



Verge Garden Makeover Guide



City of
Belmont



About this guide

Transforming your verge into a vibrant, biodiverse space is easier than you think! This guide will walk you through each step of the process—from preparing the soil to designing and planting a beautiful, low-maintenance native garden. In this guide you'll be taken through the following steps:



By replacing traditional lawns with native plants, you'll create a sustainable, waterwise landscape that enhances biodiversity, supports local wildlife, and reduces maintenance. Whether you're starting with sand or lawn, this guide will provide the knowledge and tools to help you bring your verge to life. Let's grow a greener, more resilient community together!



Step One



Understanding verge guidelines and your role



Verge treatment maintenance is the responsibility of the householder of the property adjacent to the verge. The City is responsible for the planting and maintenance of street trees on verges.

Permissible verge treatments:

- ✓ Lawn
- ✓ Gardens, provided they do not obstruct visibility and meet height restrictions.
- ✓ Mulch and shrubs, but only within a 1.5m radius of street trees.
- ✓ Hard surfaces like paving are restricted to one-third of the verge (special conditions apply).

Prohibited verge treatments:

- ✗ Synthetic turf, impervious materials, and artificial surfaces are banned.
- ✗ Large rocks, stakes, wire fencing, logs, and retaining walls are not permitted on verges.
- ✗ No poisonous, thorny or declared weeds (for pedestrian safety);
- ✗ Do not cover or obstruct any manhole, gully or inspection pit;
- ✗ Trees cannot be planted or pruned by residents—requests for new trees must go through the City.



City trees



Step Two



Designing your new verge

A well-designed verge is not only visually appealing but also safe, functional, and accessible for all users. By considering key design elements, you can create a thriving, biodiverse space that enhances both your property and the surrounding streetscape.



Maintenance Responsibilities:

- Property owners/occupiers must:
 - Keep verges tidy and safe.
 - Ensure plants do not exceed 750mm in height.
 - Prevent encroachment onto footpaths, roads, or utility access points.
- Failure to maintain a verge properly can result in the City requesting modifications or removal.

Irrigation and Watering Restrictions:

- Irrigation must be 300mm underground and not protrude above ground. This includes pipes, fittings and sprinkler heads.
- Drip or subsurface irrigation is not permitted on the verge.
- Irrigation must be kept at least 1.5m away from trees.
- Irrigation must be positioned so that water does not flow onto the footpath, driveway, road or crossover.

Visibility and Safety:

- A clear pedestrian access of at least 1.5m must be maintained where no footpath exists.
- No plants, other than lawn, can be placed within 1.5m of a bus stop

Please read the City's Verge Greening Guidelines for further information about appropriate, and inappropriate verge treatments.



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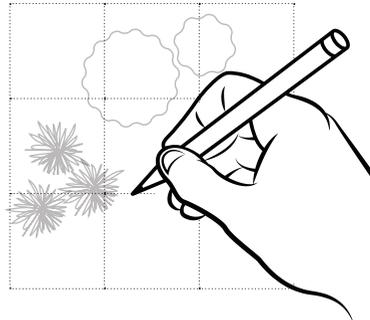



Things to Consider

Take a moment to assess your verge:

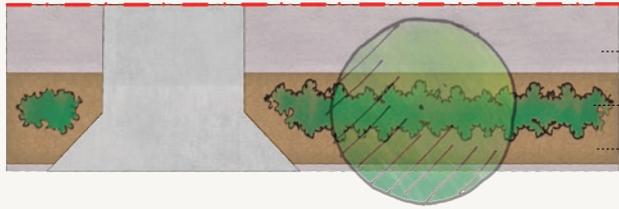
- **What's already there?**
 - Does your verge consist of open lawn with street trees, or does it have a mix of plant layers, such as shrubs, grasses, and ground covers?
- **What do you want from your verge?**
 - Do you envision a low-maintenance, waterwise garden?
 - Would you like to attract birds, butterflies, and other wildlife?
 - Are you looking for a structured design or a more natural, flowing layout?
- **How do you currently use your verge?**
 - You will need space for garbage bins and a street tree (if you don't currently have a street tree, a space must be left for one in future).
 - Are there footpaths, bus stops or driveways to consider?

