

Northcreek Subdivision Homeowners' Association
Architectural Control Committee
September 2004

“Reasonable care standards” for lawns, yards and landscaping in Northcreek

(Go to Planttalk.org or coopext.colostate.edu/boulder for expert Colorado advice and research-based Fact Sheets on specific topics).

Blue grass lawns are kept green during the growing season, typically May through September. When drought causes watering restrictions, Owners would be expected to water according to City recommendations. A thick turf is the best defense against weeds and can be encouraged by appropriate watering, fertilizing, annual (at least) aerating and judicious use of herbicides or hand-pulling of weeds and weed grasses. Savvy lawn owners carry a weed-digger along when they mow, dispatching occasional weeds before they mature, flower or spread their seed. Bare spots should be remedied as soon as they appear. (Drought exceptions). Lawns are trimmed where grass meets curbs, sidewalks, and structural elements on the Lot. If installing a new lawn, many drought-tolerant seed or sod turf grasses are available as an alternative to the thirstier Kentucky blue grass.

Mowing Grass is mowed to a height of approximately 3 inches, as recommended by CSU Extension Service. During peak growing season, that will probably mean mowing every 7 to 10 days.

Weeds are controlled in lawn and yard and in no event should they be allowed to impact a neighbor's property, physically or visually. Once weeds are allowed to grow out of control, (bloom and disperse seed) it is difficult, costly and time-consuming to regain control. Weed control is even more important in Northcreek because our yards are small and so close together.

Weed grasses Many kinds of weed grasses are present in our neighborhood and nearby. **Annuals** like crabgrass can be largely controlled by the early April application of a pre-emergent herbicide which keeps last fall's seeds from germinating. A new corn gluten product is an effective, natural pre-emergent herbicide and is safe for kids, pets and the environment. In addition to crabgrass, it helps control dandelions, foxtail, pigweed, plantain, lambs quarters and curly dock. It also contains nitrogen, a major nutrient in plant fertilizers.

Some **perennial** grasses can be controlled by targeted herbicides or hand digging. Large patches may have to be dug up and replaced with new sod, *another* reason to never let them get out of control to begin with. If you don't know which weed grass you're dealing with, you can dig up a plant and take it to the CSU extension service at the Boulder County Fairgrounds in Longmont for identification. Master Gardeners who set up tables at many local plant-sales sites in spring and early summer can identify plants

for you, too. The HOA offered weed identification help in 2004 and hopes to offer it again, probably in springtime.

Planting beds containing trees, shrubs, perennials and/or annuals are free of weeds and invasive grasses. If mulched, fresh mulch is applied as needed to maintain a neat appearance. Many homeowners “freshen up” their mulch each spring. Dead plants are removed.

Mulched areas. Areas mulched with bark or rock are free of weeds, invasive grasses and dead plants. Landscaping fabric is not visible. A 3” depth of mulch is recommended.

Xeriscaping versus “Zeroscaping.” Northcreek HOA favors the use of xeric or “waterwise” plantings in our arid climate along with appropriate landscaping materials associated with that method of planting. We do not favor the *extensive* use of gravels, “lava rock” and similar ground covers whose principal aim is to avoid any maintenance work on a property. Beginning January, 2005, the Architectural Control Committee will not approve any landscape plan which features more than 30 percent hardscape materials. Existing uses of such material are grandfathered.

Dead trees and shrubs are removed, as are dead branches and limbs. On our small lots, vegetation can encroach on neighbors, interfering with their enjoyment of their property. The HOA encourages neighbors to resolve such issues cooperatively.