

# Landscape Guidelines for Villa Paradiso

Fall 2025

Board of Directors: Archived document

The Villa Paradiso Landscape Committee (LSC) has been established by the Villa Paradiso (VP) Board of Directors to encourage and promote adherence to the Master Declaration of Covenants. The VP Covenants are issued to new owners when property within the community is purchased. All residents are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the terms of the Covenants.

Access to pertinent VP documents is obtained via [www.venetiaincommunity.com](http://www.venetiaincommunity.com).

Enter the web site password.

Select Villa Paradiso near the bottom of the page on the left side.

Select Docs and Forms from the ribbon at the top of the page.

All Villa Paradiso documents, including the Covenants, Bylaws, Guidelines, and other community forms, can be accessed from this page.

To access the Venetia Community Association (VCA) documents, select the web site [www.venetiaincommunity.com](http://www.venetiaincommunity.com).

Enter the web site password.

Select Documents on the left side of this main page.

Access is granted to the VCA documents: Rules, Covenants, By-Laws, and Contracts.

**IMPORTANT RENTER NOTE:** Owners are personally responsible for the compliance of their renter; as a result, if an owner has renters or visitors in their Villa, please print this document and post it in a visible location for reference purposes. Homeowners are responsible for the actions of their renter and will be responsible, including associated costs, for non-compliance with any landscape guidelines stated below.

The following is a brief representation of the Covenants, as well as the adopted Villa Paradiso Landscape Plan, and is not intended to be all inclusive.

Generally, Villa Paradiso maintains all landscaping including lawns, shrubs and trees, and determines the timing of trimming, fertilization, weed abatement, and new plantings, and appropriate selection of plants and trees.

1. Effective January 1, 2022, Villa Paradiso's Board adopted a Long-Term Landscaping Plan. This plan identifies Planting Zones (see attached diagrams and descriptions). This Plan lays out the transition program with landscaping plans for these zones. Effective January 1, 2022, and through updates, the Plan is used to determine perennial plantings for each of these zones. It's very important that all homeowners are acquainted with this landscaping program and refer to their copy of this plan for information on approved plantings. A copy can also be found on the Venetia Community site mentioned above.

- a. No alteration or addition of perennial or annual plantings by the villa owner is allowed to any planting beds other than Zones 3 and 4 (see below) and only with Landscape Committee approval, if any variance is needed. Residents are not allowed to plant specimens in Zone 1, the area between the shared driveways, in Zone 2A, the plantings along the side of the garage leading to a villa's front door, generally up to the air conditioning unit and not including the alcove, or in Zone 2B, which is the area near the corner of the garage, which is around the Pigmy Palm. Only plants listed in the Long-Term Landscape Plan will be automatically approved for Zones 3 and 4. The area identified as Zone 3 includes the owner's garden along the far walkway side up to the shared garden area for most villas, and Zone 4 is directly behind each villa's lanai and extends out approximately six feet. Owners of a villa may request that additional or other plantings or specific landscape work be allowed in these two areas by filling out an Architectural Variance Request - Landscape (AVR – Landscape) for approval or a community workorder at [WorkOrdersVPLandscaping@groups.outlook.com](mailto:WorkOrdersVPLandscaping@groups.outlook.com). Architectural Variance Requests – Landscaping (AVR – Landscaping) are to be utilized when an owner requests planting changes which, generally, do not comply with the Landscape Guidelines. Work Orders are completed and emailed when a correction to the existing plantings, such as plant trimming, removal of specific dead or dying plant specimens, irrigation dripline problems, etc. The cost of the plantings and the resultant labor, if required, to install, remove, or change the current garden will be the responsibility of the villa's owner unless this work is undertaken by the owner. In this latter case, any damage and subsequent costs to electrical, irrigation, or other in-ground utilities will become the responsibility of the owner.
- b. Villa Paradiso's contracted landscaping personnel should, in most cases, handle all perennial plantings, as they are most familiar with our property's irrigation and the approved perennial plants for the gardens of VP. An estimate of costs will be provided to the homeowner for the work requested. The exception would be the cost of removal and replacement of a dead plant that was planted by the Landscape Committee as part of that Zone's master planting plan. Any homeowner who attempts to plant, either annual and/or perennial plants in Zones 3 or 4 is responsible for the cost of any repairs or replacements for irrigation, utilities, mulch, and the cost of other plants which may die or have stunted growth due to any new plantings. In addition, no homeowner is allowed to undertake changes to the hardscape of Zones 3 and 4 by removing or changing the mulch from that which is delivered and distributed each fall to all villas. Any sculptures, orbs, water features, adornments, pieces of art, flags, etc. cannot be placed permanently in Zones 1, 2A, 2B, 3, or 4 without completing and having approval of the Architectural Variance Request – Landscape form. Any temporary placement, less than one day of duration,

