



Verge Landscaping & Maintenance Guidelines





The Verge Landscaping and Maintenance Guidelines were originally produced by the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River in consultation with Transition Margaret River in May 2013.

Photos are courtesy of Nature Conservation Margaret River Region.

Updated November 2020.

Street Trees

The Shire's objectives for street trees are to:

- Preserve and enhance street trees and shrubs within townsites in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River, including parks and reserves vested in the Shire.
- Integrate future provision of landscaping with the existing natural vegetation to create an attractive landscape that preserve and protect the natural and constructed environment.

Street trees are an integral component of urban streetscapes, encouraging pedestrian and cyclist use, community interaction and fewer vehicle trips.

- Provision of street trees provides shade to buildings, outdoor living areas, and street pavements and parking areas; lowers ambient temperatures; and assists in reducing adverse urban heat island effects and electricity use.
- Street trees assist local stormwater collection and retention; and perform other important environmental and ecological functions.
- Trees are also effective at intercepting rainfall, resulting in reduced stormwater runoff and soil erosion, with the scale and intensity of interception increasing with the size and amount of canopy cover.
- Trees also have traffic-calming benefits by reducing vehicle speed where they are located close to the street pavement and/or within median islands.
- The Shire is committed to protection of street trees and therefore, removal of existing street trees is only undertaken as a last resort. The Shire does not remove trees due to leaf drop and nuisance issues.

Requests to prune or maintain a street tree can be submitted by completing a Works Request submission form on the Shire's website, or by sending an email to amrshire@amrshire.wa.gov.au. Please include the details of your concerns and the desired outcome.

Verge landscaping guidelines

The verge is the area with the road reserve that is located between the road pavement and the boundary of an adjacent property. It provides a safe place for pedestrian movement and for provision of vehicle access to properties. The verge also accommodates public utilities such as street lighting and underground services such as power, water, drainage, gas, sewerage and telecommunications.

Verges are regulated under the Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2020

No existing vegetation can be removed from a Shire road reserve without prior written permission from the Shire and a permit may be required.





Who is responsible for verges?

Although the verge is owned by the Shire, the Shire encourages residents to enhance the verge in front of their properties, noting that:

- The Shire is responsible for the planting, removal and maintenance of street trees
- The property owner is responsible for the landscaping and maintenance of the verge adjacent to their property, except for street trees.

What are the benefits of landscaping?

Verges with low growing water wise plants will:

- Contribute to the attractiveness of your home and town
- Decrease stormwater and nutrient runoff
- Support biodiversity, and
- Reduce the time, cost and resources required for the maintenance of lawn

Do I need a permit to landscape my verge?

No permit is required for:

- Planting and maintenance of a lawn
- Organic Mulch – subject to finished mulch level being slightly below or at the same level as the adjacent footpath or kerb

- Planting and maintenance of a garden provided that:
 - Clear visibility is maintained for road users in the vicinity of an intersection, bend in the road or a driveway. Plants must not be planted within 6.0m of an intersection, except for grasses or a similar plant
 - Where there is no footpath, a minimum width of 2.0m adjacent to the road is free of obstruction to allow for the safe passage of pedestrians
 - No walls or built structures, and
 - Plants of a thorny or poisonous nature are not permitted
- A property owner may not plant any plant (except grass or a similar plant) on a thoroughfare within 2m of a road
- All landscaping must be maintained by the property owner and not cause an obstruction to any footpath, or carriageway
- The level and grade of the verge and between adjoining verges shall remain consistent and free of barriers, trip hazards, excess undulations, mounds, holes, depressions, ridges and terraces
- Planting for privacy or screening purposes should always be planted within the property boundary
- Trees are not permitted to be planted on the verge. Please contact the shire regarding street trees

Productive gardens

Productive gardens are permitted provided that:

- Produce will not lie on the footpath
- The ground is not raised and remains level, and
- Stakes and fences are not used

Information on productive food plants suitable for verges can be found on the Sustainable Gardening Australia website: www.sgaonline.org.au

Irrigation

Whilst the Shire encourages landscape treatments that minimize or reduce water consumption and/or improve soil and water retention, the installation of a reticulation system on the verge does not require Shire approval.

