

Landscaping

A visual guide to acceptable and unacceptable landscaping techniques around utility equipment.

Acceptable landscaping



Maintain equipment visibility: When landscaping around utility equipment, use techniques that camouflage rather than hide. Hearty grasses and/or flowers are preferred because they provide aesthetic improvements and grow back quickly should equipment access be necessary.

Ensure easy access: When fencing is used, choose a split-rail type, which can be easily dismantled when equipment access is needed. Be sure fences are located more than 3 feet from transformer sides and no permanent fence post is located in front of transformer door.



Keep proper clearance: When woody shrubs or bushes are used, place them more than 3 feet from transformer sides and more than 10 feet from door. Keep future growth in mind for the size of shrubs or bushes.



Unacceptable landscaping



Retaining walls: Retaining walls and exposed basements cause potential safety, access and reliability issues. Utility vehicle access is often impossible, which increases manual work, safety concerns and outage time — especially during harsh weather. Negotiating steep grades also poses a safety hazard to utility employees. Underground lines may be buried either too shallow or deep, which is another safety issue and also can lengthen outages because repairs may take longer to expose deep cable or bury shallow cable deeper.

Drainage easements: Equipment near drainage easements or adjacent to conservation easements near rivers can prove difficult. Erosion from moving water in a drainage easement can undermine equipment, tilt it and can cause trenches to collapse. In addition, drainage grates with filter fabric during and after construction can become blocked, causing equipment to become submerged. Wetlands and conservation areas can flood, submerging equipment.



Grade changes: Grade changes after utility equipment installation can cause equipment to be buried too deep or too shallow. These grade changes can affect safety, operation, reliability and accessibility of We Energies facilities. Often, facilities and equipment affected by grade changes after installation require costly equipment relocations at customer expense.

Fake rocks: Anything that covers or hides utility equipment, such as fake rocks, should not be used because they can delay equipment location when repair work is needed. They also pose safety hazards for utility workers as animals and insects often take up residence inside.

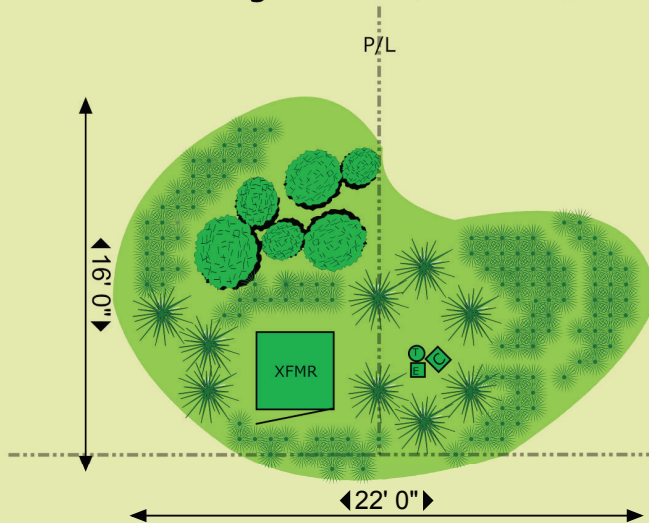


Plants: Plants that hide equipment or block access should be avoided. Plants may become damaged or removed all together should utility employees require equipment access.

Landscape design plans and plant recommendations

Utility Equipment Landscape Design

Planting Grasses, Flowers, Plants & Shrubs Around Utility Equipment



Sample Design #1

KEY:

Perennials under 36 inches

Astilbe (false spirea), campanula, coreopsis, geranium, hosta, heuchera (coral bells), ornamental grasses, salvia.

Perennials more than 36 inches

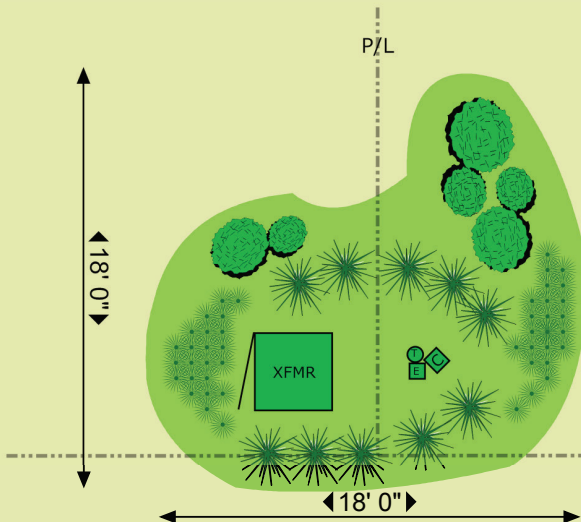
Coneflowers, monarda (bee balm), ornamental grasses, iris, perovskia (Russian sage), yarrow.