or placement of holiday season decorations from November 15<sup>th</sup> through January 15<sup>th</sup>, can be placed in these areas without prior approval.

- c. As is the policy of the LSC, prior to any planting in Zones 3 or 4, any plants which are not approved specimens, as stated in the VP Long-Term Landscape Plan, the villa's owner must submit an Architectural Variance Request - Landscaping (AVR - Landscaping) form. This form needs to be completed and submitted to the Villa Paradiso Board, who will acknowledge this request, and forward it to the Landscape Committee for their action. Renters do not have authority to alter or plant in any zone (see note regarding Important Renter Note on page 1), so no renter should fill out an AVR - Landscape Form for a villa. VP Landscape Committee members can provide copies of this form, or owners can find a copy in the Villa Paradiso documents section on the Venetia Community website. The only exception to this regulation would be for small seasonal or annual plants; however, the homeowner still assumes liability for any damage to irrigation, utilities, or perennial plants.
- d. Villa Paradiso's landscape contractor, ultimately, handles all maintenance of perennial plantings in all landscaping zones. The landscaping of the community is maintained according to the Venetia and VP maintenance standards below:
  - i. All planting between villas is maintained so that the height is no taller than five to six feet, excluding palms.
  - ii. Shrubs under garage light are maintained to be no higher than 1 foot below this light.
  - iii. Shrubs along the garage side and at the back of the villas' lanai are maintained to be no higher than window-sill height.
  - iv. The Landscaping Plan specifically outlines plants that are not acceptable or can be invasive; thus, any plant deemed to be unacceptable, invasive, hazardous, or not appropriate for our tropical climate will not be allowed in the community and will be removed without further discussion. A current list of these plants can be found in Villa Paradiso's Long-Term Landscape Plan.
  - v. **IMPORTANT:** Several areas within Villa Paradiso are considered "common property" and are maintained by Venetia Community Association's (VCA's) landscape contractor. VP homeowners have no rights to plant in these areas, including annual or seasonal plantings. This is important information, which will be strictly enforced, for any Preserve Area, and any transgression can result in a significant monetary fine.
- e. For purposes of clarification, "Shared Planting Area" is defined as a planting area in which two contiguous homeowners both have the right to plant in this area. Typically, the property line runs through the middle of a shared planting area, termed Zone 3. Several villas have an "End Planting Area" meaning that their neighbor does not plant in that area and that area is 100% within one owner's property line. An end planting area is usually

at a corner, at the end of a street, or has a large expanse of grass between the villas. Most of the “common grounds” area surrounding Villa Paradiso is the property of Venetia Community Association (VCA) and residents must not plant in these areas. These areas are cared for by VCA’s landscaping contractor.

