

# **DIGTEBY INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE POLICY 2021**

## **BACKGROUND**

These guidelines are in line with, and are an extension of the *Building Guidelines 2007* and the *Guidelines of 2016*. Where these guidelines may contradict previous guidelines, the guidelines set forth herein will apply.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

- Digteby forms part of Stellenbosch's unique indigenous natural beauty, which is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The landscaping program must build on that responsibly.
- Digteby is a transition zone between town and nature area, located between wine farms in a rural community.  
*Indigenous plants and agricultural plant species such as vines, olives, ... must be used to integrate private landscaping with the overall landscaping of the estate [Building Guidelines 2007].*
- Future expansions and planting must address current shortcomings to promote biodiversity, attract birds and butterflies and thus strengthen the natural transition zone.
- All invasive plants listed in the "Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983", (Act No. 43 of 1983) and additions to the Act No. 43 of 1983, or intruders after 1983 listed by SANBI, are prohibited in Digteby.

## **CLIMATE FACTORS**

- The environment has a Mediterranean climate, with periods of severe droughts, thus the vegetation has to accommodate those factors. Water conservation must remain high on the priority list at all times.

## **ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS**

- Digteby is part of Stellenbosch and must fit in with the town's unique character. Large trees, fynbos and soft lines are appropriate. Digteby supports the Dutch and French heritage with, among other things, vineyards and olive groves.
- Digteby home gardens are not very large and the public areas should allow for a comfortable outdoor space.

## **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

- Landscaping maintenance and irrigation costs are one of Digteby's biggest expenses.
- The large public areas that contribute to the estate's attractive atmosphere, place a strain on levy costs.
- The maintenance costs of the communal gardens must be kept low by smarter, lower labour-intensive plantings, to keep estate costs in check but to maintain the ambience.

## **SAFETY FACTORS**

- The public gardens are used daily by the residents and must be especially safe for children. However, the care and safety of children, are always the responsibility of parents and caretakers.

### **1. VINEYARDS (See point 6 below)**

**Why?** Vineyards emphasize Digteby's Boland- and rural character; it makes the estate unique and creates the feeling that the estate is located on a wine farm; it is effective in covering large areas with green vegetation; it is one of the cheapest plants to

maintain and it creates opportunities such as making our own wine. The contribution that the vineyards make to the character of the estate as well as its low maintenance costs enjoy priority over crop yields.

**Maintenance:** Prune once a year and spray when necessary with the best possible environmentally friendly products. \* Replace the vines that die. \* Brush cut the grass between the winding rows. \* The drip irrigation must be well maintained.

## 2. OLIVES (See point 7 below)

**Why?** Olives emphasizes Digteby's Mediterranean character; it is effective in covering large areas with green vegetation; it is a cheap plant to maintain; it creates opportunities to process and enjoy our own olives.

**Maintenance** as outlined by Kennedy Landscaping 2020. \* Brush cut the grass between the rows. \* Optimize the irrigation program \* Consideration will be given to fruit trees in remaining open spaces.

## 3. LAWNS

**Why?** Lawns are well utilised by residents and children, they create a sense of space and are easy and cheap to maintain.

**Maintain** and optimize the lawn maintenance and irrigation program. Planting of Kikuyu is allowed, although Buffalo grass is more environmentally friendly and hardy.

## 4. FLOWER BEDS

**Why?** Flower beds provide lustre, colour, shape and texture to the estate; it serves as natural boundaries separating houses and play areas; it softens the landscape; it serves as food for birds and insects which is crucial in the transition zone.

Current beds should not be enlarged or expanded as they are labour intensive and expensive to maintain.

**Maintenance:** Replace plants and open spaces in the beds over time with plants that require low maintenance and still support Boland indigenous landscape as set out in this document. Points 5.4 - 5.6, mentioned below, also relates to the communal garden beds.

## 5. PRIVATE GARDENS

5.1 Owners are encouraged to implement the holistic vision of Digteby gardens and promote the uniqueness of a Boland landscape as part of the World heritage site. The landscaping committee is aware that many home gardens have already been established, but future planting decisions can support this integrated plan.

