

**To:** West Highlands Homeowner  
**From:** Sentry Management and West Highlands Board of Directors  
**Date:** February 1, 2025  
**Re:** Lawn Care and Landscaping Upkeep and Maintenance



**ALERT:** REPLACING LAWN GRASS WITH MULCH, PINESTRAW, STONE OR ANY OTHER NON-PLANT MATERIAL IS NOT A PRE-APPROVED GROUND COVERING. PLEASE CONSULT WITH A LANDSCAPER TO DESIGN A LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE (ACC) APPROVAL FOR AREAS WHERE YOU WANT GRASS REPLACED (i.e., front/side/rear lawns; beauty strip between sidewalk and street curb, etc.). For areas where grass is shaded by trees preventing growth, please consider trimming the crown of the trees to allow for sunlight. Most of the grasses in the community require at least seven hours of sunlight to grow. Please visit [westhighlandsatl.com/documents](http://westhighlandsatl.com/documents) on care tips for Bermuda Grass. Alternatively, there are ornamental grasses and plants that are shade tolerant and thrive in shaded environments.

**ACC APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGES WHEN GRASS, PLANTS, BUSHES, SHRUBS OR TREES ARE REMOVED AND/OR REPLACED WITH SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM THE ORIGINAL ITEM.**

**NOW** is the time to take an inventory of your lawn/landscape and the exterior condition of your Lot. A Compliance Professional Team Member frequently inspects your property. Some of the areas that are examined on the exterior of your home are listed in the Personal Property Ground Standards that can be found on the West Highlands website: [www.westhighlandsatl.com](http://www.westhighlandsatl.com). Since warmer weather impacts the look of your lawn, it is a time to prevent crabgrass and other weeds from appearing in your yard. Timing the application of pre-emergent herbicides is critical. They must be applied several weeks before the weed seeds germinate. We recommend application of the pre-emergent in January or February. Treatment later in the season will not kill crabgrass and many other weeds. Applying pre-emergent weed preventers, weed killers, and/or post-emergent weed controllers is an all-year activity. These weeds will multiply and not only jeopardize your lawn, but also affect your neighbors' lawns. Please note that pre-emergent weed controllers will not kill existing weeds. You will need to pull existing weeds or contract with a lawn service company that specializes in weed abatement.

According to Article V and Exhibit "D" of West Highlands' Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions and Easements (CC&Rs); and West Highlands Design Guidelines....Each Lot shall be at all times kept in a clean and well maintained condition. All landscape areas shall be well groomed and maintained at all times (i.e. lawn, shrubs, trees, mulched areas, flower beds, etc.). Below are a few examples of minimum standards to maintain your lawn and to remain in compliance.

**Recommended actions to maintain minimal standards:**

1. Control your weeds before they start. January-February is the ideal and maybe your only chance to control crabgrass and many other broadleaf weeds. It is highly recommended to hire a lawn care service. The cost of the weed control chemicals, fertilizer, and spreading equipment could easily exceed \$200 in one application (check out Home Depot and Lowe's prices) not including the labor, time and the space used to store the equipment. Contracting with a professional lawn service that specializes in abating weeds is an economical way of receiving all of the necessary applications throughout the year. Importantly, it is an effective measure for controlling weeds. Examinations conducted from previous property inspections have shown that residents who continuously use a lawn service have no weeds. "Do It Yourself" residents tend to fruitlessly struggle in abating weeds resulting in violation notices. If you try to treat your lawn yourself and are unsuccessful, you could be subject to fines. Depending on the package you purchase, the basic cost of a lawn service is usually less than \$20.00 per month for a weed-free lawn. The first fine is \$50 and progressively increases with each additional violation. Ask yourself, what is your time worth? Controlling lawn weeds is a normal cost of owning a home. Upholding the image of West Highlands is paramount and in return protect the value of the entire neighborhood.

2. Trim the limb of your trees up (from the ground) to provide at least a six foot vertical clearance. Remove any branches/limbs from the trunk of the tree that are within six feet from the base of the tree and six feet in height. This allows easy passage of walkers and joggers, plus lower branches can obstruct the view of drivers. Remove any branches/limbs that are blocking or obscuring street signs. Someone walking out behind a tree with low hanging branches could be hit by an on-coming car.
3. Mow and edge your lawn at least every two weeks.
4. Trim shrubs around your house so they do not obstruct windows, porches or sidewalks. This task should be done on a monthly basis.
5. Remove dead branches from trees and shrubs as needed. Replace dead trees (**ACC approval and City of Atlanta Arborist Division approval are required to remove and replace trees**).
6. Replenish the mulch under shrubs and trees. A new layer of mulch should be added at least twice a year. This prevents weeds. Tip: buy landscape fabric at home improvement store. Scrape mulch away from base of plant. Cut a layer of fabric and place at the base of the plant. Place thick layer of mulch (bark works best) on top of the landscape fabric. This technique will eliminate all weeds and make the mulch last longer.
7. Watering (as needed) adhering to Georgia's Outdoor Water Use policy <http://epd.georgia.gov/outdoor-water-use-information>.
8. Check your house for torn screens, fading/peeling paint, damaged roofing, and mailbox damage (including missing letters). Make all of the necessary corrections if any of these conditions exist.
9. If you have utility cables and poles exposed on your property, please contact the appropriate company and request to have them buried.

**The approved fine structure is as follows:**

Offense	Notification/Fine \$	Date to Perform Corrective Actions
1 <sup>st</sup>	Warning Notice	30 calendar days
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Fine - \$50.00	30 calendar days
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Fine - \$150.00	30 calendar days
4 <sup>th</sup>	Fine - \$300.00	30 calendar days
5 <sup>th</sup>	Fine - \$25 per day, per violation	A lien will be placed upon the Lot, until the violation is abated. Additionally, the Association reserves the right to suspend the Lot Owner's right to vote and Lot Owner's right of use and enjoyment of the Common Property.

**Rules Regarding Fines:** Notifications/Fines are cumulative on a twelve-month and continuous basis. All fines must be paid in full within 20 days of the date on the invoice. Violators will incur late fees on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month if full payment has not been received. Unpaid fines will be added to HOA fees at the time these fees are billed. If full payment has not been received within the due date stated on the homeowner's HOA bill, the HOA will initiate actions to invoice the lien holder as well as to place a lien on the homeowner's property for all costs incurred including any late fees, administrative fees and court costs.

All properties within the West Highlands community are frequently inspected. The aim is to ensure West Highlands is being kept in a manner that maintains its reputation as a prestigious neighborhood and preserves the values of its homes.