

LIVING LANDSCAPES

WORTH HOMEOWNER'S TIME & EFFORT

When you're buying a home, you might fall into a love-hate relationship with the landscaping at the houses you view. A property with lovely landscaping will have better curb appeal, leaving a lasting impression. But with the phenomenon of drought-shaming and programs aimed at saving water by "ripping out" lawns, you might wonder if the living landscapes (grasses, trees, shrubs and plants) are really worth the hassle.

BUT CONSIDER THIS:

living landscapes are about much more than aesthetics. Without living landscapes, urban cities will be hotter, storm water runoff and rain will not be absorbed and cleaned by grass, and the air will not be cleansed of pollutants, dust and smoke particles.

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF ABOUT THE LANDSCAPING AT YOUR POTENTIAL NEW HOME.

The key is to have the right yard for your lifestyle combined with the right grasses, trees and plants. Living landscapes provide a host of environmental benefits, and they help communities in all climates.

DOES IT HAVE ARTIFICIAL TURF OR HARDSCAPE AS A LAWN REPLACEMENT?



These surfaces can heat up to the point of burning people and pets, and offer none of the oxygen-producing and pollutant-cleansing benefits of grass. And they still need to be cleaned with water!

WHAT KIND OF TURFGRASS IS PLANTED?



Hundreds of varieties exist, and some are perfect for drought conditions. For instance, established buffalo and Bermuda grasses require very little water and can survive foot traffic, children's play and pets.

IS THE GRASS BROWN?



We must get out of the mindset that all plants must stay perpetually green. Grass will turn brown when it goes dormant, but it will green up again when rains return.

IS THERE A SYSTEM IN PLACE TO WATER WISELY?



Don't overwater! Check for watering solutions like smart controllers on irrigation systems that help you use less water while maintaining your living landscape.

ARE THERE NATIVE AND ADAPTIVE PLANTS AND GRASSES?



A mixture of native plants and drought-resistant adaptive species are necessary in our cities and suburbs that include a lot of concrete, asphalt, people and traffic.

DOES THE YARD SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY?



Determine if the landscaping includes flowering plants for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

To learn more about how to maintain living landscapes at your new home, even during a drought, visit opei.org/stewardship.

