



Verge Garden

Guidelines
and Induction
Checklist



WAVERLEY
COUNCIL

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DEPARTMENT
Community Programs

DATE REVIEWED
June 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE
JUNE 2027

1.

Introduction and Definition

Waverley Council supports public place gardening as a valuable activity that contributes to the health and well-being of community members, cools the streets, beautifies the neighbourhood, and increases biodiversity and habitat in Waverley.

Verge Gardens are plantings on Council land between the private property boundary and the road kerb. This area is usually turfed and contains street trees, footpaths, driveways and other above and below ground infrastructure. While verges are public land, residents are expected to contribute to their upkeep, through mowing or maintenance of a planted garden.

The Verge Garden Guidelines detail requirements for gardening on the verge directly in front of a property. Gardening projects in parks, laneways, or reserves are not included in the scope of this document and will be considered individually by Council Officers.

2.

Location and Access

The verge garden guidelines are intended to help residents establish a garden directly in front of their property. A site's suitability for verge gardening and the location of any planting depends on factors such as existing trees and other structures above and below the ground.

The location of a garden within the verge will depend on the verge width, other structures and plants present and how the verge is used. The most important consideration is to provide/maintain a clear path to travel for pedestrians. The best place for a verge garden, whether in garden beds or in a planter box, will usually be closest to the property boundary, as most public utilities run along the kerb-side of the verge. For safety reasons, it is also important to maintain clear lines of sight.

There are exclusion zones such as main roads, median strips, and Local and Neighbourhood Centres where verge gardens will not be permitted. The location of 'Centres' can be identified on Discover: <https://discover.waverley.nsw.gov.au/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=%2FAnalyst%2FNamedProjects%2FPlanning> Council also maintains a register identifying the location of approved verge gardens.

2.1 Site Assessment

When assessing your verge for its suitability for a garden, consider the following:

- Access to sunlight in both summer and winter and how this will influence the garden location and plant species selected.
- How the movement of surface water will affect the verge garden.
- Waverley's street trees are owned and managed by Council and must not be damaged by any gardening (or other) activity.
- Contact Council if in doubt about the proximity of a proposed garden to street trees.
- Corners are to be unplanted for a 45degree splay from the property (see Figure 3).
- Pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic share our public spaces. Consider how many people use or walk by the proposed verge garden location and how potential impacts may be reduced.
- As verges are often used to place bins for Council garbage collection, ensure access for this service is maintained.
- The stormwater drains of some properties may be at shallower depths. Planting must be limited in depth to avoid infrastructure damage.
- Permanent fixtures or structures are not permitted on verge gardens. Garden edging is allowed as long as it doesn't create a trip hazard.
- Retaining walls, paving, and seating are not permitted.
- Gardens must be neat, well maintained and without trip hazards.