Flowering shrubs

(Do not use in front of transformer doors)
Dwarf lilac, hydrangea, shrub roses, spirea, weigela.

Utility Equipment Landscape Design

Planting Grasses, Flowers, Plants & Shrubs Around Utility Equipment



Sample Design #2

KEY:

Perennials under 36 inches

Astilbe (false spirea), campanula, coreopsis, geranium, hosta, heuchera (coral bells), ornamental grasses, salvia.

Perennials more than 36 inches

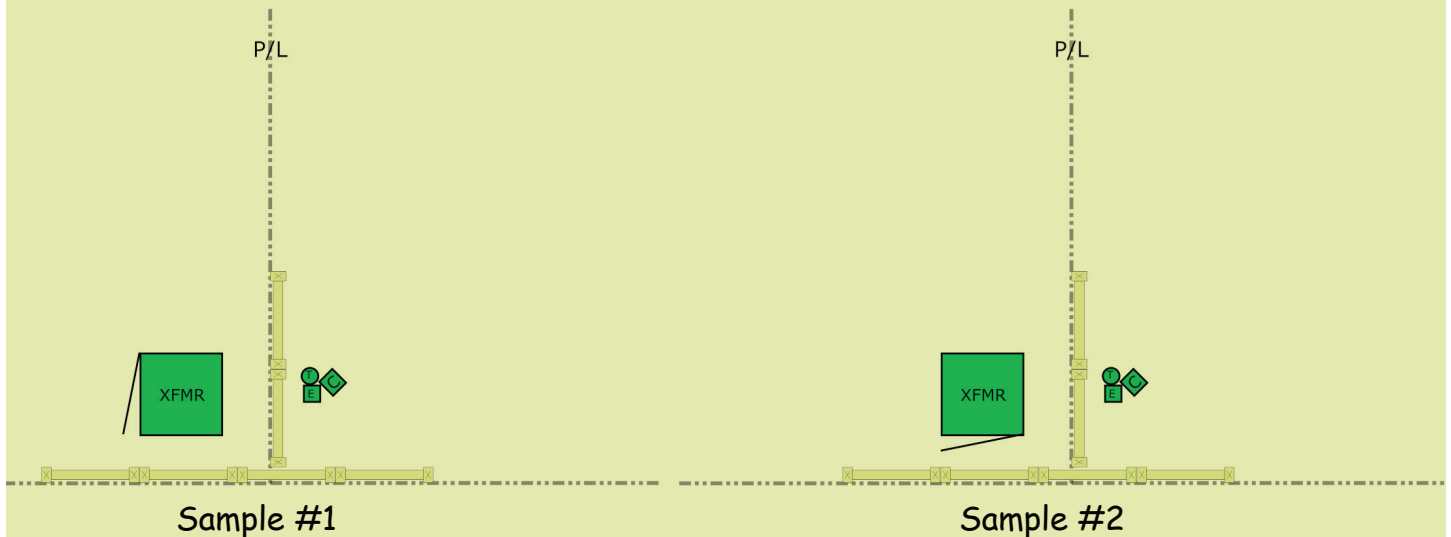
Coneflowers, monarda (bee balm), ornamental grasses, iris, perovskia (Russian sage), yarrow.

Flowering shrubs

(Do not use in front of transformer doors)
Dwarf lilac, hydrangea, shrub roses, spirea, weigela.

Landscape design plans and plant recommendations

Landscaping Around Utility Equipment with Fences



NOTE: Ensure no permanent fence posts are placed within three feet of the side back of the transformer or pedestals. If a fence is placed in front of the door of the transformer (see sample #2), ensure the fence can be readily and easily removed by utility personnel.