Fittings connected to the pipes must not protrude above the surface of the lawn or garden, except when the irrigation system is in use (i.e. pop-up sprinklers only). The pipes and connections must be at least 250mm away from the footpath and the kerb. The Shire can be contacted to confirm whether a footpath upgrade or installation is programmed for the street. Where irrigation extends to the kerbing or a footpath, reduced radius sprinklers must be used that direct the flow of water away from the road or footpath surface.

Hardstand treatments on the verge

Hardstand treatments such as paving or gravel require a local law permit. The local Law permit application form is available on the Shire's website, or ask the Customer Service Team to send you a copy.

Hardstand treatments that are acceptable include:

- Compacted gravel
- Road base or limestone, or
- Brick pavers



Obligations of owner or occupier

An owner or occupier who installs a verge treatment must:

- a. Maintain the verge to ensure any landscaping verge treatments are not a hazard to pedestrians and motorists and must not obstruct or cause a hazard on the footpath or road surface
- b. Not place any obstruction on or around the verge treatment, and
- c. Not disturb a footpath on the verge

Where a plant in a garden creates a hazard for any person using a verge, road reserve or adjoining footpath, the shire can direct the owner or the occupier of the land adjacent to the garden to maintain or remove the hazard in the interests of public safety.

When do you need a local law permit?


A local law permit is required to:

- Plant any plant (except grasses or a similar plant) within 6.0 meters of an intersection
- Plant any plant (except grass or a similar plant) on a thoroughfare so that it is within 2.0m of a carriageway.
- Install any hardstand surface such as paving, gravel or concrete
- Prune or fell any tree on or onto a verge or road reserve or remove any native vegetation
- Unless installing, or in order to maintain, a permissible verge treatment:
 - lay pipes under or provide taps on any verge;
 - Interfere with the soil or take anything from a thoroughfare

Power to Carry out Public Works on a Verge

Where the Shire or an authority empowered to do so under a written law disturbs a verge, the Shire or the authority

- is not liable to compensate any person for that disturbance
- may backfill with sand, if necessary, any garden or lawn, and
- is not liable to replace or restore any:
 - verge treatment including planted landscaping, hard surface, or
 - sprinklers, pipes or other reticulation equipment



Local native plants are ideally suited for the local soils and climate and can provide important usable habitat for birds and other small fauna and thus, help maintain the biodiversity within towns.

Steps to landscaping your verge

Making a plan

- Ensure that you know the boundaries of your verge. The Shire's web page has a link (Interactive Shire Maps) that allows you to view the aerial photos and property boundaries:
www.amrshire.wa.gov.au
- To avoid the disruption of services and possible costs, it is the homeowner's responsibility to check the location of any service infrastructure that may be located in the road verge. Please Dial before you Dig on 1100 during business hours or lodge a free enquiry www.1100.com.au/contact
- Measure the area of your verge and draw a scaled plan of your verge area and plot the following:
 1. Location of infrastructure
 2. Areas that cannot be planted e.g. footpaths, access to letter boxes, refuse bin collection; existing street trees
 3. A distance of 2.0 meters immediately adjacent to the kerb shall be maintained to allow for the safe passage of pedestrians where there is no footpath. (This area can be covered by conventional grass or mulch);
 4. An outline the area and height limits for planting.

Selecting plants

The Shire encourages residents to install and maintain soft, native water-wise landscaping on the verge. Soft landscaping includes drought tolerant grass varieties, ground covers and low growing shrub which often have a reduced need for fertilizer.

As a rule, plants should not exceed 750mm in height at full maturity.

Local native plants are ideally suited for the local soils and climate and can provide important usable habitat for birds and other small fauna and thus, help maintain the biodiversity within towns.