- f. Most importantly, please ensure that all plantings take place within the owner’s legally zoned property lines. The Landscape Committee has zone details on file for any owner to reference. As a courtesy, if a planting bed is shared with a neighbor, both owners should share their plans, regarding any new or changes to the existing plantings, to ensure that the planting plans are coordinated.
  - g. These planting changes can include any extension of a planting area, but the changes must ensure that lawn maintenance equipment has appropriate access and that irrigation is adequate. Again, the cost of any additional material, such as mulch or irrigation changes, will be at the owner’s expense. Repair or replacement of damaged irrigation and/or utility lines will also be at the homeowner’s expense.
  - h. The above guidelines will also include the request by any owner for any approved hardwood trees or palms, since this action necessitates a site inspection by Sarasota County for underground utilities and cable, in addition to irrigation lines. Tree planting must be done by a licensed contractor. A quote for this service may be obtained from Venetia’s or Villa Paradiso’s landscape contractor.
  - i. Homeowners do not have the authority to remove, trim, or cut down a tree. They may request this consideration from the VP Landscape Committee but most of the time this request will need approval from the appropriate VCA committee and Sarasota County.
2. Homeowners must not treat any plantings or grass with fertilizer or pesticides other than regular pest control provided by a licensed pest control vendor. The only variance to this could be Zone 3, but the VP Landscape Committee should be consulted prior to application of any fertilizer. Our Landscaping contractor handles all regular lawn and foliage treatments, so any additional treatment could be detrimental to plantings or grass.
  3. Should an owner experience any problems with landscaping or irrigation, Villa Paradiso uses a Work Order system. All homeowners should report issues by sending an email to [WorkOrdersVPLandscaping@groups.outlook.com](mailto:WorkOrdersVPLandscaping@groups.outlook.com). Remember that Work Orders are used for planting requests, dealing with trimming, removal of dead plants, irrigation problems, etc., while any changes to the community’s Long-Term Landscape Plan should be requested by completing an Architectural Variance Request – Landscaping form. Renters are not authorized to complete a work order or AVR – Landscape form; only the homeowner may do so. The subject within the email should be “Work Order” and within the text, owners should state their names, addresses, and the issues they wish the Work Order to review. Owners will be copied on the

- progress of the work order. All Work Orders are logged, tracked, and archived by the VP Landscape Committee.
4. Due to the attraction of various rat species, racoons, squirrels, and other herbivores, bird feeders are not permitted on any VP, VCA, or Preserve properties.
  5. Residents who experience rodent or other animal issues in landscaping (rats, squirrels, racoons, armadillos, etc.) need to immediately refer to their personal pest control contractor. Our management company, Sunstate Association Management Group, can recommend a specialist who has experience with the native wildlife, our villas and Venetia.
  6. All exterior decorations, including sculptures, flags, orbs, water features, or similar items, must be approved in accordance with Villa Paradiso or Venetia Community standards.
    - a. Christmas decorations can be displayed between November 15<sup>th</sup> through January 15<sup>th</sup>.
    - b. All other holiday decorations should be displayed one week prior to the holiday and removed the day after that holiday.
  7. There are three separate waste pickups for Sarasota County: bags with weeds/garden waste, garbage or trash containers, and recycling containers. All three pick-ups are scheduled for Thursday morning in the community.
    - a. Garden bags with yard waste must not be left outside due to their attraction from wildlife. These bags must be kept inside the garage until being moved to the curb for collection by Sarasota County's weekly yard waste pickup. Movement to the curbside area should occur no earlier than 5:00 PM of the night prior to the day of pickup.
    - b. Garbage or trash containers must remain in the garage until they are moved to the curb for pickup. Please do not put out plastic garbage bags which can be ripped open by animals, such as racoons or bobcats, which wander in from the preserve. Please make certain that the lid is properly closed on the container, which means no materials may extend above the rim of the container. Containers may be placed at the curb no earlier than 5:00PM the night prior to the day of pickup.
    - c. Recycling containers, which should never include food waste, can be placed at the curb no earlier than 5:00PM the night before the day of pickup. All recycling containers must have lids which close properly, so no material may extend above the rim of the container.
    - d. Sarasota County typically picks up in our area on Thursdays. Holidays will normally postpone the Thursday schedule, typically one day. Pick-ups can also be delayed due to weather and volume of debris resulting from weather conditions and/or seasonal events.
  8. Wildlife and Preserve Areas. Villa Paradiso's residents, along with all other residents within Venetia, have a strong commitment to wildlife as indicated by our Preserve Areas that have been developed throughout Venetia. This initiative, for conservation and preservation, also exists throughout the State of Florida. All owners are responsible for having policies which support the

