



## ASK THE CC&R COMMITTEE

### **Dear CC&R Committee,**

*One of my neighbors still has his Christmas lights up from last year, and it's now April! Is this legal? Signed, Christmas in April?*

### **Dear Christmas in April,**

You are right to be concerned. In addition to being out of season and unsightly, those holiday lights can be dangerous! These lights are rated for outdoor use for short periods only and are not intended to be left up for extended periods. Over time, the sun and rain will decay the wires. This could cause a shock hazard or a structural fire. Anyone who has left their holiday lights out from the previous season should not turn the lighting on again and take them down as soon as possible. If we receive complaints about old Christmas decorations, a notice will be sent to the homeowner.

### **Dear CC&R Committee,**

*I just received my new HUGE garbage, recycling and yard waste cans, and I don't have room in my tiny side yard! Help! Signed, Out of Room*

### **Dear Out of Room,**

Although they are larger than the old ones, all garbage, recycling and yard waste cans do need to be stored out of sight until trash day. Keep in mind that Vallejo Garbage Service will haul away your old cans if you put them out on the next trash day with a sign on them that says "TAKE ME." This may help clear some space. It also may be possible to get smaller cans. Send me an e-mail and I may be able to help you.

### **Dear CC&R Committee,**

*My lawn is dormant and brown while my neighbors is dark green and beautiful. I also have a few shrubs that look dead. What am I doing wrong? Signed, Brown Thumb*

### **Dear Brown Thumb,**

Unlike some other parts of the country, lawns in California don't go dormant. Unfortunately this means that your lawn may be dead and beyond repair. Water it every other day for a week and if it begins to green up, then it's salvageable. If not, then you will need to tear it out and completely replace it.

In order to keep your lawn green and lush year round, you will need to water, fertilize, trim and mow on a regular basis. During the summer months you may need to increase the amount and frequency of your watering and mowing, and during the winter and rainy months you may be able to decrease the amount and frequency of your watering and mowing.

If you don't have a mower or don't have the time for lawn care, there are plenty of lawn care business around. They should be able to help you set up your irrigation timer and fertilize and maintain your lawn.

We had an unusually hard frost this Winter, and many plants just can't handle the cold. Any plants that die need to be replaced in order to keep your front and back yards looking good. If you replace the dead plant with the same plant, you don't need HARC approval, as this is just considered maintaining your yard. If you decide to take the opportunity to do a little re-landscaping project, make sure to get HARC approval first. On the same token, if you have any plants that died during this past winter due to that hard frost, you will need to replace them. If you plant them soon they will get a head start on the blazing summer heat.

### **Dear CC&R Committee,**

*I have a tiny backyard and want to pave it all. Do I need HARC approval? Signed, Got No Space*

### **Dear Got No Space,**

You need HARC approval to do any upgrades or improvements to your front or back yard, and even to the exterior of your home. Although you have a small yard, you still must comply with the Hiddenbrooke Design Guidelines and various City of Vallejo setback issues. HARC does understand that there are many homes in Hiddenbrooke with tiny backyards, and will grant variances when possible. You can download a copy of the Hiddenbrooke Design Guidelines at [www.HiddenbrookeOnline.org/HPOAdocuments.htm](http://www.HiddenbrookeOnline.org/HPOAdocuments.htm) as well as HARC applications. If you have any questions regarding front or backyard ideas, you can e-mail HARC at [HARC@hiddenbrookeonline.org](mailto:HARC@hiddenbrookeonline.org).

### **Dear CC&R Committee,**

*I've lived in my home for several years, and unfortunately it looks like it's time to*

*repaint the exterior and restrain my fence. Do I need HARC approval to do this? Signed, Needs a Paint Job*

### **Dear CC&R Committee,**

*I've just moved into Hiddenbrooke and I want to paint my fence. Do I need HARC approval? Signed, Naked Fence*

### **Dear Needs a Paint Job & Naked Fence,**

If you are repainting your home or trim items the original color that the builder supplied, then you do not need HARC approval. If your builder left you any leftover paint, you can take that and have more mixed, or get a color match sample from your local home improvement center. If you are interested in changing the color of the body of your home or trim items, such as doors, shutters, window boxes, fascia, etc, then you would need to submit for HARC approval. At least two homes in Hiddenbrooke have already had to be repainted (again) because the owner neglected to get HARC approval.

HARC would prefer that homeowners only use a Semi Transparent stain for fencing. HARC has approved colors for fence stains, so be sure to check with HARC before staining your fence. In situations where the fence has already been painted (without HARC approval), HARC has approved a solid color stain (paint) to help keep the fencing in Hiddenbrooke looking good and the community looking cohesive.

It is also important that you follow manufacturers directions when applying stain, whether as an initial coat, or a maintenance coat. Fresh wood should be preserved first, and an old weathered fence may need to be cleaned, re-conditioned and rejuvenated before applying a new coat of stain. Stain applied on a dark weathered fence will not look good and be much much darker than the sample.

*Send your questions for "Dear CC&R Committee" to [HARC@HiddenbrookeOnline.org](mailto:HARC@HiddenbrookeOnline.org). Please include your full name and address with your question. Your question will be answered immediately, and if appropriate, used in the next Dear CC&R Committee column. Questions will be edited for brevity and the names changed for anonymity. ♦*