

Verge Garden Policy

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the City's approach to the verge preparation assistance scheme, mulch, the plant subsidy scheme, verge garden materials and verge garden maintenance.

Legislative requirements

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the *Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2005*.

Policy

The City encourages residents to develop and maintain verge gardens to provide a range of social, environmental and economic benefits to the community. Well designed and maintained verge gardens can:

- improve water efficiency
- contribute to beautiful streets
- reduce urban heat island impacts
- provide ecological benefits including habitat for flora and improved biodiversity
- improved building thermal performance.

The successful establishment and performance of verge gardens is dependent on correct design, preparation, installation and maintenance. An owner or occupier of land may landscape the verge which abuts their property and is vested under the management and control of the City of Fremantle in accordance with the following guidelines. Residents may also access the initiatives to help subsidise the development of verge gardens.

Verge Preparation Assistance Scheme

The City's verge preparation assistance scheme assists with the conversion of a verge to a verge garden by providing level preparation and mulch delivery. Weed removal from verges will remain the responsibility of the applicant. The scheme will assist with preparation by:

- Removing soil, grass and vegetation against hard surfaces including kerbs, driveways and footpaths.
- Delivering mulch to the residents. The applicant will be responsible for spreading the mulch. Mulch provided will be tree clipping mulch recycled from the City's tree pruning program.

Expressions of interest will be called for annually. Applications will be considered on the following order of priority:

- Seniors Card or Health Care Card holder
- Size of verge where large verges have higher priority.
- Not had the property's verge prepared in the previous 10 years.

Mulch

The City will provide mulch to residents for collection from the depot. Mulch will be available for all City residents, businesses and community groups for use on their verge garden. Mulch provided will be tree clipping mulch recycled from the City's tree pruning program. Organic mulch is to be placed:

- 5-10cm deep
- level with or below adjacent hard surfaces
- 10cm clear of plant stems
- 50cm clear of street tree trunks.

Plant Subsidy Scheme

The City provides plants to residents through the plant subsidy scheme to help verge garden development and maintenance. The City will provide up to 40 plants per residential property per annum. Other property types, such as schools or commercial, can apply to the City for larger quantities which will be at the City's discretion. Plants provided provide the following range of benefits:

- low water usage
- provide habitat for fauna
- are flowering
- suppress weeds
- reduce urban heat island effects
- promote biodiversity.

The plant species list will be determined by the City and include water wise, endemic and Australian plant species.

Verge Garden Materials

The following materials list outlines verge materials which are acceptable, require approval or are unacceptable. Residents are able to install acceptable materials without the City's approval provided they are maintained in accordance with the verge garden maintenance requirements. The City requests residents seek approval for certain materials to ensure

they are placed in a safe location and / or don't interfere with services or public utilities. Some materials are unacceptable as they restrict City or public utility access for infrastructure maintenance, are detrimental to the environment or present hazards to the public.

Material Classification	Material Description
<p>Acceptable Materials Approval not required prior to installation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained turf • Low shrubs and groundcovers • Vegetables and herbs • Organic mulch • Street trees (planted and maintained by the City only) • Irrigation at ground level • Vegetable planters (removable construction type) that are 2m from the kerb and/or crossover, 1m from the footpath and are clear of pedestrian and vehicle sight lines. • Trafficable paving and/or consolidated inorganic mulch less than one third of the verge (excluding the crossover) and 2m away from the trunk of a street tree • Garden edging at ground level that does not present a trip hazard.
<p>Materials requiring approval Approval required prior to installation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary structures such as bollards to aid the establishment of the verge garden or ornaments • Furniture including seats and benches • Trafficable paving and/or consolidated inorganic mulch more than one third of the verge (excluding the crossover) and/or within 2m of the trunk of a street tree • Fruit and nut trees.
<p>Unacceptable Materials When in the opinion of the City a material, structure or verge treatment is considered to be hazardous or pose a significant risk to the public the material will be considered unacceptable and appropriate compliance action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials or structures which are unsafe, block sight lines, are loose or slippery, present a hazard, are impermeable, are weeds, are sharp or prickly will be considered to be an unacceptable material. • Artificial turf

will be taken.	
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For materials requiring approval an application must be submitted and approved in writing by the City before the material is installed.

Verge Garden Maintenance

The maintenance of verge gardens is the responsibility of the resident and includes mowing turf, weeding, pruning, mulching, irrigation maintenance and cleaning hard surfaces. Guidelines for maintaining a safe verge are:

- Vegetation must be kept clear of vehicle and pedestrian site lines.
- Vegetation must be maintained so it doesn't present a hazard and is clear of paths, crossovers, roads and service infrastructure.
- Irrigation must be maintained so it doesn't present a hazard.
- Mulch levels must be below the top of the adjacent kerbs and surrounding hard surfaces such as paths and driveways.
- A bin pickup zone must be maintained free from obstructions including overhead trees.
- Vegetables, fruits and nuts must be harvested regularly and collected off the ground to prevent issues associated with decomposing vegetation.
- Where a fruit or nut tree is approved for installation, the City will give tree maintenance requirements, specific to the species and location, at the time of approval.
- Where there is no footpath, a pedestrian has safe and clear access of a minimum width of 2m along that part of the verge immediately adjacent to the kerb in accordance with the Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2005.

Street Trees

The City is responsible for planting, maintenance and removal of all street and reserve trees in accordance with the Street and Reserve Tree Policy. Residents can request a street tree to be planted or maintained by contacting the City who will consider the request.

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.

Non-compliance

Non-compliance with this Policy will result in the City requesting the adjacent resident to undertake works, remove items to meet the requirements of the Policy or the City to undertake works at the resident's expense.

Verge reinstatement

The verge has a primary function to act as a corridor for services and utilities. Periodically,

works will be undertaken in the verge to service this infrastructure which may damage or disturb verge gardens. The resident is responsible for reinstatement of the verge garden following any works by the City, utility providers or other authorised parties.

Reviewing officer: Manager Parks and Landscape

Policy adopted: 27 September 2017 – OCM FPOL1709-10

Policy amended: NA

Legislation: *Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2005.*

Related documents: Relevant City Procedures

Next review date: 27 September 2019