



## TOWN OF NAGS HEAD VEGETATIVE PLANTING GUIDELINES

This vegetative planting guidelines document is designed to complement the requirements in Town Code Sections 48-370 and 48-371 related to residential and commercial design standards as well as Article XIII related to buffering requirements. Below is a description of the purpose and framework of the ordinance.

### **Purpose**

- To buffer incompatible uses
- To soften the appearance of commercial parking lots, sites, and large structures
- To provide natural/native and locally adaptive landscaping (non-invasive)
- To enhance community aesthetics
- To encourage/require landscaping that will grow well where it is proposed
- To reduce air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen
- To reduce erosion by dispersing and absorbing rainfall
- To reduce stream pollution by stabilizing soil and slowing, dispersing and absorbing storm water runoff.
- To reduce storm water runoff and the potential for flooding.
- Buffer and landscape trees and other plants also help reduce noise from auto traffic, glare from auto and other lights and help collect & reduce litter from reaching adjacent properties and roadways.
- To provide flexibility for owners to design natural landscapes and less focus on specific spacing requirements. Planting plans may include a specific number of required plantings, a mixture of sizes, and must ensure that some of the vegetation is visible from the street and contributes to overall community appearance.

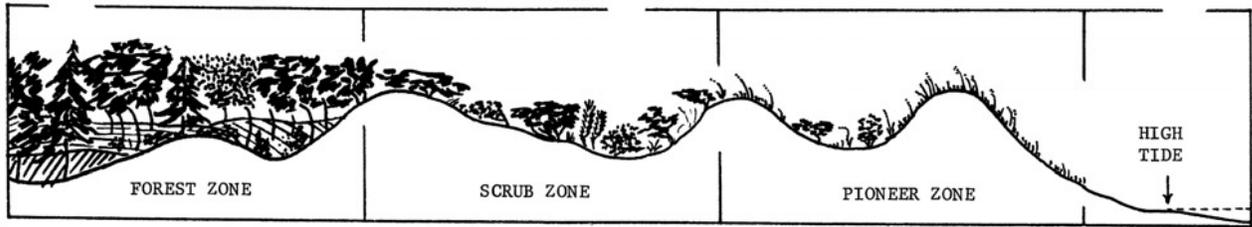
## **Framework**

- The Town's ordinance requires landscaping or preservation of vegetation for commercial sites and for large residential dwellings.
- The emphasis is on preserving existing vegetation (this is weighted in meeting the requirement). For commercial sites, property owners should plan to clear only what is necessary for the construction of improvements and this must be approved by the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners during site plan review.
- The Town of Nags Head Vegetative Guidelines document includes a list of suggested plant types. Landscaping plans are required to include a mixture of trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and groundcovers, and/or grasses based on a formula prescribed in the ordinance.
- The plant list is broken down by planting zones (beach and highway). Landscaping plans should include planting materials that are appropriate for the zone in which they are proposed (see cross section diagram below). For example, plant material required in the beach zone may focus on shrubs and grasses and less on trees.
- Additionally, the list identifies which plants are evergreen species. The ordinance requires a certain number of plants from each category and also requires a minimum percentage of evergreen species.
- This information is provided for reference purposes only. The Town of Nags Head makes no guarantee as to the heartiness or performance of listed plants in these areas; there are many other factors that will affect their survival.
- This guidelines document also includes cluster diagrams appropriate for each zone that designers may use to incorporate these into landscape designs. The cluster diagrams are designed to meet the town's requirements and include native plant materials.
- Property owners need to address maintenance as part of their landscaping plan. Since irrigation can be integral to the success and survival of plant material, the number of required plants may be reduced by 10 percent for sites with drip irrigation.

## **Sources of Information for the Attached Plant List.**

The plant list provide herein has been compiled from the NC State Agricultural Extension Service, Dare County's Cooperative Extension for plant types specifically suited for Nags Head and Northeastern North Carolina. A substantial amount of information on plant type and suitability is available from the Extension Service Website.

**Barrier Island Cross Section with Generalized Vegetative Zones**



Excerpt from Seacoast Plants of the Carolinas – For Conservation and Beautification, UNC Sea Grant Program, February 1973

<p><u>Pine and hardwood or “forest” zone located on the leeward side of the island usually behind a dune ridge which provides protection from salt and wind;</u></p>	<p><u>Middle “scrub” zone usually starts behind the protection of the frontal dunes</u></p>	<p><u>“grass” or “pioneer” zone closest to the ocean with the most direct exposure to salt and wind</u></p>
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Barrier Island Cross Section with Generalized Vegetative Zones Excerpt from Seacoast Plants of the Carolinas – For Conservation and Beautification, UNC Sea Grant Program, February 1973.

The pine and hardwood or “forest” zone is typically located on the leeward side of the island usually behind a dune ridge which provides protection from salt and wind. This is most closely associated with the Nags Head Woods area of the Town. The middle “scrub” zone usually starts behind the protection of the frontal dunes between the “grass” or “pioneer” zone and the “forest” zone. The “grass” or “pioneer” zone is located closest to the ocean with the most direct exposure to salt and wind. Not listed in the above diagram is the salt marsh zone which is typically located along the sound shoreline between the high and low tide line.

