

Verge Greening Guidelines



City of
Belmont



Version 2 – 29 May 2024



Verge Greening Guidelines

If you live in or run a business in the City of Belmont, you can play an important role in achieving a clean, green and healthy City. You can use these guidelines to help create more green verges across the community, dominated by natural plants and tree-lined streets to create shade, allow for walking and riding, and provide a range of health and environmental benefits.

Your verge greening project

You can create an attractive and waterwise space adjacent to your property (on your verge) which will enhance and support the City's environmental values and amenity, while meeting the necessary safety, services, infrastructure and access requirements.

Your verge enhancement or greening project could include a native garden, waterwise garden with low water requirement plants or edible garden, such as a bush tucker garden.

Please note, your project cannot include planting new trees or pruning any street trees on your verge – but you can request these services from the City. The City is responsible for selecting, supplying, planting and maintaining street trees.

All new verge upgrades need to comply with the City of Belmont Consolidated Local Law 2020, Urban Forest Policy and Tree Protection Fact Sheet which is available on the City's website. You also need to know:

- If your project is designed and installed in line with these guidelines below, you will not need the City's approval;
- If you are proposing a non-standard verge treatment or you plan to alter the gradient or level of the verge, you will need to apply for approval;
- If you would like to install a raised garden bed, paving or another hard surface material on your verge, please email parks@belmont.wa.gov.au or phone the City's Parks, Leisure and Environment team on (08) 9477 7257 to discuss your plans.

Kindly be aware that street trees positioned beneath power lines undergo annual pruning by contractors designated by the City to meet the necessary clearances mandated by Western Power. This process entails utilising a mobile elevated work platform. As you plan your verge layout, please ensure that adequate access to the street tree is maintained to facilitate safe entry for contractors without risking substantial damage to your verge planting.



Follow these design guidelines for your verge

When you are planning and installing your verge upgrade, please follow these mandatory design guidelines:

- Make sure sight lines for pedestrians and traffic are maintained, so everybody who uses the road and driveway/crossover has clear visibility at all times;
- Do not plant trees or prune (or interfere with) street trees;
- If you have one or more street trees, you can only use lawn or mulch within a 1.5m radius around the trunk of each street tree;
- If you need to remove any lawn or soil from your verge, you need to be careful to avoid damaging the roots and trunk of existing street trees;
- Except for street trees (which are maintained by the City), you need to maintain all of your verge plants at a height of no more than 750mm (75cm);
- Do not include any plants which are a declared weed, poisonous, prickly in nature or likely to cause a nuisance within your verge area;
- Make sure you do not cover or obstruct any man hole, gully or inspection pit with plants, mulch or any other materials;
- If there is no existing footpath, you need to keep a clear thoroughfare (such as mulch or low groundcover) for at least 1.5m from the kerb;
- If your verge includes mulch, this must be installed to a finished level of below the footpath and kerb line to prevent creating slip or trip hazards, and have a particle size of no more than 2cm;
- If your verge includes a bus stop, only lawn can be placed within 1.5m of that bus stop.
- There shall be no mechanical rotoavation or excavation of the ground within the Tree Protection Zone (Aus Std AS4970.2009). For more information on Tree Protection Zones visit the City of Belmont's Tree Protection Fact Sheet, available on our website.
- Recommend excavation for cables, irrigation, fencing/retaining walls, or any other service within the Tree Protection Zone should be done by Soil Vacuum or Airspade method to minimise root damage, or manually "dig by hand".

If you follow these guidelines from the beginning of your project, you could save time and money by avoiding the need to later remove or change any elements which do not meet the City's requirements.



These materials are not permitted on your verge

Your verge design cannot include:

- Gravel, limestone, road base, stone, flagstone, cement, concrete slab, block, pebbles, plastic sheeting, kerbing, bark, woodchips or sawdust
- Permanent or temporary placement of rocks, stakes, star pickets, wire fencing, logs or retaining walls
- Impervious material, synthetic turf, impervious synthetic membrane or other synthetic material*

* This restriction applies to verge upgrades completed from 29 January 2021.

Taking out the bins!

Make sure your verge treatment will not prevent waste collection or become displaced or damaged if a bulk bin was delivered.