5.2 Although homeowners are responsible for their own irrigation costs, everyone is encouraged to plant drought-resistant, Western Cape plants.

5.3 Homeowners are encouraged to develop gardens with vegetation in line with the area's Boland character and use plants that compliment Digteby's communal gardens.

5.4 These include: Indigenous trees, preferably found in the Western Cape, fynbos and suitable Mediterranean plants.

- 5.5 These exclude: Dry regional bushveld plants such as cacti and thorn trees; cypresses, tropical plants such as palms and bougainvillea; hard landscape lines such as concrete constructions, stones, gravel as well as invasive and inappropriate alien plants. Roses, although beautiful, require a lot of water and fungal spray and do not compliment a fynbos landscape.
- 5.6 In places where plants mentioned above in 5.5, are already established in private gardens, it should, when it dies, be replaced with appropriate plants mentioned under 5.4.
- 5.7 No owner may plant or remove plants in communal areas.
- 5.8 An estate resident may not give any instructions to the landscaping staff as this often implies additional expenses. Owners are encouraged to submit landscaping ideas and comments in writing to the manager of Digteby.
- 5.9 A planting list is included to encourage owners to plant appropriate plants to promote Western Cape biodiversity and a healthy environment.
- 5.10 Homeowners should take care of their own sidewalks in accordance with the guidelines for Digteby Gardens. This makes a major contribution to the aesthetics of the individual home and the ambience of the estate. However, the sidewalk still remains the property of the estate.

## **6. UTILISATION OF GRAPES**

### **BACKGROUND DIGTEBY WINEMAKERS**

During the first years the grape yields were so low that the focus fell solely on the maintenance of a healthy vineyard. Since 2015 the harvest has been managed as follows:

- 6.1 The Digteby Winemakers, Jose & Charleen Miranda, Erica Moolman (and later Suzanne Coetzee) have taken the initiative and managed the harvest as follows for the benefit of all the residents.
- 6.1.1 Jose Miranda pays half of the input costs for the maintenance of the vineyards.
- 6.1.2 JM manages the finances, infrastructure and relationship with Clos Malverne, the farm that manages the processing and winemaking process.
- 6.1.3 The bottled product is sold to Digteby residents at cost price after each resident has received one bottle for free.
- 6.1.4 All grapes are harvested under the supervision of Digteby Landscaper.
- 6.1.5 No person may harvest grapes without the permission of the Trustees.

### **6.2 GARAGISTES IN DIGTEBY**

The need arose among some residents to make their own wine on a small scale. It will be handled as follows:

- 6.2.1 The resident will apply to the Trustees in January to give enough time to Digteby Winemakers to be able to organize additional grape purchases, if necessary.
- 6.2.2 Only 10 crates (plus or minus 20 kg per crate) per Garagiste will be allowed.
- 6.2.3 The crates are bought by the Garagiste at the average price per crate calculated over the past three years by the Digteby Winemakers.
- 6.2.4 All grapes are harvested under the supervision of Digteby Landscaper.
- 6.2.5 Harvest labour costs is paid by the Garagistes.

## **7 UTILIZATION OF OLIVES**

After a drought of many years, there were enough olives for the first time in 2020 that made a harvest possible. It has been processed as follows and it will be implemented again in the future if the crop is large enough.

- 7.1 All residents are given a week's period to harvest 5 kilograms per household for private use.
- 7.2 The rest of the olives are harvested, processed (by an olive farm after a quotation has been obtained and approved) and the olive oil bottled by the estate manager.
- 7.3 It is sold to the residents at cost price.

## **8 MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Landscaping meetings are held quarterly by the Chairperson, Trustee member, Manager and Landscaper to monitor progress and to do planning.
- 8.2 The communal gardens are managed by the Landscape Manager appointed by the Trustees and are subject to the guidelines set out in this document too.
- 8.3 Decisions are made by the Manager, Trustee member and Landscaper. Matters that have budgetary implications are referred to the Exco.
- 8.4 The Landscaper gives quotes for all purchases to the Manager who oversees that purchases are both necessary, and take place within the budget.

Approved at Trustee Meeting of August 2021 to be circulated to all residents.