

Planting Around Electrical Equipment

Yampa Valley Electric Association appreciates how much the public values the appearance of home and commercial landscaping. Good appearance is one of the prime reasons for underground utilities.

Those underground electric lines must “come up” somewhere if they are to serve the electrical requirements of the public. In areas that are served by underground facilities, padmount transformers and switchgear (those green boxes) are placed at selected intervals along main electric lines near streets and highways.

We suggest a few landscaping ideas you will find helpful. YVEA requires the access to padmount transformers and switchgear be kept clear for 10 feet. Some “green boxes” have two sets of doors, one in front and the other in the back – both require 10 foot clearance. The other non-door sides must have a two-foot clearance free of obstacles. Do not plant ivy or other climbing plants as they grow into the metal enclosures and cause problems.

Grass, gravel or small rocks are recommended within the two or 10 foot “free zone”. Avoid delicate flowerbed plantings that may be harmed. Small rocks the size of a soccer ball, placed outside the “free zone”, break up the rigid straight lines of the electric equipment. Larger rocks, the size of boulders, should be placed at least 10 feet away from all sides of the equipment. Remember we need access to the equipment in winter and summer. Electric equipment must be visually and physically accessible to utility crews and meter readers at all times.

Trees should be planted far enough away from the padmount equipment, that when they reach maturity, overhanging branches won't obstruct a crane from removing a defective transformer or setting a new one. The right tree in the right place has value. For future safety, always stay 20 feet away from the nearest overhead power line when planting trees.

If concrete is to be poured near a powerline pole, the concrete needs to be at least 12 inches away from the pole. YVEA discourages the placement of concrete near any power line equipment. Consult YVEA if you plan to build, grade or construct any type of structure near electric equipment.

Dependable, uninterrupted electric service is what consumers expect. YVEA will help you create a landscaping design that adds beauty and will not impair service to neighborhood electric equipment.

REVISIONS	DATE	DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY
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			3/26/01

YAMPA VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSC.
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS,
COLORADO

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EQUIPMENT