

## Get to Know Your Yard!

The Board has been working diligently with our current landscaper vendor in order to ensure the community is receiving the best service possible and making sure the Community Standards are met.

During our time of meetings and walk-thrus, we have encountered many items that most of us would not have known about our yards and these items can make you think that there has been missed landscaping.

This letter is to be able to help inform all our owners of the items we have been made aware about in order to help give as much information and knowledge to all.

Please note: this is simply to help spread information given to the board for your knowledge. We still encourage for owners to report any issues that are seen so they can be reviewed and resolved. Here are the emails where to send your concerns:

Highland Community Management: [j.conklin@hcmanagement.org](mailto:j.conklin@hcmanagement.org)

New Board Email: [cpatlhoa@gmail.com](mailto:cpatlhoa@gmail.com)

## Community Standards Review

The Board would like to quickly review again the Community Standards in regards to the height and trimming of all hedges/plants throughout the community. This standard is and will be done for every home in order to maintain the best overall look.

**Front Yard:** All hedges will be trimmed at a height of no more than 3 feet high. All plant beds that have multiple rows of plants will then be tiered down lower from the back 3-foot hedge.

**Side Yard:** All hedges will be trimmed to 4 feet high in order to conceal garbage cans and home equipment like A/C units.

**Back Yard:** All hedges around pool cages will be trimmed at a 6-foot height from the floor of the pool (this could cause some hedges to be over 6-feet from the ground). All other backyard hedges will be trimmed to a 6-foot height from the ground.

**Water Shoots:** You might have noticed the occasional high branch sticking out on top of your hedges, this is called a water shoot and can grow around 6 inches in a week!

## Palm vs Hardwood Trees

### What are the Responsibilities?

- **Palm Trees:** all palms are trimmed twice a year by the HOA and is also checked monthly and cleared of any seed pods or dead branches that are less than 12 feet high. The removal and/or replacement of palms are the homeowner's responsibility.
- **Hardwood Trees:** All other trees, like Oaks and Magnolias are the responsibility of the homeowner to trim, remove and/or replace. The HOA is only responsible to trim any branches away from sidewalks and streets to keep the required height per City Code.
- **Crepe Myrtles:** The HOA will trim back any crepe myrtles in the community if requested from homeowner. Requests must be made in January.

*Palm Tree*



*Hardwood Tree*



*Crepe Myrtle*



## Landscaping Alterations

### Solar Lights and Location



Please review the placement of any lights in your plant beds or yard. All solar lights need to be installed at least 4-6 inches inside the plant beds and away from the edge of the plant bed in order to properly edge the plant bed. Also Any lights that are installed in the lawns must be removed in order to not be damaged. Any lights not installed properly as stated above and are damaged, will be homeowner responsibility to repair/replace.

Also, please make sure that you submit an alteration application for your lights. This is for your protection to show that the lights you install are installed in the correct location should any damage occur, the landscape vendor can then be held accountable for replacement.

### Can I Have Rock Mulch?

The Board of Directors have approved for owners to install rock mulch in place of the community place pine bark mulch. The installation of the rock mulch is fully the responsibility of the homeowner as well as all maintenance of the rock mulch moving forward from installation. In order to install, you will need to submit an application and have approved provided the following conditions are noted in the application and met:

- Currently only white rock mulch has been approved
- Owner is required to place weed control base under rock mulch
- Owner is required to install a landscape border to hold rock mulch within the plant bed
- Owner is required to take full responsibility of the cleaning and replacement of rock mulch and also opts out of community mulch installation.



### I want to change my landscaping...

With many more new owners to the community, we have seen more changes to landscaping as people want to freshen up the look of the home.

Please remember that you must submit an alteration application for all landscaping and have approved prior to install to avoid costly removal.

The Community has adopted an approved plant list for owners to pick from which are items that will be able to be maintained by the HOA. If you would like to have plants not on the list, these will need to be placed in pots and not in the ground.

Approved Plant List can be found on either the HOA Website or you may request one to be sent by emailing Highland Community Management.

### Why Can't I have Fruit Trees and Vegetable Gardens?

It has been noted that a few owners have planted fruit trees, pineapple plants and vegetable gardens in their yards. At this time, we have no approved applications for these items and have been planted without approval which is a violation.

Upon review of these items, **the HOA will not approve for these items to be planted within the community and all will need to be removed** for the following reasons:

1. Any plants planted in the ground become the responsibility of the HOA and the HOA is not contracted to maintain fruit trees or gardens.
2. Any fruit/vegetables that fall to the ground become a safety hazard with lawn equipment shooting into neighboring homes and also attracts bugs and pests.





## Why Does the grass in my Yard look Uneven?

For anyone who might not know, most lawns in the community are St. Augustine grass which requires the lawns to be maintained at a longer height in order to maintain the health of the grass. Due to the requirement of maintenance of this type of grass, owners might feel the lawns are too long (see next page). Upon our last meeting with the landscaper, we reviewed lawns that looked uneven, which we thought was due to poor mowing. However, we were able to learn that many homes in the community actually have 2-3 different type of grass growing in their yard at the same time! As each type of grass will grow at different rates, this is causing yards to look uneven at times. Below are a few of the grass types seen in yards so you can see if you have any of these:



- **Bahia Grass:** It was originally used as a pasture grass on the sandy soils of the southeastern United States. Additional varieties have been introduced since that time for use as lawn grasses. Bahiagrass is a low-maintenance lawn grass that does well with limited water and fertilizer inputs. Varieties currently available do not produce a carpet-like, dense lawn like some other warm-season lawn grasses. Because of the slow growth habit of bahiagrass, the plugging method leaves open areas of soil that can be taken over by fast-growing weed species.