wellbeing of the wildlife that surrounds our community. These Preserves are also a natural water system that allows large volumes of rainwater to disperse throughout the community, rather than causing flooding which could come during the rainy season, including tropical storms and hurricanes. This system of rainwater control works well for our community. As a result, it is important that Sarasota County, as well as all counties in Florida, controls our Preserve areas, to ensure our community's compliance.

- a. Venetia's Preserves are natural areas, that allow the much-needed native environment for our tropical animal and plant life to have environs within which they can flourish. Consequently, residents must allow the Preserve to exist without interference. Residents cannot toss any foreign materials into the Preserves, including food scraps, bird seed, any waste materials, or vegetative debris. Residents cannot plant any vegetative material in the Preserve and should never disturb the plants already planted in these areas.
- b. Villa Paradiso and any properties within Venetia do not allow fruit trees of any kind due to the attraction of rats (one species with the common names of fruit, tree, palm, or roof) which can then move into homes' attics, potentially causing serious and expensive damage.
- c. The professional landscapers and their workers, who are employed throughout Venetia, continually use chemical fertilizers and weed treatments, which can be absorbed into food and/or seeds that, when left outside, can be very detrimental to wildlife, possibly causing illness or death. The Preserve Buffer zones which surround our community act as filter systems which help to ensure that chemicals do not contaminate the Preserve's vegetation and water systems.
- d. Within the boundaries of homes, villas, and condominiums, owners should not feed wildlife. Feeding any wildlife, including alligators, rabbits, racoons, birds, sandhill cranes, hawks, bobcats, or other species, can cause unnatural and dangerous dependency which is not healthy for any animal, our residents, or pets. This list states the primary offenses of man's negative interactions with nature, but it is not an all-inclusive summary.
  - i. Alligators become very aggressive and may venture out of their normal habitat when presented with food scrapes. Once fed, alligators will continue to search for more food, potentially to the detriment of the community.
  - ii. Birds and other small animals will eat seeds that have fallen to the ground. and these seeds may have absorbed chemicals from fertilizers or weed abatement, which can cause illness or death in animals. Sick or dying birds and small animals, in turn, can attract rats, hawks, bobcats, or other animals, which can become ill from eating the originally contaminated animal. Therefore, no bird feeders are permitted in Villa Paradiso, on either residents' properties or within the

Preserve. This applies to temporary or permanently installed animal feeding stations for any animals.

- iii. Throwing used water, cleaning liquids, or other chemicals of any kind, from paver or roof cleaning, car washing, etc., into a pond is absolutely prohibited. This can potentially kill fish, otters, birds, turtles, or any other wildlife which use open water in their activities
- iv. It's important that all residents have contract services for internal pest control to prevent the occasional rat, racoon, or squirrel family from taking up residence in attics, especially during cooler months. Villa Paradiso is not responsible for the inside of any owner's villa. The Association does seasonal spraying of the plants surrounding the villas, but exterior pest maintenance is the responsibility of the villas' owners.
- v. Should any animal appear ill, exhibit aberrant behavior, or become aggressive, please notify the Villa Paradiso Board and the information will be passed on to the wildlife team of Venetia, who work within the wildlife guidelines of Sarasota County. These individuals will render aid to the specified animal according to appropriate guidelines. Under no circumstance should a resident attempt to undertake or resolve any situation involving an ill or dying animal.
- vi. It is imperative that all pets be on a leash whenever the animals are outside a villa. Pets should never be allowed to roam or run free, even if they are accompanied by their owner and, at no time, should a pet be staked in a yard or tied to a fixture outside of a villa. As a courtesy to all neighbors, others in the community, and our visitors, it is imperative that all animal waste products be picked up immediately by the owner or walker of a pet. Under no circumstances should animal waste be allowed to remain, for any length of time, on the grass or in any vegetative area of the community.
- vii. In review, we do not attempt to domesticate our wildlife nor alter their habitats, so all owners, renters, and visitors must work diligently to keep the natural environment within the Preserve. It is VCA's policy, as well as that of VP, that all citizens cohabit with our wildlife neighbors and enjoy the natural bounty of our community.
- viii. Further details from Sarasota County concerning our Preserves are included elsewhere in this document.

