

4.2.3 Waterwise Verge

Type:	Operations – Parks & Reserves
Legislation:	Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016
Delegation:	
Other Related Document:	Maintenance and Removal of Public and Verge Trees Policy

Objective

To encourage the installation of soft landscaping that contributes to the aesthetic presentation of the streetscape, utilises native and low water demand plants and minimises the use of impervious surfaces. Verge treatments are vital in assisting urban cooling whilst creating liveable, waterwise and green areas that provide habitat for local wildlife and biodiversity.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to any residential, commercial or Town property that wishes to alter an aspect of the Council verge. This policy provides a list of acceptable materials pursuant to the Town of East Fremantle Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016 and provides guidance on how to modify and landscape the street verge.

Policy

The Town of East Fremantle (the “Town”) is committed to further greening of the landscape by the transformation of streetscapes and verges. The Town encourages residents to landscape and maintain verge gardens to provide a variety of environmental, health and climatic benefits to the wider community. Well designed and well managed verges can assist with a variety of areas including reduced water use, greener streets, improved air quality and a reduction in urban heating.

This policy is constructed in line with the Water Corporation’s Waterwise Verge Best Practice Guidelines.

The Town strongly encourages the use of waterwise plants, specifically native species, for planting on verges due to their ability to survive hot dry summers with little to no supplementary water. Native plants are made available to residents of the Town at the annual plant sale at Apace Nursery in North Fremantle each May. For a list of waterwise plant species, visit Water Corporation’s [Waterwise Plant Selection Tool](#).

Plant species selected for the verge should not be prickly, have spines, be poisonous or cause allergic reactions. Shrubs and low-lying plants should be utilised only. No fruiting trees or plants are permissible in the verge area. All plants should be maintained to a height below 0.6m to ensure clear lines of sight for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists are provided at all times.

Turfing of verges is permitted however in the interests of saving our water resources and reducing fertiliser run-off, alternative options are encouraged. Should turfing be required, it is recommended that a hardy low maintenance turf developed for Australian conditions be laid. **Please note, that the installation of synthetic turf on verges is not an approved treatment in the Town.**

A coarse variety of mulch should be applied to verge gardens at 5-10cm thick to help reduce plant stress, suppress weed growth and reduce water loss through evaporation. Mulch should sit just below

adjoining kerbs and footpaths as to not cause a hazard to pedestrians and to prevent mulch entering local stormwater systems.

1. Approvals and Controls

Requirements will include:

- A detailed, scale plan of the proposed verge design (preferably at 1:100) which identifies any existing features (i.e. street tree and powerlines), plant species, plant density, any surface treatments as well as any installation of irrigation etc.
- A written confirmation from all strata owners/managers approving the verge works to be completed (if applicable).

2. Underground Services

Prior to commencing any work on the verge, it is advised to contact '[Dial Before You Dig](#)' to determine any services, including Telstra, Water Corporation, Western Power and Alinta Gas that may be located within the verge and to ensure that the depth of the services is sufficient to carry out the proposed works safely.

Any works carried out on the verge by the resident, which results in damage or disruption to the services will need to be reinstated at the resident's full cost.

3. Site Preparation

Residents and contractors are obliged to contact 'Dial-Before-You-Dig' to confirm the location of any underground services prior to all works being carried out. A free enquiry can be submitted online at <https://www.1100.com.au/> or call 1100 during business hours.

The removal of lawn grass is crucial to the success of a waterwise verge garden to prevent competition with new plantings. Whilst some perennial grasses such as buffalo and kikuyu can be removed manually, couch grass typically needs to be killed by spraying with an appropriate herbicide. Please note that glyphosate (commonly known as Roundup) is not permitted to be used on any Town verge. When using permissible herbicides, utilise a licensed contractor, alternatively refer to the directions on the pack.

4. Soil Preparation

Depending on the soil on your verge, it may be beneficial to improve the soil prior to planting. This is not essential but good soil is the foundation of a healthy waterwise garden, and the healthier your soil is, the more drought resistant your plants will be. Most native waterwise plant species don't require soil conditioners but applying a soil wetting agent can assist with establishment. The soil structure in the Town of East Fremantle is Sandy Limestone – Cottesloe sand plain.