Paving and other hard surface materials

Within the City, acceptable hard surface materials currently include small format clay or concrete modular pavers (no bigger than 300x300mm) and permeable or porous pavers. If you have other hard surface materials in mind for your design, please contact the City to discuss your options.

You can install acceptable hard surface materials over an area of up to one-third of your verge area, without including your crossover or driveway. These criteria will also need to be met:

- Your front lot boundary (along the road) is more than 12 metres long;
- The rest of your verge area is maintained as garden or lawn;
- If you do not already have a street tree, you will need to keep an area of open space of at least 1.5 metres in diameter where the City could install a street tree in the future;
- Hard surfaces need to be set back at least 1.5 metres from the trunk of any street tree;
- Where an established street tree exists on the verge excavation shall not exceed 100mm in depth for the installation of any hard surfaces.

You can apply to the City for permission to install an acceptable hard surface material over your entire verge area if:

- The width of your verge is less than 1 metre, not including the width of the footpath;
- There are some parts of your verge (for example an area of less than 4 square metres) where it would not be feasible to maintain natural groundcover or garden.

If you have any questions about incorporating hard surfaces into your verge area, please contact the City to discuss your proposed design.



Before you begin a verge upgrade

You need to make sure your verge design meets these City of Belmont guidelines before you start to implement your verge upgrade. You will also need to:

- Contact your landlord or body corporate for written consent if your property is rented or part of a unit or strata complex;
- Contact utility providers or 'Before You Dig Australia' at www.byda.com.au to make sure your verge upgrade will not impact existing infrastructure.

It is also a good idea to discuss your verge plans with your neighbours before you start any work on your verge to make sure that it will not have a negative impact on them.

Once your verge upgrade has been completed

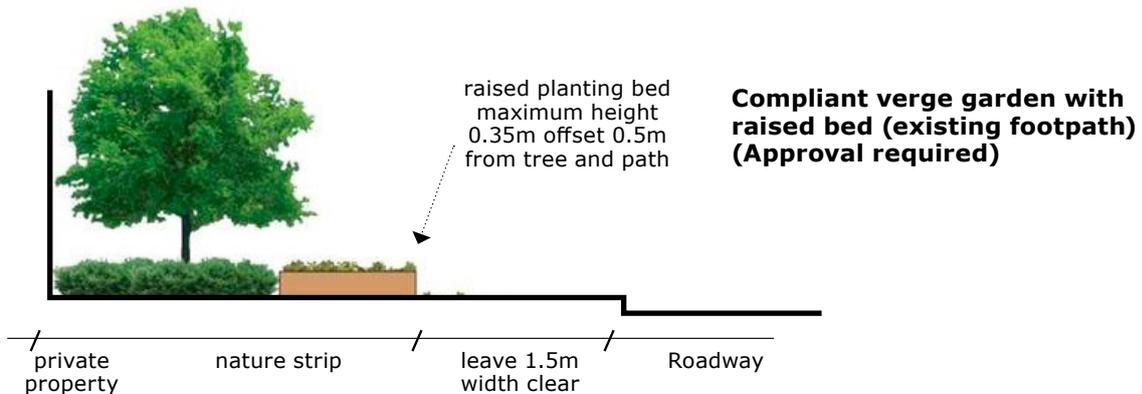
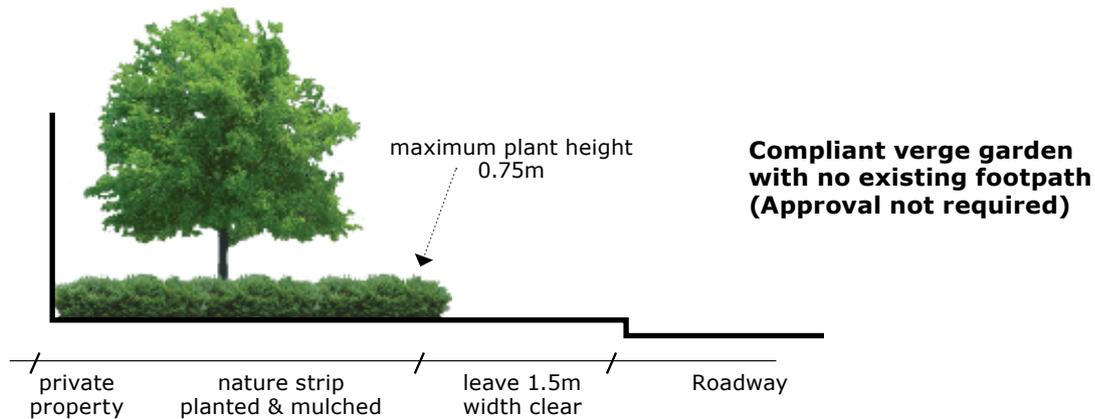
You will need to make sure your verge stays well-maintained, with clear sightlines and free from weeds and any safety or fire hazards. You will also need to keep your mulch or plants from overflowing onto footpaths, crossovers or the road.