When choosing plants consider the following:

- Mature plant size, form and colour
- The aspect and exposure for plants, and
- Mass planting of a few species is often attractive

Geographe Community Landcare Nursery, Nature Conservation Margaret River Region and the Water Corporation websites provide information on water-wise plants:

- www.natureconservation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PlantThisInstead_Brochure.pdf
- www.watercorporation.com.au/Waterwise/Waterwise-plants
- www.geographeplants.com

Additionally, the Cape to Cape Landcare Companion is available from Nature Conservation Margaret River Region office and has detailed information on local native flora.



Nurseries

You can order and purchase native plants from the following local nurseries:

Everyday Potted Plants

311 Sebbes Road, Forest Grove
Ph: 9757 7424
www.everydaypottedplants.com.au

Geographe Community Landcare Nursery

366 Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Busselton
Ph: 0429 644 885
www.geographeplants.com

The Tube Nursery

8 Blond Street, Cowaramup
Ph: 9755 5509
www.tubenursery.com.au

Check websites for opening hours.

Mulch

Mulch is widely used for water retention, inhibiting weed germination and moderating soil temperature.

When applying mulch a few important points should be noted:

- organic mulch (such as bark mulch) must be at least 75mm thick to reduce water evaporation
- large particle mulch must be used to prevent loss due to wind, water or foot traffic
- finished mulch level must be slightly below or at the same level as the adjacent footpath or kerb, and
- inorganic mulches such as gravel, pea gravel, are not a suitable alternative to organic mulch for safety reasons.



Installing your verge

It is important to take proper landscaping steps to improve your gardens chances of survival. Planting in late autumn or early winter when rainfall is high, and soil is still relatively warm allows plants to develop deep root systems to withstand hot dry summers.

- Remove grass, weeds and unwanted material from verge
- If necessary, remove soil to ensure the finished verge remains slightly below or level with the kerb after adding mulch
- Loosen compacted soil as this may be a problem where vehicles have been regularly parked
- Layout plants and change position if necessary
- Dig holes for planting and add any needed material e.g. organic matter or soil wetting agents
- Water plants and planting holes
- Plant and water in, and
- Apply mulch around your new plants

Maintaining you verge

Regular maintenance of your verge will be required, including:

- New plantings may need additional watering in the first summer
- if reticulation has been removed from the verge, pre-existing street trees may need supplementary watering, and
- Regularly checking that sightlines are maintained as plants grow

Non-compliant verge treatments and service installation

It is important to note that the verge remains the property of the Shire. The Shire Government reserves the right to remove verge treatments at any time for the installation or repair of services. The Shire is not liable for any costs or reimbursement for removed verge treatments.

If a verge treatment is installed that does not comply with these guidelines and/or without first obtaining Shire approval, penalties can be imposed as per the Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2020.

Landscape diagram



Plant species list

1	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
2	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
3	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
4	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
5	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
6	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
7	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
8	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
9	_____	Plant's max growth height _____
10	_____	Plant's max growth height _____

Attach Permit application form







Shire of Augusta Margaret River

Main Administration Office
41 Wallcliffe Road (PO Box 61)
Margaret River WA 6285

P: 08 9780 5255

F: 08 9757 2512

Office Hours: Mon to Fri, 9am – 4pm

Phone Enquiries: 8am – 4.30pm

Augusta Administration Office

66 Allnutt Terrace
Augusta WA 6290

P: 08 9780 5660

F: 08 9758 0033

Office Hours: Mon to Fri, 9am – 4pm
(closes for lunch 12pm – 1pm)

Phone Enquiries: 8am – 4.30pm

www.amrshire.wa.gov.au
amrshire@amrshire.wa.gov.au

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

- TTY users phone 133 677 then ask for 08 9780 5255
- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 08 9780 5255
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS (www.relayservice.com.au) then ask for 08 9780 5255