5. Design Considerations

In addition to verge gardens and lawn, there are a number of permissible landscaping features that may be installed within the verge. The installation of these features must be set back and provide clear access to any infrastructure such as power poles and underground services. The installation must also maintain safe access for pedestrians and cyclists and must be set back from footpaths, kerbs and vehicular crossings in accordance with this policy so as to not obscure or intrude into sightlines and maintain safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Accepted Verge Treatments	Not Accepted Verge Treatments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low lying vegetation below 0.6m (native and waterwise species preferred) • Drought tolerant lawn varieties • Verge trees installed by the Town of East Fremantle. • Mulch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous, spiky, invasive or poisonous vegetation • Artificial or synthetic grass • Limestone rubble, gravel or any similar loose aggregates • Paving, Concrete or other similar hardstand materials • Fences or walls • Fountains and ornaments • Stakes and star pickets

6. Design Consideration Guidelines

The Town encourages residents to install soft landscape treatments such as waterwise plants and mulch when installing and/or incorporating landscaping features on the verge. The below guidelines are required when undertaking works on the verge area.

1. Any landscaping feature installed on the verge must not obstruct clear lines of sight for any pedestrians, cyclists or motorists;
2. Residents may incorporate a number of permissible verge landscaping features provided the specific guidelines for each feature are adhered to;
3. Residents must keep to general level and grade of the verge and keep consistent with neighbouring verges;
4. Residents must ensure landscaping features are checked regularly and well maintained so that they meet and continue to meet the verge landscaping feature guidelines;
5. If 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 resident to remove or revise part or all of the feature to comply with this policy and guidelines;
6. For verges without a footpath, plants should be set back at least 1.5m from the road kerb to allow for pedestrian movement and access to and from vehicles that are parked on the road. Footpaths and kerbing are not to be removed or replaced to accommodate landscaping.

7. Irrigation and Reticulation guidelines

The Town encourages residents to install waterwise vegetation that conserves water and removes the need for permanent forms of reticulation. When watering is required it would be recommended that a sub-surface drip irrigation system be installed to reduce water use and reduce risk to pedestrians while being better suited to the exposed conditions typical on a verge. Conditions required for the installation of irrigation in the Town Verge are listed below.

1. Provide, to the Town of East Fremantle, a diagrammatic sketch indicating location of proposed reticulation.
2. Any water pipes laid must be laid at a depth of not more than 30cm nor less than 15cm, and so that any fitting connected to them does not project above the surface of the verge.
3. Where connected to a private water supply, where passing under road pavement, footpaths or crossings the water pipes shall be of galvanised wrought iron, copper or PVC and have approved valves, be located within the property where they are connected to the supply and fitted so as to give control of the flow of water from the supply.
4. Prior to any excavation taking place all public utility services are to be located to prevent any damage during excavation (dial before you dig 1100).

5. All irrigation spray is to be maintained and contained within the verge area and not be allowed to overspray onto footpaths and roadways.
6. Applicant to remain responsible for maintenance and operation and related costs of reticulation.
7. The Town may at any time, by notice in writing to the owner or occupier of land that abuts upon that part of a street wherein the owner has had water piping or fittings installed require that owner or occupier to remove such water piping or fittings and may, where the owner or occupier does not comply with the notice, remove the piping or fittings at the expense of the owner or occupier, and any expense incurred by the Town pursuant to this by-law may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction.
8. Where the Town or any other authority authorised by law to dig up a street for the purpose of carrying out authorised works is of the opinion that the carrying out of those works may be impeded by the existence of piping, under a lawn or garden in a street, it may give notice to the owner or occupier of the land abutting on the lawn or garden to remove the piping, until the completion of the works; and may, where the owner or occupier does not comply with the notice, remove the piping at the expense of the owner or occupier; and any expense incurred by the Town or authority pursuant to this by-law may be recovered in any court of competent jurisdiction. In respect of the above, the Town or other authority is not liable for damage to piping under a lawn or garden in a street, occasioned either in the course of the removal of the piping or of carrying out authorised works.
9. The Town reserves the right to use the full width of the road reserve as it sees fit and does not accept that it will be responsible to pay compensation for the cost of the reticulation should future works require the removal of all or any part of that reticulation.
10. The Town reserves the right to carry out work to the footpath and verge at any time and takes no responsibility for damage to lawn/vegetation, reticulation and drainage installations, the cost of reinstating same being borne by yourself, if required.
11. The Town will not in any circumstances be responsible for any damage caused to the reticulation whether that damage is caused by the Town, another public authority or any other agent or individual.

8. Street Trees

The Town is responsible for planting, maintenance and removal of all street and reserve trees in accordance with the '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.

Care is to be taken during the installation of a verge treatment to preserve the root zone and protect the trunk and canopy of trees. Residents can request a street tree by getting in contact with the Town's Operations team. Please note the removal of existing street trees is not permitted without the approval of Council.

Responsible Directorate:	Operations
Reviewing Officer:	Waste & Sustainability Officer
Decision making Authority:	CEO
Policy Adopted:	
Policy Amended/Reviewed:	