Sketching a simple design can help visualise your ideas. Treat your verge as a blank canvas, keeping in mind elements like sunlight exposure, shade, soil conditions, drainage, and plant selection. A well-planned verge not only enhances your property but also contributes to a greener, more sustainable community.



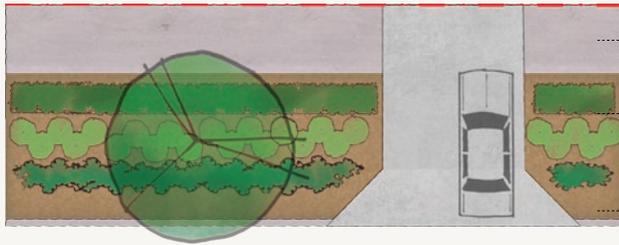


Verge design examples



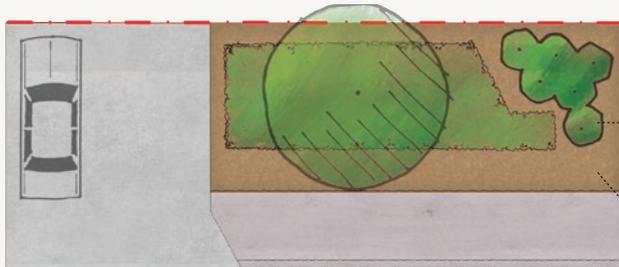
Narrow verge

Footpath
 Groundcover
 1m mulch only strip at back of kerb to allow for growth and area for bins



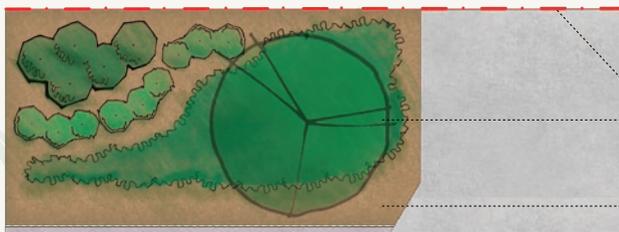
Standard verge (with footpath)

Layered planting, shrubs, strappy leaf plants, groundcovers.
 1m mulch only strip at back of kerb to allow for growth and area for bins



Large verge (with footpath behind kerb)

