

Benchmark Communities offers xeriscaping on lawns

By BoNhia Lee
blee@fresnobee.com

Benchmark Communities, a national homebuilding company, with homes in the central San Joaquin Valley, is getting into the xeriscaping game.

The company decided a couple months ago, after the city of Clovis adopted steep [water-use cuts](#), to begin offering buyers a landscape plan with drought-tolerant plants, mulch and an option for a riverbed, boulders and gravel.

The builder said goodbye to sprinkler heads and hello to irrigation lines. Synthetic grass is also an option. If a buyer still wants real grass, the builder has a project with [Netafim](#), a leading maker of drip irrigation, to install “a drip system that can go under lawns,” said Brandy Tschappler, vice president of sales and marketing.

The average home site at Benchmark’s [Diamond Crest](#) development, south of Harlan Ranch, in Clovis is about 10,000 square feet and 8,400 square feet at [Pasaro](#) in the Loma Vista area on Barstow and Locan avenues.

“We wanted to give (buyers) options, but also be conscious of the drought,” said Ashley Ilic, director of marketing.

Benchmark Communities is a subsidiary of UCP, based in San Jose. It builds homes in California, Washington, North and South Carolina and Tennessee. The builder has neighborhoods in Clovis, Fresno, Madera and Sanger.

Benchmark received the Eliant 2015 Homebuyer’s Choice Award for providing the highest level of customer service through the homebuying process. It was voted one of the top two builders in the multi-division category for Overall Purchase & Ownership Experience and received other awards for purchase, design, construction and first-year customer and first-year service quality.

The awards are based on customer ratings conducted through homebuyer surveys that measure key elements of the purchase and ownership experience.

BoNhia Lee: [559-441-6495](tel:559-441-6495), [@bonhialee](https://twitter.com/bonhialee)