The Town of Nags Head Vegetative Guidelines and associated ordinances describe two primary zones; the beach zone and the highway zone. This is based on the two primary areas where landscaping plans will be required within the Town. The beach zone is most closely associated with the grass or pioneer zone as depicted in the above barrier island transect. This will include areas along the oceanfront extending generally to the parcels fronting the western edge of NC 12 (South Virginia Dare Trail) and SR 1243 (South Oregon Inlet Road). Except for some exposed areas of the US 64/264 causeway, most other areas of the town will be included in the highway zone.

**Purpose of this Plant List**

The list attached is to be used as a guide for the reader only. The list of plants and shrubs included are not the only types of trees and shrubs that may be used to meet the requirements in the Town of Nags Head Zoning Ordinance for landscaping and buffering. The list only provides examples of plants that may be suitable for the locations on sites, where landscaping and plantings are required by the zoning ordinance. Many other types, species and varieties of plants can be used and are available. Plants for non-residential sites should be chosen that are low maintenance and adaptable to the conditions peculiar to the site. Landscape architects, local nurseries, plant suppliers, the NC Agricultural Extension Service or other available sources should be consulted when making a substantial investment in plant materials and installation. The wrong choice in plant type can result in considerable expense in replacement. Buffers and Landscaping required by the Zoning Ordinance must be maintained for the duration of the permit issued for the site and the use. Preservation of existing trees and vegetation around the perimeter of the site and other key locations on the site can save substantial financial resources. Advance planning prior to clearing of the site for development is suggested to save time and money. Early preparation of a site for any proposed development can preclude unnecessary expenditures for buffer and some landscape plantings by preserving existing vegetation on the site.

TOWN OF NAGS HEAD VEGETATIVE PLANTING GUIDELINES								
Plant Name	Height	Sun/Shade Tolerance	Moisture Requirements	Growth Rate	Scientific Name	Preferred Planting Zone	Ref. Page	
<b>Trees, Evergreen</b>								
Live Oak	6-40'	Sun	Medium	slow	Quercus virginiana	Highway & Soundside		
Eastern Red Cedar	10-25'	Sun	Medium	slow/mod	Juniperus virginiana	Highway & Soundside		
American Holly	10-20'	Sun	Medium	slow	Ilex opaca	Highway & Soundside		
Japanese Black Pine		Sun	Low	slow/mod	Pinus thunbergii	Highway & Soundside		
Redbay	10-40'	Sun/Shade	Low	slow/mod	Persea borbonia	Highway & Soundside		
Swamp Bay	10-30'	Sun	Medium	slow/mod	Persea palustris	Highway & Soundside		
Carolina Laurelcherry	10-20'	Sun/Shade	Medium	slow/mod	Prunus caroliniana	Highway & Soundside		
Cabbage Palmetto	15-30'	Sun/Shade	Medium	mod/rapid	Sabal palmetto	Highway & Soundside		
<b>Trees, Deciduous</b>								
Flowering Dogwood	20-30'	Sun/Shade	Medium	slow	Cornus florida	Highway & Soundside		
Devilwood/Wild Olive	15-25'	Sun	Low	mod	Osmanthus americanus	Highway & Soundside		
Black Cherry	10-60'	Sun/Shade	Low	mod	Prunus serotina	Highway & Soundside		

Town of Nags Head Vegetative Planting Guidelines

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Plant Name	Height	Sun/Shade Tolerance	Moisture Requirements	Growth Rate	Scientific Name	Preferred Planting Zone	Ref. Page	
Crape Myrtle	10-40'	Sun/Shade	Medium	mod	Lagerstroemia indica	Highway & Soundside		
<b>Shrubs, Evergreen</b>								
Yaupon (regular and dwarf)	10-20'	Sun/Shade	Medium	slow	Ilex vomitoria	Highway & Soundside		
Japanese Pittosporum	6-10'	Sun	Medium	mod	Pittosporum tobira	Beach, Highway & Soundside		
Northern Bayberry	4-10'	Sun	Medium	mod	Myrica pensylvanica	Beach, Highway & Soundside		
Japanese Privet	4-16'	Sun	Medium	rapid	Ligustrum japonicum	Highway & Soundside		
European Privet	8-15'	Sun	Medium	rapid	Ligustrum vulgare	Highway & Soundside		
Inkberry	4-8'	Sun	Medium	slow	Ilex glabra	Highway & Soundside		
Southern Wax Myrtle	8-10'	Sun/Shade	Low	mod	Myrica cerifera	Highway & Soundside		
Yucca (Adamsneedle, Beargrass)	3-5'	Sun/Shade	Low	slow	Yucca filamentosa	Beach, Highway and Soundside		
Yucca (Moundlily)	6-15'	Sun/Shade	Low	slow	Yucca gloriosa	Beach, Highway and Soundside		
Evergreen Euonymus	10-15'	Sun/Shade	Low	mod	Euonymus japonicus	Beach, Highway & Sound		
Oleander	6-15'	Sun	Low	mod	Nerium oleander	Highway & Soundside		
Butcher's broom	2-4'	Shade	Low	slow/mod	Ruscus aculeatus	Beach, Highway and Sound		

