Live Oak
- Red Maple
- Slash Pine
- Satin Leaf
- Sabal Palm
- Southern Magnolia
- Southern Wax Myrtle

The City of Greenacres is very pleased with the outcome of this project. Thanks to funding in part by the **Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council**, the project enabled the City to meet its goals by providing essential information to property owners within the commercial districts as well as all other citizens and interested parties. This has consequently led to attractive communities while creating good intergovernmental relationships. The City of Greenacres continues to work with the Palm Beach County Environmental Resource Management Department and the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council to provide up-to-date and accurate information to our citizens and businesses, while also developing diverse strategies to create public awareness of preferred native trees and shrub materials, and their maintenance requirements.

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