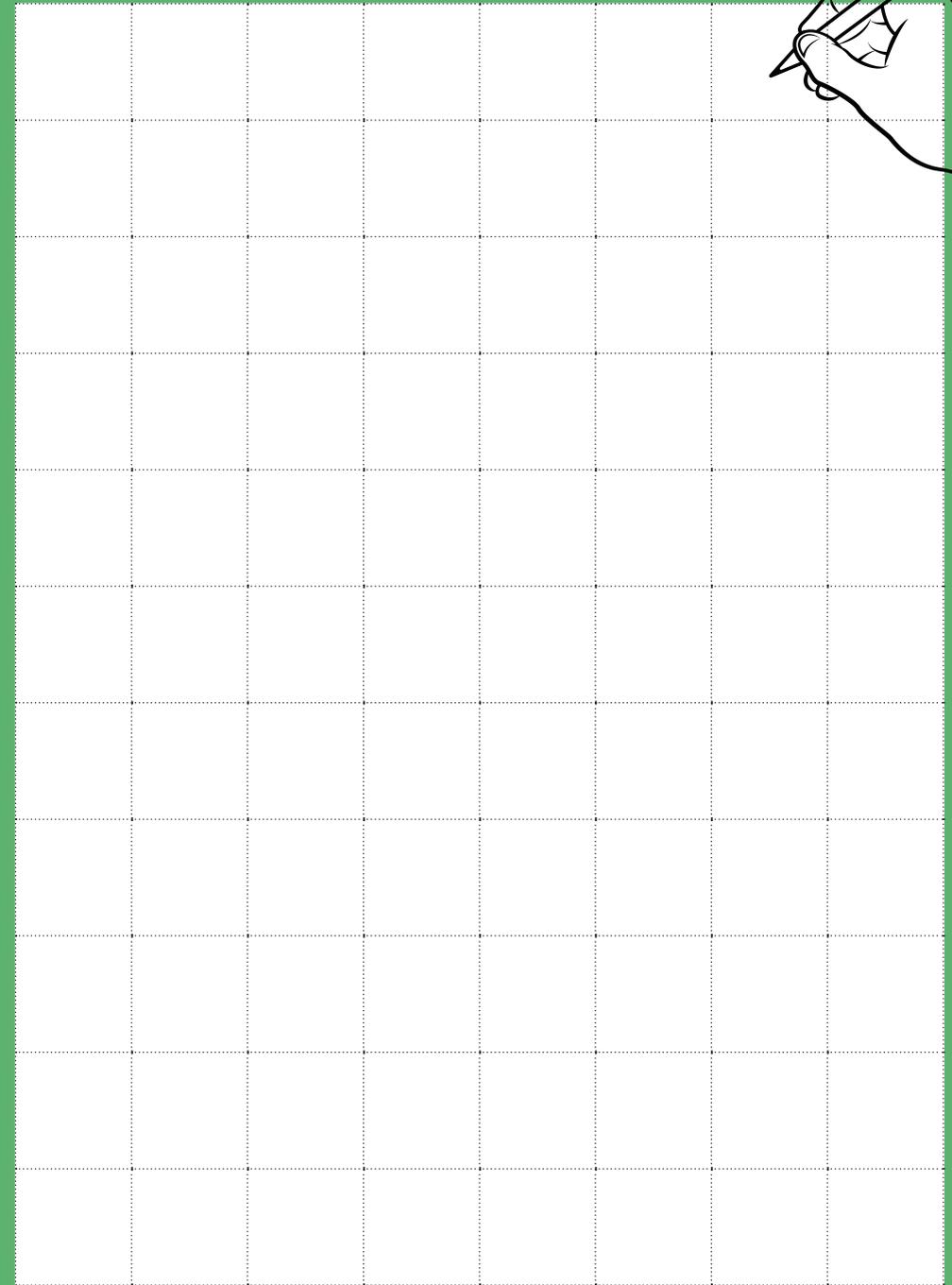
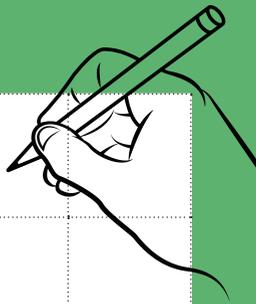
Layered planting, street tree, shrubs, strappy leaf plants, groundcovers.
 1m mulch only strip behind footpath to allow growth



Large verge (no footpath)

Property boundary
 Layered planting, street tree, shrubs, strappy leaf plants, groundcovers.
 1.5 m mulch only strip for pedestrian access and bins

Verge garden design grid



Soil Preparation

Lawn removal

The hardest, but most critical part of creating your verge garden will be the removal of any existing grass. Ensure you complete a Dial Before You Dig before commencing any works.

There are a number of ways to remove grass lawns, depending on your time and budget:

- Removing with a turf cutter or shovel.
- Smothering technique: The smothering technique works by covering the grass, cutting off light, and gradually killing off unwanted plants. While it takes a few months, starting now means you'll be ready for winter planting. Plus, the longer you smother, the more the grass breaks down into nutrient-rich soil.
 - Mow the grass area using your lawn mower's lowest setting.
 - Cover the grass with a single layer of corrugated cardboard or six layers of newspaper, overlapping the sheets by at least six inches. Ensuring you remove any glossy ads or tape from newspapers and use pure paper or cardboard.
 - Wet the cardboard thoroughly to start the decomposition process.
 - Top the cardboard with at least 5cm of organic matter (wood chips, leaves, compost, straw) to hold it down and complete the seal. This helps the breakdown process and enriches the soil below.