Pedestrian access

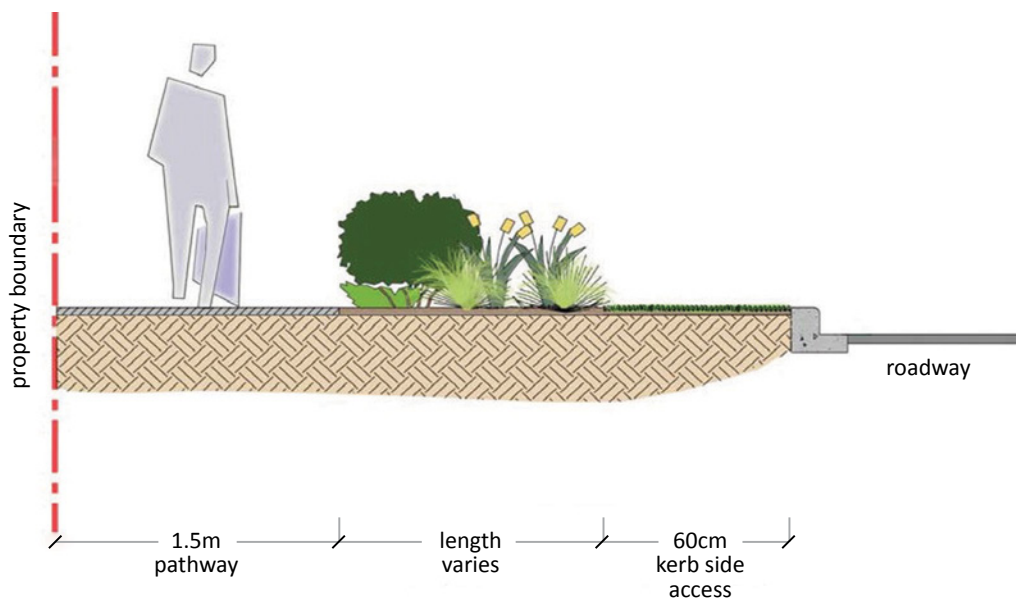


Figure 1: A 60cm access area must be maintained between the kerb and in ground planting.

Planter boxes and raised beds

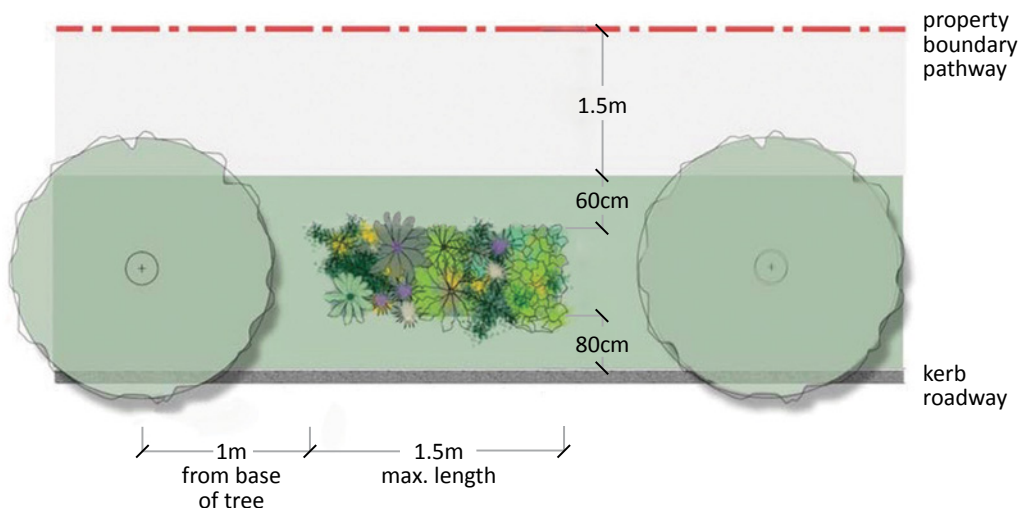


Figure 2: An 80cm access area must be maintained between the kerb and planter boxes. A 60cm access area must be maintained between raised beds and the footpath. A distance of 1m from the base of the tree must remain unplanted and free of planter boxes so as not to damage roots. Planter boxes must not exceed 1.5m in length.

Traffic visibility



Figure 3: To maintain visibility, street corners are not to be planted for a 45 degree splay from the property.

3.

Design and Materials

Gardens that use existing site soil are preferred by Council, rather than those needing new materials. Plants should be selected that are suited to local soil conditions so that soil additives, such as fertilisers, are not needed. Sustainable gardening is encouraged and, the use of synthetic fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides are not permitted.

The soil or growing medium next to the footpath should be level with, or slightly below the top surface of the footpath. This will ensure that surface water can flow into the garden bed, and that soil, mulch or other garden materials do not spill over.

It is important to select the right plants for the location and consider how they will grow over time. Research is recommended before choosing the species, see local plant list included for guidance and Council's 'Living Connections' program for further information. Ensure there is enough space for the future growth of plants. Plants that are spiky and have sharp edges or points, such as cacti are not suitable for verge gardens.

