

## CRITERIA FOR WPNA YARD OF THE MONTH

**The Yard of the Month (YOM) program has been established to recognize the efforts of residents, whether they are homeowners or tenants, who inspire other people to improve and maintain their front yards. The YOM committee strives to follow criteria we have established but realizes there is often a need for flexibility.**

**The main judging criterion for winning YOM is for the overall design of the front yard.**

The design and upkeep of the yard can reflect the efforts of the residents themselves or that of a professional landscaper or groundskeeper. A potential YOM is judged on the total exterior appearance and tidiness of the property and house as viewed from the street. This includes the yard, driveway, parking, walks, open space, and entrance area. If the property is on a corner, the front and side yard both have to conform to the criteria.

The purpose and design should be a front and public area that enhances the home, provides comfortable access and leads the visitor to the entrance. It should have a discernible and intentionally balanced design, or a purposeful asymmetrical design. A natural wildscape is also acceptable if the overall result is attractive and not overgrown or weedy looking. Decorative items (statues, fountains, pots, etc.) should be in proportion to the house and the property. Funky unique yards with lots of yard art can be fun, but sometimes they can be overdone and can often look cluttered. Remember, our focus is on good design principles that enhance the home.

The selected property must follow Austin city ordinances. There should be no inoperable vehicles on the property, no parking on the lawn, no watering except on scheduled days, etc. For safety reasons the driveway entrance and sidewalk on the street should have an open view for drivers and walkers. If any area in the front yard has no lawn or ground cover, that space should be mulched, graveled, etc. to prevent water runoff.

Properties that are vacant or for sale are not eligible for consideration, nor is any YOM committee member's yard. Former winning yards are eligible for YOM again after five or more years have passed since they won the award. If the committee members cannot determine a winner for the month, no yard will be chosen.

YOM winners must agree to maintain their front yard appearance for the whole month they are showcased. The front yard and driveway must be kept neat, free of litter, junk, and debris; open carports left uncluttered; water hoses rolled up and neatly stored when not in use; and trash cans put away from sight if possible, etc.

If the front area is not kept tidy for the entire month, then the committee has the right to remove the YOM sign.

The YOM committee selects a winner on the first weekend of each month for the following month. Our award is presented at the Windsor Park Neighborhood Association meeting. This award consists of a photograph of the winning yard, plus a gift certificate from a local nursery.

Although the following suggestions are not criteria for selecting the YOM, our committee wants to inform residents about unhealthy tree practices we have observed. 1) Lopping or topping off crepe myrtle trees is the most common mistake we see while driving around the neighborhood. People seem to think that this is the proper way to prune these trees but it is not!!! These unsightly stubs destroy the natural beauty of this tree in the winter and these stubs produces weak new growth the following year. This practice does not produce more flowers! 2) Piling mulch against a tree trunk is the next major mistake we see. This practice smothers the trunk and keeps it damp after watering which can cause disease, decay and insect damage. There should be 2 -3 inches of space between the mulch and the base of the trunk. It is the roots that extend out to the drip line of the tree that need water.