

GUIDELINES FOR LANDSCAPING DETENTION PONDS IN DEKALB COUNTY

Section 14-40 (b)(11) states: *A landscape plan shall be submitted for all detention ponds and other storage facilities as part of the overall drainage plan.* The following are guidelines for such landscaping.

All proposed plant material is to be readily available, low maintenance, and ecologically compatible with the area where it is to be planted.

Landscaping is to be installed in such a way as to allow access to the pond for maintenance.

No trees or large shrubs are to be planted on the pond dam, but may be planted on other slopes and the pond floor.

100% vegetative cover of erodible areas is required. For earthen or partial earthen ponds, at least 30% of detention pond area (square footage) is to be planted in woody vegetation – trees and/or shrubs. The following chart may be used to calculate how the 30% requirement is being met:

Plant material	Typical height at maturity	Amount of square foot credit	Minimum size
overstory trees	40 feet or more	200	1” caliper
understory trees	10 to 40 feet	100	1” caliper
large shrubs	8 feet or more	25 *	3 gallon pot
medium shrubs	5 to 8 feet	15	2 gallon pot
small shrubs	5 feet or less	8	1 gallon pot

*5 and 7 gallon pots will receive 50 square feet of credit. Credit for nursery cans larger than 7 gallon will be considered on an individual basis

- No more than 25% of new trees are to be pine species, unless otherwise approved by the county arborist.
- No vines that may in time overtake trees or shrubs are to be planted.
- Selected plant material must be free from injury, pests, disease, nutritional disorders or root defects, and must be of good vigor, so as to assure a reasonable expectation of survivability.
- Plan approval is at the discretion of the county arborist.

If new plant material is placed on a slope, mulch adequate to cover the planting hole is acceptable, however the space between the trees and shrubs should remain grassed.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

For dry ponds, vegetation planted on the pond floor should be facultative (FAC) in nature, that is equally likely to occur in wetlands and non-wetlands. Plantings at the lower end of the pond could be more likely to occur in wetlands (FACW), while plantings at the high end of the pond could be more likely to occur in upland areas (FACU).

Typically, detention ponds continue to be used as sediment basins after the final plat when houses are under construction. If this is the case, a residential subdivision may defer planting permanent vegetation on the pond floor for up to the 10-month final inspection; however the slopes are to be planted prior to issuing the final plat. Non-platted sites must plant the pond at the time of the certificate of occupancy, weather permitting.

If a certificate of occupancy is sought between November 1st and March 1st, the pond may be stabilized with rye grass, but is to be re-grassed with permanent herbaceous vegetation as soon as warm weather permits. If a c.o. is sought between May 1st and September 30th, planting trees and shrubs may be deferred until cooler, wetter weather arrives. For any deferred plantings, the county is to receive a letter from the property owner that will allow such planting to occur. Platted sites have a 10-month window. Consider the optimal planting time for various requirements during that time frame.

If a maintenance bond is required for a site, a portion of that bond will cover detention pond landscaping.

If detention pond trees planted are to be used toward unit density requirements, then minimum size is 2" caliper. Section 14-39 (h) (1) also needs to be considered. Otherwise, the minimum tree size is 1" caliper, and species to be used are determined by the property owner or the design professional.

If the natural topography allows for a wall to be installed at a low point, no other land disturbing activities are required, and woody vegetation (trees and/or shrubs) exist throughout the pond area, no additional landscaping shall be required.

Detention ponds with exposed exterior concrete walls shall plant evergreen screening trees and/or (large) shrubs, a minimum of 15 feet on center, and a minimum of 4 feet tall at the time of planting. If interior concrete walls are exposed, but exterior walls are not, the pond shall have screening plant material in a similar fashion to the exterior wall criteria. Site design will dictate the extent of screening possible