

ERB LANDSCAPES:

For ERB review we do not have a criterion that the landscape plan needs to be prepared by a licensed landscape architect. However, most applicants will need to have their landscape plans (all of them) finally reviewed by County Fire, so you probably do need what they require. Fire review is needed because of the high fire hazard of most of the Santa Monica Mountains area.

ERB is, however, very concerned about the landscape plans and always wants to review them. This is because they want to have as many native plants in landscapes as possible. Natives promote the natural landscape, beauty, and ecosystems of the mountains, whereas non-natives have a number of problems. You will need to show a potential landscape plan for your ERB review.

Non-natives require more irrigation, which promotes pests that decimate the native fauna. An example is the Argentine ant, often introduced with nursery plants, that has been shown to penetrate beyond 500m into natural lands adjacent to landscaped areas and eliminate much of the native fauna, even to the point of attacking bird nestlings.

The higher irrigation need is a problem for native plants, which are not adapted to it, and a problem for southern California in general because of continuing drought and perhaps climate change to a climate of less rainfall in general.

Non-natives may become invasive, and will penetrate into the native landscapes and displace the natives. We know of the invasive nature of certain non-natives that are displacing native flora but that are preferred by landscape architects because of their resilience, and these occur fairly often on landscape plans before ERB review.

You will need to irrigate for establishing the native plants, but then irrigate only during times of drought in the summer occasionally, say once a month in the summer. You will need to have irrigation for the 100-foot horizontal distance around any structures, but irrigation does not need to be used regularly. It needs to be in place and sufficient for fire protection and tested twice a year, before and following fire season, and repaired at those testing times.

Please use lists of plants native to the Santa Monica Mountains for designing a landscape plan. We have some available on our website, <http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/erb/>

Do not use any of the invasive plants on the invasive list. The invasive list also has flammable native plants. These require special spacing. They need to be 30-ft. distant horizontally from any structure and 30-ft. distant from other flammable plants.

I attached an old list of native plants for the Santa Monica Mountains.

Some further desiderata for instructions on the landscape plans for native plant areas:

Prohibit any use of rodenticides (use non-pervasive measures for rodent control such as trapping and fumigation). This is for anywhere in the landscaped areas.

Do not use fertilizer or herbicides for soil preparation. Amendments such as native plant mulch are OK.

Watering instructions for native plants in a conservation zone:

NATIVE PLANT IRRIGATION REGIMES:

OAK TREE IRRIGATION AND MAINTENANCE: Arrange soil around base of tree to slope away from tree so that rainfall drains away from the trunk; avoid ponding at the base of the trunk. Leave 6 to 10 feet around the trunk clear and dry. Irrigation can be done with hoses once a month at 6 feet from the trunk until tree is established (several years) in the normal rainfall months, October-March, and then only once or twice in summer in times of severe drought. After establishment, only rainfall should irrigate oaks, and NO water should be applied April-September. In times of severe drought, native oaks may be irrigated once in mid-summer. **Any temporary irrigation system shall be removed when oaks are established.**

NATIVE PLANT ZONE IRRIGATION AND MAINTENANCE:

Plants in these zones are watered like the oaks (but within 3-ft. of trunks) until established, once a month October-March, and then only once or twice in summer until established (several years). Usually, only rainfall should irrigate native plants after their establishment, and NO water should be applied April-September. In times of severe drought, native shrubs may be irrigated once or twice in summer.

Any temporary irrigation system shall be removed once native plants are established.

Of course, you will not be removing the irrigation around a structure, because you will need it for fire safety, but observe the irrigation regime anyway for the sake of the native plants in the landscape and the environment of the Santa Monica Mountains.

These pointers should help in the design of your landscape plan, and do not hesitate to ask more questions to clarify these principles of landscaping with native plants.

With respect to oak (and other native tree) removals, (no landscape requirements except with respect to irrigation for any oaks planted) but you will need to follow mitigation requirements in the LIP: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/coastal_adopted-LIP-maps.pdf

See section 22.44.1920.K for the mitigation requirements (includes encroachments into protected zones, approx. p.527+). We prefer you do the mitigation plantings in some permanently protected area such as government land or land protected by conservation easement or owned by a conservation management group.