## Resident Information for Homes that Border on the Preserve

Our community is unique! We have an abundance of conservation and buffer lands, sump (drainage) ponds, and drainage cache areas. With two exceptions, these areas all depend upon surface water drainage for a water supply. In that our waters come and go on a seasonal basis, the community's buffered Preserve Areas are subject to near drought conditions in the dry, winter season and near flood conditions during the wet, summer season.

Buffer Zones generally do not need to be cleaned up. Instead, buffer areas should be left in their natural state because they are an important element for protecting the interior habitats. Leaving the buffer in its natural state encourages the decomposition cycle, which is an important biological processing cycle that creates microhabitats, food sources, nesting and denning areas, and helps to return nutrients to the soil.

Residents may walk through the Preserve Areas for enjoyment of these habitats. However, no one should be making trails through repeated traversing of the same area, no one should be removing or chopping down vegetation to make a trail, no one should disturb or remove natural litter, and no one should purposefully disturb the habitat of any wildlife.

If a tree limb or other vegetation from a Preservation Area encroaches onto an owner's property, this problem should be discussed with a representative from the appropriate committee of the Venetia Community Association or VP Landscape Committee, who will refer the homeowner to the appropriate individual within Venetia or Sarasota County. When the appropriate individuals from VCA or Sarasota County have been contacted, these individuals will decide what action can be undertaken and by whom this action should be done.

Residents may not plant vegetation in the Preservation Areas. The planting of native or exotic, ornamental landscape plants is not allowed within Preservation Areas. It is important to know exactly where the owner's property line exists because all lots are not created equal.

Only licensed professionals are permitted to use herbicides in these areas. Our Aquatics consultants deal with these problems and treatments. Please be aware that most home store (Home Depot, Lowes, the local hardware store, etc.) chemicals are oil based with restrictions for use and are not permitted within or near natural areas that retain water, such as wetlands or mesic hammocks. Homeowners should not apply herbicides adjacent to Preservation Areas but, if this must be done by a licensed contractor, only **water-soluble** herbicides can be applied.

Vegetative debris, yard waste, and any other foreign materials, waste, or trash, **MAY NOT** be dumped, thrown, buried, or burned within a Preservation Area. All materials

must be disposed of properly at an off-site location or by your community's scheduled waste collection.

The possibility of a natural fire in a Preservation Area is considered low because most of the preserved habitats located in subdivisions are wetlands or mesic hammocks. Both systems hold water in their soils and rarely become a fire hazard.

Where Preserve boundary signs are posted, there is not to be any cutting or disturbance of the natural plants beyond these postings, which designate the edge of a Preservation Area. These signs' locations have been flagged by the County for violations and must not be moved or altered.

It is always a good idea to ask for permission concerning the Buffer or Preserve Areas behind a residence, as to what an owner can do or not do in these areas. Violations that the County finds will be addressed, the cost will be passed on to the relevant homeowner association, which will then pass on any fees to the homeowner who committed the encroachment violation into the Buffer or Preserve Areas.