

City of San Diego, Land Development Code Revisions  
General Planting Requirements §142.0403 (Plant Points)

§142.0403 General Planting and Irrigation Requirements

All planting, irrigation, brush management, and landscape-related improvements required by this division must comply with the regulations in this section and with the Landscape Standards in the Land Development Manual.

Table 142-04B, Plant Point Schedule

§142.0404 Street Yard and Remaining Yard Planting Area and Point Requirements

When new *structures* or additions to *structures* are subject to this section in accordance with Table 142-04A, the planting area required and the plants necessary to achieve the number of plant points required in Table 142-04C shall be provided.

Table 142-04C, Street Yard and Remaining Yard Planting Requirements

**Instructions to review group:** Review and mark deletions, additions and edits on the current code. Number and write reasons for the changes (on separate paper).

**Names of reviewers:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Background\*** Briefly summarize the relevant existing regulations or review process.

“Plant points” are required to fulfill areas landscape requirements in sections §142.0404 Street Yard and Remaining Yard Planting Area and Point Requirements and §142.0405 Additional Yard Planting Area and Point Requirements. Table 142.04B assigned plant points by planting stock size.

Local arborists, urban foresters, and landscape architects met on March 8, 2019 to review current land development codes relating to trees. They formed teams to review current codes, gathered information from other cities and relevant research, and recommended revisions. The proposed changes were reviewed by \_\_ on February 5, 2020, and their recommendations are the basis for these proposals.

**Issue\*** Briefly summarize the issue or problem that has triggered the need for the proposed amendment. Please include any real-world project examples.

Tree planting stock size does not correlate with tree health and planting success.

Palms contribute little to tree canopy, shade, walkable streets, or wildlife habitats.

**Objective\*** Provide a one or two sentence statement of what you want to achieve with amendment.

Increase tree health and likelihood of success as they adapt to their planted site. Align regulations with research and established arboriculture practices, of planting smaller nursery stock. Plant shade trees rather than palms in permitted developments and streets.

**Solution\*** Briefly summarize how you propose to address the issue and achieve the objectives.

Plant trees that will have greater tree health, by deleting any additional points for trees planted in greater than 24” box. (Same points for 24”, 36” and larger box trees.)

Allow small palms to be assigned points as shrubs, but no points for the larger palms. Allow some medium-sized palms to be planted, if there is historic or scenic precedent for palms. They could be included in landscape plans but not contribute to the required points.

**§142.0403 General Planting and Irrigation Requirements**

All planting, irrigation, brush management, and landscape-related improvements required by this Division must comply with the regulations in Section 142.0403 and with the Landscape Standards in the Land Development Manual.

(a) Plant Point Schedule

Table 142-04B assigns plant points based on plant type and size and applies where plant points are required by this division.

**Table 142-04B  
Plant Point Schedule**

Proposed Plant Material		Plant Points Achieved per Plant
Plant Type	Plant Size	
Proposed Shrub	1-gallon	1.0
	5-gallon	2.0
	15-gallon or larger	10.0
Proposed Dwarf Palm	Per foot of brown trunk height	5.0
Proposed Tree	5-gallon	5.0
	15-gallon	10.0
	24-inch box	20.0
	36-inch box	50.0
	48-inch box and larger	100.0
Proposed Broad Headed Feather Palm Tree	Per foot of brown trunk height	5.0
Proposed Feather Palm Tree	Per foot of brown trunk height up to 20 feet in height	3.0
	each feather palm tree over 20 feet in height	60.0
Proposed Fan Palm Tree	Per foot of brown trunk height up to 20 feet in height	1.5
	each fan palm tree over 20 feet in height	30.0

Existing Plant Material		Plant Points Achieved per Plant
Plant Type	Plant Size	
Existing Shrub	12-inch to 24-inch spread and height	4.0
	24-inch and larger spread and height	15.0
Existing Native Tree	2-inch caliper measured at 4 feet above <i>grade</i>	100.0
	each additional inch beyond 2 inches	50.0
Existing Non-Native Tree	2-inch caliper measured at 4 feet above <i>grade</i>	50.0
	each additional inch beyond 2 inches	25.0
Existing Broad Headed Feather Palm Tree	Per foot of brown trunk height	5.0
Existing Feather Palm Tree	Per foot of brown trunk height up to 20 feet in height	3.0
	each feather palm tree over 20 feet in height	60.0
Existing Fan Palm Tree	Per foot of brown trunk height up to 20 feet in height	1.5
	each fan palm tree over 20 feet in height	30.0

- (b) Plant Material Requirements
  - (1) Planting of invasive plant species, as described in the Landscape Standards of the Land Development Manual, is not permitted.
  - (2) All existing, invasive plant species, including vegetative parts and root systems, shall be completely removed from the *premises* when the combination of species type, location, and surrounding environmental conditions provides a means for the species to invade other areas of native plant material that are on or off of the *premises*.
  - (3) Plant material species shall be used that will continue to meet the requirements of this division after installation.
  - (4) Tree locations shall be measured horizontally from the centerline of the tree trunk at *proposed grade*.