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Shrubby Yew Podocarpus	6-20'	Sun/Shade	Medium	slow	Podocarpus macrophyllus maki	Highway & Soundside		
Yeddo Hawthorn	4-8'	Sun/Shade	Low	slow	Rhaphiolepis umbellata	Beach, Highway and Soundside		
Shore Juniper	1-2'	Sun	Medium	rapid	Juniperus conferta	Highway & Soundside		
Banks Rose	1-4'	Sun	High	rapid, vining	Rosa banksiae	Highway & Soundside		
Rugosa Rose	4-6'	Sun	Medium	moderate	Rosa rugosa	Highway & Soundside		
Memorial Rose	1-2'	Sun	Medium	moderate	Rosa wichuraiana	Highway & Soundside		
<b>Shrubs, Deciduous</b>								
Chickasaw Plum	4-8'	Sun	Medium	slow/mod	Prunus angustifolia	Highway & Soundside		
Dwarf Witch Alder	2-4'	Sun/Shade	Low	slow	Fothergilla gardenii	Highway & Soundside		
American Beautyberry	4-6'	Sun/Shade	Medium	slow	Callicarpa americana	Highway & Soundside		
Spicebush	5-20'	Sun	Low	slow	Lindera benzoin	Highway & Soundside		
Pampassgrass	5-10'	Sun	Low	slow	Cortaderia selloana	Beach, Highway & Soundside		
<b>Herbaceous Plants &amp; Groundcovers</b>								

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Butterfly Weed	1-3'	Sun	Low	slow/mod	Asclepias tuberosa	Highway & Soundside		
Redring Milkweed	1-3'	Sun	Low	slow/mod	Asclepias variegata	Highway & Soundside		
Lanceleaf Coreopsis	1-2'	Sun	Low	mod	Coreopsis lanceolata	Highway & Soundside		
Purple Coneflower	2-4'	Sun	Low	mod	Echinacea purpurea	Highway, Soundside		
Joe Pye Weed	2-7'	Sun	Low	slow	Eupatorium fistulosum	Beach & Highway		
Woodland Sunflower	2-6'	Sun	Low	slow	Helianthus divaricatus	Highway & Soundside		
Sweet black eyed Susan	2-5'	Sun	Low	slow	Rudbeckia subtomentosa	Highway & Soundside		
Seaholly Eryngo	1-4'	Sun	Low	mod	Eryngium maritimum	Beach, Highway & Soundside		
Seaside Goldenrod	1-3'	Sun	Low	mod	Solidago sempervirens	Beach & Highway		
Blanket Flower	1-3'	Sun	Low	mod	Gaillardia pulchella	Beach & Highway		
Carolina Jessamine	vine	Sun	Medium	mod, vining	Gelsemium sempervirens	Highway & Soundside		
Trumpet Honeysuckle	vine	Sun	Medium	mod, vining	Lonicera sempervirens	Highway & Soundside		
Dustymiller	1'	Sun	Medium	mod	Artemisia stelleriana	Beach, Highway & Soundside		
Cypress Lavendercotton	1-3'	Sun	Low	slow	Santolina chamaecyparissus	Beach, Highway & Soundside		

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<b>Ornamental Grasses</b>								
American Beachgrass	2-3'	Sun	Low	rapid	Ammophila breviligulata	Beach		
Sea Oats	2-6'	Sun	Low	mod	Uniola paniculata	Beach		
Switchgrass	3-5'	Sun	Medium	rapid	Panicum virgatum	Beach		
Bitter Panicum	3-5'	Sun	Low	mod	Panicum amaratum	Beach		
River Oats	2-3'	Shade	Medium	mod	Chasmanthium latifolium	Beach		
Purple Muhly Grass	2-4'	Sun	Medium	mod	Muhlenbergia capillaris	Beach		
Little Blue Stem	1-3'	Sun	Low	mod	Schizyachyruim scoparium	Beach		

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### **WEBSITE**

For detailed information about each plant and to see imaged visit the Plant Fact Sheets on the NC Cooperative Extension Consumer Horticulture website: [www.ncstate-plants.net](http://www.ncstate-plants.net)

More fact sheets of recommended plants and other local garden and landscape information are available from the Dare County Cooperative Extension website at: <https://dare.ces.ncsu.edu/>

### **CONTACT COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

If you have questions about plant selection and maintenance, lawn care, vegetable gardening or plant pest problems call or visit your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension Office.

The Dare County Cooperative Extension Center is open 8:30am to 5pm, Monday – Friday and is located at: Dare County Center  
517 Budleigh Street  
Manteo, NC 27954  
(252) 473-4290

For residents of other counties in North Carolina, find out how to contact your local Cooperative Extension Office at North Carolina Cooperative Extension.