Once the lawn has been removed, you can now prepare the soil.



To correctly prepare your soil, you need to know what your soil type is. In the City of Belmont, we have two main soil types:

Central Coastal Plain
Grey to pale brown sandy soil.

📍 Rivervale, Redcliffe, Cloverdale, Kewdale, most of Belmont.

Eastern Coastal Plain
Variable soil types from sandy, loamy, and clayey soils.

📍 Most of Ascot and portion of Belmont closest to the River.

  Map of soil types by area





Soil water retention

Improving water retention in the soil is an important step to benefit your plants. Perth's soils can be hydrophobic (water repellent) and are highly permeable. This can prevent water from soaking in and water draining through the soil so quickly it cannot be absorbed by plants.

Use an environmentally friendly soil wetter to help improve water retention. There are additional ways to improve water retaining, at each planting hole:

- Mix bentonite/kaolin clay into the existing soil
- Add and mix organic matter through the soil (native friendly compost).

Soil levels

You may have to adjust the level of your verge soil to ensure that once a 5-10cm mulch layer is added, the overall ground level is sitting flush with the kerb. This is to avoid overspill onto the road/footpath and to retain water within the verge garden.

Step Four



Planting and mulch

After all the hard work of preparing your garden, now comes the fun part!

1. Follow your plans and spread your plants out. Consider their mature size when planting. Remember, great gardens take time to grow. Placing plants too close together can affect their growth, cause overcrowding and eventually “shade out” other plants.
2. Dig the hole at least 2 – 3 times larger than the width and depth of the pot.
3. Remove your plant from the pot and place your plant in the hole, the soil level of the plant should be the same as the natural soil level. Push the soil back around the plant to fill in the hole, then making a fist with your hand, gentle push the soil around the roots of the plant making a “well” around the base of the plant to create an area for water to pool and slowly sink into the soil. Water your plant in well and if you have some kelp or a seaweed solution include that also at this stage.

Now you're ready to mulch!

Applying a coarse layer of mulch, 5-10cm thick, will retain soil moisture by preventing evaporation, provide organic matter and nutrients for soil microbes and plants, lower the soil temperature, and will also suppress weeds.

- Ensure you leave space around main plant stems and street tree trunks.
- Make sure the mulch is level with your kerbs and footpath, this will prevent spread or flow onto footpaths or into stormwater systems.



The City offers residents the opportunity to collect free mulch in Spring. Visit the City's website for further information. Dates are also advertised in the Belmont Bulletin.

Step Five



Ongoing maintenance

After Planting

It is important to keep your plants watered while they settle into their new homes. In the event of no rain, a good 2 litre drink every week should suffice. Adding a kelp or seaweed solution into the water will greatly assist with transplant shock and the success of your plant establishment.

First summer

Water your plants 1-2 times per week in their first summer with 1-2 litres of water per plant each time. In their second year it will really depend on how they are progressing, but general rule of thumb is a good water every 2 weeks through the hotter months around early November to late March.

After establishment

Yearly application of an organic, pelletized low phosphorous fertilizer for native plants followed by 50 – 100mm of organic mulch will all help to keep your plants and soil microbes healthy.

Need help?

Visit our website or contact our Parks, Leisure and Environment team on environment@belmont.wa.gov.au or (08) 9477 7257.



For further planting tips and tricks, scan the QR code to watch a short video



The Water Corp's Waterwise Greening Scheme provides the opportunity for Waterwise Councils to receive up to \$10,000 of co-funding each year to support waterwise greening initiatives. Councils are encouraged to involve their local residents in greening initiatives to spread the greening and waterwise messages.



City of
Belmont

215 Wright Street, Cloverdale WA 6105
Locked Bag 379, Cloverdale WA 6985
Open 8:30am - 4:45pm, Monday - Friday
☎ PH: (08) 9477 7222
☎ A/H: (08) 9477 7224

✉ belmont@belmont.wa.gov.au

🌐 belmont.wa.gov.au

📘 [BelmontCouncilWA](#)

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Parks - 17/2/2026