

3.2.4 Verge Treatment Policy

Type:	Regulatory Services, Environmental Health
Legislation:	Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016
Delegation:	
Other Related Document:	Town of East Fremantle Greening Guidelines Maintenance and Removal of Public and Verge Trees Policy

Objective

To encourage the installation of soft landscaping within the local road verge area utilising vegetation that maximises the use of pervious surfaces to:

1. contribute to the aesthetic presentation of the streetscape and improve public health;
2. assist with urban cooling;
3. reduce stormwater runoff into sensitive environments, including the Swan River; and
4. create liveable, waterwise and green public corridors and verge areas that provide habitat for local wildlife and biodiversity.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all land within the road and street verge areas within the Town, where the Town has control of the road reserve.

The verge is the area of land located between a street kerb and the boundary of an adjacent property. Verges are Crown Land, however it is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner to maintain and improve the verge.

Legislative Requirements

The *Town of East Fremantle Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016* allows owners and occupiers of land which directly abuts a verge to install a 'permissible verge treatment'. For information regarding a 'permissible verge treatment' please review the Verge Treatment Policy (this policy) and the *Town of East Fremantle Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016*.

Policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Water Corporation's *Waterwise Verge Best Practice Guidelines* and provides further guidance for permissible verge treatments as stated in the *Town of East Fremantle Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016*.

Application

To apply for a Verge Garden the Town requires:

1. a completed **Verge Application Form** available from eastfremantle.wa.gov.au/
2. a requirement of the *Application Form* includes a diagrammatic sketch which identifies any proposed installations to verge (vegetation, mulch, inorganic/manmade material and associated irrigation) the sketch should also note any existing features (i.e. street tree/s, power poles, street signs, existing reticulation).

*For applications abutting a strata titled property, written confirmation from all strata owners/managers approving the verge works will be required. *

Underground Services

Prior to commencing any works on the verge (including but not limited to reticulation and planting), the applicant is to contact [‘Dial Before You Dig’](#) to determine location of any underground services. For more information visit <https://www.1100.com.au/> or call 1100 during business hours.

Any works carried out on the verge by the applicant resulting in damage or disruption to services will need to be reinstated at the applicant’s full cost. The Town and any service providers reserve the right to carry out any necessary works on the verge or authorise others to do so, whether this necessitates removal of any plantings or not, at no cost to the Town or other authorised party for replacement.

Removal of Lawn

The establishment of waterwise native verge gardens is encouraged in favour of lawn varieties. The removal of lawn is crucial to the success of a waterwise verge garden to prevent competition with new plantings. For information relating to maintenance of lawn refer to:

<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Waterwise/Waterwise-advice/Garden/Lawn-care>

Design Guide

The Town encourages residents to install permeable soft landscaping in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Features of verge installations must be set back and provide clear access to any infrastructure such as power poles and underground services and to ensure they do not obstruct clear lines of sight for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists.
2. For verges with no footpath, plants should be set back a minimum of 2m from the road kerb to allow for pedestrian movement and access to and from vehicles that are parked on the road.
3. Footpaths and kerbing are not to be removed or replaced to accommodate landscaping.
4. Verge installations are not to include materials or structure which are deemed unsafe, refer to *Verge Garden Materials* as follows.
5. Verge are expected to be well maintained to ensure safety of the community.

Verge Garden Materials

The following table outlines acceptable and unacceptable verge treatments. All treatment placed in the verge area should be permeable for water and set back to provide clear sightlines and safety areas for the public and access to any services.

Material Type	Material Description
Accepted (no approval required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drought tolerant lawn varieties such as couch, kikuya and warm season buffalo (however, lawn verges not preferred).• Mulch (contained within the boundary of the verge).
Accepted (subject to approval)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintained gardens (native and waterwise preferred & less than 0.6m), and irrigation.• *Edible plants ensuring they are harvested regularly, and no produce is not left on the ground to decompose (less than 0.6m).
Not Accepted When the Town deems a material, structure, or verge treatment to be hazardous or posing a significant risk to the public the material will be deemed unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials or structure which are unsafe, block sightlines, are loose or slippery, present hazard, are impermeable, are weeds, are sharp or prickly.• Paving, Concrete, or other similar hardstand materials.• Limestone rubble, gravel, or any similar loose aggregates.• Artificial/synthetic turf.• Verge Trees other than those planted by the Town .

Soil Preparation

The soil structure in the Town is Sandy Limestone – Cottesloe soil matrix. Refer to the Towns *Greening Guidelines* with specific reference to soil types.

Plant Selection

The Town encourages and supports the use of waterwise plants for planting on verges. Native plants are made available to residents of the Town at the annual plant sale at Apace Nursery every May. For a list of waterwise plant species, visit Water Corporation’s [Waterwise Plant Selection Tool](#) or view the Towns *Greening Guidelines*.

Street Trees

Residents may apply to have a street tree planted or replaced on the verge adjacent to their property by completing the [Verge Tree Request Form](#) .

The Town is responsible for planting, maintenance and removal of all street and reserve trees in accordance with its ‘*Maintenance and Removal of Public and Verge Trees Policy*’.

It is the Town’s intention to retain verge trees that are healthy, and do not cause any safety concerns. In the absence of suitable justification being provided for the removal of a tree, the request for the removal will not be supported. Pruning of verge trees will only be carried out on those trees that cause an adverse impact by the Town or the Town’s contractor. Care is to be taken during the installation of a verge gardens to protect the trunk and canopy of street trees and preserve the root zone.

Maintenance and Upkeep

The maintenance of the verge is the responsibility of the adjacent owner or occupier. The Town accepts no responsibility for plant health and wellbeing for an approved verge garden. Once approved and installed, a verge garden is to comply with the following:

- Plant growth is to be maintained within the confines of the verge area and not spill into the footpath or road areas and is not to exceed a height of 600mm.
- Plants are to be maintained in a weed free state at all times and are to be watered as required to establish and maintain them.
- All excess soils and litter resulting from the plantings is to be removed at the applicant’s cost.

Where a verge landscaping feature is considered by the Town to pose a safety concern or does not meet the guidelines, the Town may require the applicant to revise part or all of the feature to comply with this policy and Town requirements. Alternatively, the Town may remove, or require the applicant to remove any non-complying feature.

Irrigation

For all irrigation conditions refer to *Verge Greening Guidelines*. The Town is Waterwise Council and promotes water sensitive urban design. Proposed irrigation plans are to be included in the *Verge Treatment Application* when applying for a verge garden.

Responsible Directorate:	Operations
Reviewing Officer:	WASO
Decision making Authority:	Council
Date of Adoption:	20/7/21
Policy Amended/Reviewed:	