

HWPOA RECOMMENDED WATER-WISE PARKWAY LANDSCAPING ALTERNATIVES

September 14, 2015

These recommendations address landscaping on our parkways (the strip of plants between the sidewalk and the road).

Water Issues

- **California is in a historic drought. Depleted aquifers can take decades to replenish.**
- What we pay for scarce water in LA can be viewed as cheap. This will not last.
- Municipalities have been increasing both water restrictions and the cost of water.
- Even if El Niño 2015 brings heavy rains, it will not end California's drought problems.
- **We need to conserve water in every way possible, for the environment, and our budgets.**


Parkways

- **The turf that remains on most of our parkways (and lawns) is not water-wise.**
- Because of water restrictions, many residents have stopped watering their parkways which are now browning or dead.
- Even though LA parkways are City property, homeowners are required to maintain them.
- **Consider replacing parkway grass (and, possibly, front lawns) with better choices.**
- *LA maintains a limited list¹ of selected approved plants for parkways. Using other plants or using other cover (bark mulch, rocks, decomposed granite, synthetic/artificial turf, etc) is not recommended by us, may be dangerous and requires permits and meaningful permit fees.*
- Property owners are of course free to leave existing parkway plants in place or contract for their replacement as each owner sees fit, within City guidelines. Replacing lawns at the same time would, presumably, involve cost efficiencies.
- There are several ways to remove existing turf. We suggest avoiding herbicides which run off into the ocean. We are informed that the simplest method is to first stop watering and allow the grass to die, then water the parkway (to soften the soil) one week prior to grass removal with a pick and shovel. Prior to installing any new plants, homeowners may wish to investigate additional water efficiencies afforded by surface or sub-surface drip irrigation as a modification to existing sprinklers. Re-planting in late October or November at the earliest is preferable as it should be cooler and therefore less stress on new plants. *Note that even drought tolerant plants will need regular water until established.*
- **After extensive research, we feel the following groundcovers are the best city-approved alternatives** which: require little to very little water; are suitable for our local soil; do well in various sun/shade exposures; take some foot traffic; are low enough (or can be mowed/trimmed) to allow car doors to open; do not have winter or summer dormancy (turn brown); and, will keep the neighborhood attractive year-round. Plants appear alphabetically:
 - **Beach Strawberry** (*Fragaria chiloensis*) - a California native.
 - **Common Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*) - several California native cultivars are available.
 - **Kurapia** (*Lippia nodiflora* 'Kurapia') - in the form of the Kurapia patented cultivar.
- **Existing street trees need special consideration.** Please note that, whatever plants you choose, they are best left about 24" from the base of street tree trunks and, whatever irrigation you use, *street trees need to be provided with appropriate water or they will eventually die.*


¹ http://bss.lacity.org/Engineering/pdfs/Residential_Parkway_Landscaping_Guidelines_2015.pdf

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- More complete information, including photos, of each of the selections is on the following pages.

Beach Strawberry (<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>)						
IRRIGATION once established	DROUGHT TOLERANT?	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	FOOT TRAFFIC	EXPOSURE	EVERGREEN ?	CALIFORNIA NATIVE
LOW	YES	10 inch & mowable	Light	Full Sun Part-Shade	Yes	Yes
						
<p><u>Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another California native on LA City’s approved list. • Needs infrequent to occasional watering. • Vigorous, fast-growing, quickly covers the ground with a mat of glossy dark green foliage and bright white flowers. Berries are edible. • Easily contained, if desired, with a string trimmer or mower. Un-mowed maximum height is about 10 inches. • An annual spring pruning will freshen plantings. • Works well as a lightly trafficked turf. 						
<p>Selected Links:</p> <p>California Native Plant Society http://calscape.cnps.org/Fragaria-chiloensis-(Beach-Strawberry)?srchcr=sc55ad802a32b19</p> <p>University of California Ground Cover trial http://smsf-mastergardeners.ucanr.org/Elkus/ground_cover/</p>						

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Common Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>)						
IRRIGATION once established	DROUGHT TOLERANT?	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	FOOT TRAFFIC	EXPOSURE	EVERGREEN ?	CALIFORNIA NATIVE
LOW	YES	1 foot * & mowable	Light	Full Sun Part-Shade	Yes	* many available
						
White Yarrow	"Island Pink" Yarrow		Dwarf pink yarrow			
<p><u>Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many cultivars of Common yarrow exist. • All approved by LA City for parkway landscaping. • California has a number of native yarrows, tough and robust plants needing little maintenance and we encourage you to choose a native cultivar over an import. • Soft leaves are aromatic. • Late spring and summer will bring white to pink flowers. • Needs only occasional to moderate water. • A suitable turf substitute as tolerates light foot traffic and regular mowing, if desired. • Good habitat plant, attracts birds, butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. 						
<p>Selected Links:</p> <p>California Native Plant Society http://calscape.cnps.org/Achillea-millefolium-(Common-Yarrow)?srchcr=sc55ad7ba2d1b51</p> <p>Dwarf Yarrow, a Groundcover You Can Walk On http://thesmartergardener.com/dwarf-yarrow-a-ground-cover-you-can-walk-on/</p>						

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Kurapia (<i>Lippia nodiflora</i> 'Kurapia')						
IRRIGATION once established	DROUGHT TOLERANT?	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	FOOT TRAFFIC	EXPOSURE	EVERGREEN ?	CALIFORNIA NATIVE
LOW	YES	1 inch	Light	Full Sun Part-Shade	Yes	No. Japanese drought-tolerant cultivar of a plant which is also native to California
						
<p><u>Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kurapia is a newly developed, highly versatile groundcover. • This is a University of California tested drought tolerant turf alternative. • Once established, it requires little maintenance and little water. • Kurapia has a long bloom period and its white flowers are attractive to pollinators such as bees and butterflies. • Native California Lippia is an LA City approved parkway alternative, though it grows taller, so requires mowing, and uses more water than Kurapia. If you intend to choose Kurapia, please ensure you or your landscaper does not get non-Kurapia Lippia. 						
<p><u>Selected Links:</u></p> <p>Kurapia Home Page http://www.kurapia.com/index.html</p>						