- **Bermuda Grass:** Is among the most widely used warm-season grasses. Improved, fine-textured Bermuda grasses are used throughout the south on golf courses, athletic fields, and in high-profile residential and commercial landscapes where a fine-textured, dense ground cover is desired. It establishes rapidly and is able to outcompete most weed species. This aggressive growth also fosters thatch buildup. Bermuda grasses will generally not maintain green color in cold temperatures and have poor shade tolerance. Can be mowed at 1–2" for lawn use and a rotary mower can be used. Mowing at heights > 2" may result in an uneven appearance.



- **Goose Grass:** A common annual turf and horticultural weed found throughout Florida. It grows well in compact, wet soil and competes successfully with warm-season and cool-season turf grasses especially with thin, open disturbed turf. Can grow up to 3 feet tall.



- **Crab Grass:** Crabgrass will grow under close mowing situations and prefers areas where turfgrass stands are weak. Healthy turf is therefore the best way to prevent crabgrass infestation.

More information can be found at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

## Irrigation Timer Updates

Upon review and work done by management and our landscaper, we have been made aware of residents having unlocked irrigation timers, most due to broken latches, and residents have been changing the settings to off or to setting outside the water restrictions of Haines City. This can pose major accountability issues for dead landscaping due to lack of irrigation or fines by the city for watering outside their restrictions.

As the HOA is responsible for the maintenance of the irrigation systems and reduce liability on the HOA, locks will be installed on all timers in order to manage the settings of each timer to make sure they are set within the correct guidelines of the City.

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[www.hcmanagement.org](http://www.hcmanagement.org)

<https://www.calabayparcattowerlake.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/CalabayParcTowerLakeHOA>

# St. Augustine Grass for Florida Lawns



## Advantages

St. Augustinegrass produces a green to blue-green dense turf that is well adapted to most soils and climatic regions in Florida. It has relatively good salt tolerance, and certain cultivars have better shade tolerance than other warm-season grass species. St. Augustinegrass establishes quickly and easily and may be planted as sod, sprigs, or plugs.

### 'FLORATAM'

'Floritam' (Figure 3) is an improved St. Augustinegrass that was released jointly in 1973 by the University of Florida and Texas A & M University. 'Floritam' is the most widely produced and used St. Augustinegrass in Florida. It is a coarse-textured cultivar that has poor cold and shade tolerance relative to other St. Augustinegrass cultivars. It does not persist well in environments that receive less than 6 hours of sunlight daily. It grows vigorously in the spring and summer. When first released, it had UF-documented chinch bug resistance, although that has largely been lost over time and chinch bugs are now a major pest of 'Floritam'. It is also susceptible to gray leaf spot and other diseases. 'Floritam' is not tolerant of herbicides that contain atrazine when applied at temperatures above 85°F. It should be mowed to a height of 3.5–4 inches.



Figure 3. 'Floritam' in the landscape. It is the most commonly used lawn grass in Florida.

Credits: L. Trenholm, UF/IFAS

## Disadvantages

St. Augustinegrass, like most turfgrasses, has certain cultural and pest problems. It requires water to remain green and healthy and may require supplemental irrigation during extended dry periods. It has poor wear tolerance and does not hold up to repeated foot or vehicular traffic. It goes into winter dormancy in parts of the state and turns a brown or tan color until springtime. It produces thatch under high fertilization and irrigation regimes, which may become a health problem for the grass. It has coarse, wide leaves and stems and therefore does not grow as densely as some other species. The major insect pest of St. Augustinegrass is the southern chinch bug (*Blissus insularis* Barber), which can cause considerable damage if not treated. Some cultivars are also susceptible to diseases, such as gray leaf spot (*Pyricularia grisea*), large patch (*Rhizoctonia solani*), and take-all root rot (*Gaeumannomyces graminis* var. *graminis*). Chemical weed control can be challenging, particularly when trying to control persistent, grassy weeds, for which there are few herbicide options for use on home lawns.

## Mowing

Proper mowing practices are necessary to keep any lawn healthy and attractive. Standard St. Augustinegrass cultivars ('BitterBlue', 'Classic', 'Floritam', etc.) should be maintained at a height of 3.5–4 inches. Repeatedly mowing at lower heights increases the stress on the lawn, discourages deep rooting, increases the chance for scalping if a mowing event is missed or postponed due to weather, and may increase susceptibility to pest problems (Figure 6). Maintaining the right height helps the grass develop a deep root system and gives a better appearance to the turf. No more than 1/3 of the leaf blades should be removed with any mowing. If possible, grass clippings should be left on a lawn that is mowed at the proper height and frequency. Under these conditions, clippings do not contribute to the thatch layer. Clippings put nutrients and organic matter back into the soil system. If clippings are excessive (e.g., clumping occurs), let them dry out and then disperse them over the lawn. For more information on mowing, please refer to ENH10, *Mowing Your Florida Lawn* (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh028>).

Table 1. Relative growth characteristics for St. Augustinegrass cultivars.

Cultivars	Mowing height (inches)	Cold tolerance	Shade tolerance	Chinch bug resistance	Green color	Texture
'Floritam'	3.5–4	Poor	Fair	Slight	Dark	Coarse