



Tree and Landscaping Regulations of the Zoning Code Frequently Asked Questions

Q Why does the City require landscaping?

A Landscaping helps protect human health and the environment, protects property values and livability, and makes the urban environment more comfortable and pleasant. It does so by:

- Providing shade from the sun and shelter from the wind;
- Helping to treat and manage stormwater runoff;
- Reducing noise, visual, and lighting impacts onsite and on neighboring properties;
- Improving the appearance and function of public and private spaces;
- Reestablishing or preserving wildlife habitat and natural areas; and
- Preserving and enhancing Portland's urban forest.

Q How does the Zoning Code require landscaping?

A The Portland Zoning Code requires landscaping in many situations. The Zoning Code specifies the type of landscaping, where the landscaping must be located on the site, and how much area must be landscaped.

Many different chapters of the Zoning Code require landscaping. The four most common types of required landscaping are trees for new houses, required landscaping areas on commercial sites and perimeter or screening landscaping such as around the edges of a site, and parking lot landscaping.



Stormwater swale, recently planted

Q What does this manual cover?

A The Zoning Code specifies the type, location, and area of required landscaping. This manual provides additional information on the methods and materials to be used in required landscaping. The manual includes plant materials, planting methods, irrigation, maintenance, and similar information. In addition, the manual will help you can calculate the number of trees, shrubs, and groundcover plants required and develop a landscaping plan.

Q How do I determine what landscaping is required?

A This manual is used together with the Zoning Code. First, you must know what zoning applies to your site. Each zoning designation has different landscaping requirements that specify what type of landscaping is required, where it must be located, and how much area must be landscaped. Once you know the zoning designation, you can find the types of landscaping required. Chapter 33.248 describes the different types landscaping.

Q Do I need a permit to install landscaping?

A Landscaping is usually part of a larger project, rather than a stand-alone installation. When you get a building permit for the whole project, it includes the landscaping.

A permit is required in the case where required landscaping is proposed without additional development; it allows the owner and the City to document that the required landscaping was installed.

Q How do I get my building permit?

A Come to the City's Development Services Center at 1900 SW 4th Avenue to apply for the necessary permit. City staff will help you through the process.

Q What information do I need to show on a landscape plan?

A In general, your building permit application needs to include a site plan that shows all required landscaping. The information that you need to show may vary somewhat depending on what you are building and on site-specific characteristics. You may include your landscaping plan on your site plan as long as all the necessary details are shown. You must include the information listed below on your landscaping plan:

- Layout and dimensions, and for parking lots, the amount of landscaped area;
- Proposed locations and numbers of plant materials and spacing;
- Plant type, both scientific and common names and size;
- Planting and tree protection details and specifications;
- Irrigation; and
- Any other elements required by the code; check the individual standards that apply to your project.

This manual also includes a worksheet to help calculate the numbers of plants needed. We recommend that you use the worksheet to calculate your plant requirements and then submit it with your landscaping plan.

Q Can I use existing trees and plants to meet the landscaping standards?

A Yes. In particular, you are encouraged to preserve older, larger trees wherever possible. If you intend to use existing trees and plants to meet the standards, you must show their locations, species, and sizes on your landscaping plan. In addition, if you are preserving trees, you must have a tree preservation plan.

Q What must be included in a tree preservation plan?

A A tree preservation plan includes both a site plan and a written statement. The written statement must be prepared by a certified arborist and must say that the trees to be preserved are healthy. The site plan must be drawn to scale and show all of the following:

- All trees to be preserved on the site, their species and diameter;
- The location of water, sewer, and other utility easements;
- The location of dry wells and soakage trenches; and
- How the City's Tree Protection Requirements are met, please see Title 11, Trees.

Q How is the landscaping inspected?

A Landscaping is inspected during the Erosion Control Permanent Measures inspection, which takes place at the end of a project, after all long-term soil stabilization measures are in place.

Q What if I have to make changes to my landscaping plan after it's approved?

A It depends on how your landscaping was approved.

Most landscaping is approved by meeting the standards in the Zoning Code. In this case, you can change the plant materials, spacing, and methods as long as your new proposal still meets the standards in the code. Changes must be approved, and a copy of the approved revisions to your landscaping plan must be on file with the Bureau of Development Services.

Sometimes landscaping is required as a condition of approval of a land use review (such as an adjustment or conditional use), and the species, placement, and maintenance are specified by the land use decision. In this case, you cannot change anything about the landscaping without going back through another land use review to modify your proposal.

Q How do I use this manual?

A First find the type of landscaping that the Zoning Code requires for your site.

Once you know which standards you need to meet, you can find in the manual illustrations and plain-language descriptions of them.

If you are looking for guidance about species of plants that may be suitable, check the Lists of Suggested Plants for Required Landscaping in the back of the manual, the Portland Plant List, and the Stormwater Management Manual. These lists show the size categories for many trees and give height and spacing information for shrubs and ground cover plants. The manual also contains a form for calculating the numbers of trees, shrubs, and ground cover plants needed at your site.

Q Does this manual tell me how to plant stormwater facilities?

A No, this manual only covers zoning code landscaping. Information specific to stormwater plantings is in the *Stormwater Management Manual* available at www.portlandoregon.gov/bes.

Q Does this manual tell me how to landscape for erosion control?

A No, specific measures for erosion control, including plantings, can be found in the *Erosion Control Manual* available online at www.portlandoregon.gov/bds.

Q Where can I get more information about plants and landscaping?

A Expert information about local conditions and suitable plants is always available from professionals. Depending on your needs, you may wish to consult with landscape architects, arborists, landscape contractors, or nurseries.

A wealth of information is available on the Internet about plant selection. Here are some websites we consulted during development of this manual:

Oregon State University

- Landscape plants: <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants>
- Trees of the Pacific Northwest: <http://oregonstate.edu/trees/>

Washington State University

- Native plants: <http://cabedb.wsu.edu/nativePlant/scripts/webMain.asp>

PLANTS National Database

- Plants native to the USA: <http://plants.usda.gov/index.html>

Missouri Botanical Garden Kemper Center

- Plantfinder: <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/alpha.asp>

North Carolina State University

- Horticulture on the Internet: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/hortinternet/index.html>

Michigan State University Extension Service and Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association

- Ornamental Plants: <http://www.msue.msu.edu/msuel/imp/modzz/masterzz.html>

University of Connecticut Plant Database

- Trees, shrubs, and vines database: <http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/>

City of Portland, Oregon

- Naturescaping for Clean Rivers: <http://www.portlandonline.com/bes>
- Portland Plant List: <http://www.portlandonline.com/planning>

Friends of Trees

- Trees database: <http://www.friendsoftrees.org>