- (5) A minimum root zone of 40 square feet in area shall be provided for all trees. The minimum dimension for this area shall be 5 feet. This minimum dimension and root zone area may be reduced with the use of structural soil or where the combination of soil conditions, root zone area, adjacent improvements, and selected tree species can be demonstrated to provide conditions for healthy tree growth that will not damage adjacent improvements.
- (6) Plant material shall be maintained in a healthy, disease-free, growing condition at all times.
- (7) All pruning shall comply with the standards of the National Arborist Association.
- (8) Any plant material required by this division that dies within 3 years of installation shall be replaced within 30 calendar days of plant death with the same size and species of plant material shown on the approved plan. Required shrubs that die 3 years or more after installation shall be replaced with 15-gallon size, and required trees that die 3 years or more after installation shall be replaced with 60-inch box size material. The City Manager may authorize adjustment of the size and quantity of replacement material where material replacement would occur in inaccessible areas or where the existing plant being replaced is larger than a 15 gallon shrub or 60-inch box tree.
- (9) Trees required by this division shall be self-supporting, woody plants with at least one well defined trunk and shall normally attain a mature height and spread of at least 15 feet.
- (10) Trees required by this division shall be maintained so that all branches over pedestrian walkways are 6 feet above the walkway *grade* and so that all branches over vehicular travel ways are 16 feet above the *grade* of the travel way.
- (11) Shrubs required by this division shall be woody or perennial plants that are low branching or have multiple stems.
- (12) Tree root barriers or structural soil shall be installed where trees are placed within 5 feet of *public improvements* including walks, curbs, or *street* pavement or where new public improvements are placed adjacent to existing trees. The City Manager may waive this requirement where the combination of soil conditions, root zone area, adjacent improvements, and selected tree species can be demonstrated to provide conditions for healthy tree growth that will not damage public improvements.

- (13) Native plants shall be locally indigenous.
  - (14) Naturalized plant material shall be plantings that can survive without irrigation after initial plant establishment.
  - (15) Plant materials shall be grouped into hydrozones that consist of plant species having similar water demand and by their soil, sun, and shade requirements.
  - (16) Plant material shall be selected to meet a maximum applied water allowance as determined by the water budget formula and specifications in Section 142.0413(d).
- (c) Irrigation Requirements
- (1) All required plant material shall be irrigated with a permanent, below-grade irrigation system unless specified otherwise in this division.
  - (2) All required irrigation systems shall be automatic, electrically controlled, and designed to provide water to all required plantings to maintain them in a healthy, disease-resistant condition.
  - (3) Irrigation systems shall meet the following design requirements:
    - (A) No irrigation runoff or overspray shall cross *property lines* or paved areas;
    - (B) The velocity of water flowing in irrigation system piping or supply pipes shall not exceed 5 feet per second downstream of the water meter;
    - (C) Irrigation systems shall be designed to minimize system maintenance requirement after installation. Above-ground irrigation system equipment that is exposed to potential damage shall be designed to be damage-resistant; and
    - (D) Automatic irrigation controllers utilizing evapotranspiration or soil moisture sensor data using non-volatile memory is required for irrigation scheduling.
- (d) Planting Area Requirements
- (1) Planting areas required by this division shall consist of the following:
    - (A) Low-growing woody or herbaceous groundcover, turf, shrubs, or trees;

- (B) Unattached unit pavers, loose organic or inorganic materials, or *hardscape*; or
  - (C) Built improvements including water features, overhead *structures* (such as gazebos, trellis *structures*, etc.), or fixed seating.
- (2) Planting areas may be counted toward the planting area required by this division if they are greater than 30 square feet in size with no dimension less than 3 feet.
  - (3) All required planting areas shall be maintained free of weeds, debris, and litter.

*(Added 12-9-1997 by O-18451 N.S.; effective 1-1-2000.)*

*(Amended 9-19-2005 by O-19413 N.S.; effective 10-19-2005.)*

*(Amended 11-13-08 by O-19800 N.S.; effective 12-13-2008.)*

*(Amended 10-28-2009 by O-19903 N.S.; effective 11-27-2009.)*

*(Amended 8-9-2019 by O-21114 N.S.; effective 9-8-2019.)*

**EDITORS NOTE: The Land Development Manual includes:**

Coastal Bluffs and Beaches Guidelines

Biology Guidelines

Historical Resources Guidelines

Submittal Requirements for Deviations within the Coastal Overlay Zone

See RR-292248 for the Coastal Bluffs and Beaches Guidelines of the Land Development Code; RR-292249 for the Biology Guidelines of the Land Development Code; RR-292250 for the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Code; RR-292251 for the Submittal Requirements for Deviations within the Coastal Overlay Zone of the Land Development Code.