If your verge treatment is considered to pose a safety hazard, does not meet the design guidelines or is not maintained properly, the City could ask you to take action to either comply with these requirements or remove your verge treatment.

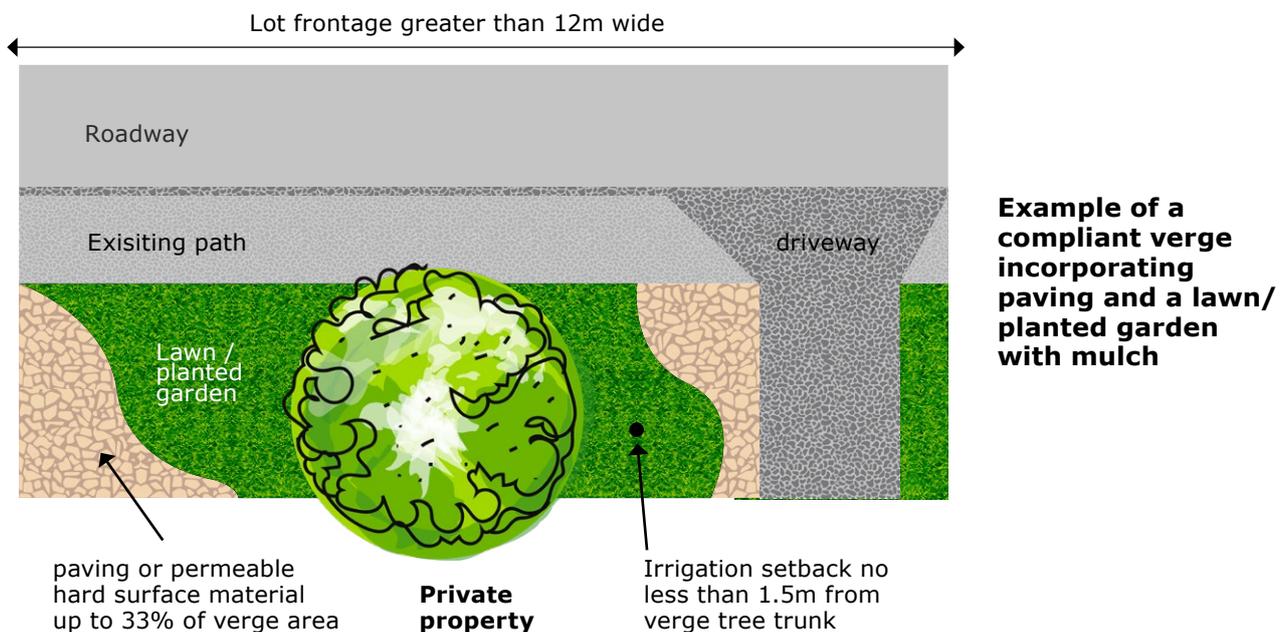
It is important to know that your verge treatments may need to be disturbed (removed or dug up) to allow access for utility service providers, the installation of footpaths or the maintenance of verge trees (including pruning). It is generally your responsibility, as the property owner or occupant, to reinstate the verge or verge treatment after these works.

Examples of verge upgrades

Here are some examples of compliant verge upgrades, including examples where there is no existing footpath, an existing footpath and paving involved.



Please note, you can apply for approval for raised garden beds no higher than 0.35m (35cm) (not including vegetation). You will also need to provide a 0.5m setback from footpaths, driveways, street trees and any other infrastructure such as power poles and underground services.



Over the following pages, you'll find a range of tips and inspiration to help you plan, implement and maintain your verge upgrades

Take a long-term view

- Think about how your verge upgrade could improve biodiversity, aesthetics, food production and minimise the need for water, fertiliser and other chemicals;
- Consider local, native plants suited to WA's soil and climate which can provide ecological value such as food and shelter for native animals and insects;
- Try to minimise the amount of lawn on your verge or choose drought-tolerant grass varieties such as Couch, Buffalo, Zoysia, Saltene or Kikuyu;
- Visit the [Water Corporation website](#) 'find your tree' page or speak with your local nursery for help to choose shrubs with suitable root systems that will not damage wastewater and drainage pipes and other underground services;
- Choose a verge design which will allow access for services, including the maintenance of street trees and under or above ground services;
- If you have space, you could request a street tree to be planted and maintained by the City.



Choose waterwise plants

- A waterwise garden can help you reduce the amount of water needed for your garden – and can also create wildlife corridors, enhance local biodiversity and help to build resilience to climate change;
- Try to choose local, native species and take local conditions into consideration, such as the quality of your soil and how much direct sunlight the plant will receive;
- Visit the [Water Corporation website](#) for ideas on waterwise plants;
- New waterwise plants have the best chance to thrive without lawn and weeds to compete with them, so remove these carefully if you can – and please contact the City for advice if you need to dig out lawn near a street tree.

Look after your soil

- Good soil is the foundation of a healthy, waterwise garden – and you might like to use soil conditioners such as composted organic matter and clay, such as Bentonite, within the top 30cm of soil to improve moisture and nutrient holding capacity;
- You could apply a good quality soil-wetting agent to help water reach deep into the root zone to help your plants establish and grow deeper roots;
- When buying soil conditioner or wetting agents, look for products with the Waterwise and Smart Approved WaterMark symbols and refer to the manufacturer's instructions for application rates.

Consider the benefits of mulch

- Mulch can help to improve your soil, reduce plant stress and evaporation, slow down weed growth and improve the appearance of your garden;
- Spread a 5 to 10cm thick even layer of mulch (with particle size of up to 2cm), keeping clear from the stem of plants and any man hole, gully or inspection pit;
- Make sure the mulch is level with your adjoining kerbs and footpath and that it will not spread or flow onto footpaths or into stormwater systems.

Choose water-efficient irrigation methods

- Local native plant species are generally drought-tolerant and suitable for non-irrigated verges, but some hand watering over summer could help your plants to get established and stay healthy;
- You are not required to have sprinklers on your City of Belmont verge – but if you do install irrigation, the City has these safety and water efficiency guidelines:
 - Your irrigation needs to be laid below the surface by 30cm and cannot protrude above the surface of the lawn or garden, including pipes, fittings and sprinkler heads;
 - Do not install irrigation within 1.5 m of an existing verge tree;
 - Irrigation must be positioned to ensure that water does not spray on footpaths, your driveway or crossover, or the road;
 - It is recommended that irrigation (such as reticulation and sprinklers) is installed by a Waterwise-approved Irrigation Specialist.
- Please note, drip or subsurface irrigation on the verge is not permitted under the Consolidated Local Law 2020.
- Visit www.watercorporation.com.au to check your allocated watering days, when you can use your irrigation after 6pm or before 9am unless is during the annual winter sprinkler ban from 1 June to 31 August.
- Extreme care must be taken when installing irrigation near City trees, and must abide by the protection and retention requirements outlined in this document and in compliance with the City's [Urban Forest Policy](#) and [Tree Protection Fact Sheet](#).
- Do not install irrigation within 1.5 m of an existing verge tree;
- Excavation for irrigation within the Tree Protection Zone shall be done by soil vacuum or Airspade method to minimise root damage.



For more information

Visit the [Water Corporation](#) website for a range of design ideas suited to the Perth climate and tips on using local native, waterwise species.

You could also visit the [South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare's website](#) for local information on plant sizes, forms, flowers and bird and butterfly-attracting species:

- The Eastern Coastal brochure relates to the area near the river;
- The Central brochure is more relevant if you live on the southern side of Great Eastern Highway.

Contact the City of Belmont

If you have questions about your verge project, please email parks@belmont.wa.gov.au or phone the City's Parks, Leisure and Environment team on (08) 9477 7257 to discuss your plans.

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