Waverley encourages residents to compost and utilise the rich soil and liquid fertiliser it provides while reducing landfill. Compost should be established and maintained within a resident's property, however if there is no outdoor space available within the property, composting may be approved on public land in limited circumstances when connected to a verge garden. Composting in Waverley is supported by the 'Compost Revolution' program.

3.1 Garden design elements

When thinking about designing your verge garden, consider the following:

- Keep plants and soil clear of utility covers such as fire hydrants, phone, and stormwater pits.
- Monitor the sun, shade, damp, dry conditions of the site before selecting plants.
- Native plants are encouraged. Choose drought-tolerant plants and those suited to coastal conditions. Planting native plants encourages native birds and wildlife.
- Choose perennial plants over those that last for one growing season to minimise garden maintenance (see recommended species list in Plant List).
- Consider mulching around plants to suppress the growth of weeds and reduce watering.
- Make sure plants do not overhang the footpath or roads, or into gutters.
- Avoid planting weeds or allowing them to grow.
- Trees are not allowed. This includes frangipani.
- Edible plants that require soil cultivation and regular replacement are not recommended.
- Eating produce grown on the verge is at your own risk.
- Plant low growing plants at corners to ensure visibility to traffic.
- Materials used must be low risk e.g., no bamboo or hardwood stakes, steel pickets or guide wires that might injure a pedestrian or cause irritation or toxicity.
- The garden must remain free of physical structures that cause a trip hazard and pedestrian footpaths must remain clear.
- Gardening work must be undertaken by hand. Mechanised equipment is not permitted.
- All digging should be limited to shallow depths to avoid interference with underground utilities. Contact Dial Before You Dig at www.1100.com.au to identify underground services.

3.2 Planter box considerations

When deciding on the type and location of a planter box, consider the following:

- Planter boxes are permitted in verge gardens and recommended in areas with hard, level surfaces.
- Planter boxes should be constructed from sustainably sourced wood. Recycled wood can be used if it meets the requirements below. If you are growing food in your planter box, do not use treated pine. Alternatively, corrugated iron can be used providing there are no sharp edges. Wine barrels are also acceptable.
- Planter boxes should be square or rectangular in shape, with four sides and a fixed bottom if positioned on hard surfaces.
- Planter boxes must be durable enough to survive outdoors, stable after planting out, resistant to toppling, waterproof and UV resistant.
- Planter boxes must be free of sharp edges, protrusions, or features, which may damage the footpath or injure passing pedestrians.
- Planter boxes must be regularly maintained to ensure they are safe, tidy, and visually appealing.

4.

Safety when working on a verge garden

4.1 Working safely on verge gardens

Residents are responsible for their own safety while working on a verge garden. This means taking basic safety precautions such as wearing appropriate clothing and protective equipment, sun safety and utilising and taking care when using tools and materials.

Always consider the following when working on a verge garden:

- How the garden and related activities will affect others.
- Always work from the footpath or verge, never from a position on the road.
- Watch out for passing cars and keep clear of cyclists and pedestrians.
- Wearing high visibility clothing is recommended.
- Wear gloves and any other personal protective equipment.
- Use tools safely and do not store tools or materials on the footpath as they may cause a trip hazard.

4.2 Insurance

Council will take out and keep current public liability insurance to cover private individuals in relation to approved verge gardens which are subsequently maintained in accordance with the Public Gardening Policy and applicable Guidelines. However, this does not prevent a third party from making a claim against the applicant relating to gardens.

4.3 Approval and Compliance

Applicants must complete the Induction on page 6 for their verge garden to be approved. Council will undertake regular inspections of approved verge gardens to monitor compliance. If Council receives complaints about a verge garden, a staff member will contact the applicant to discuss the complaint.

Council will acknowledge receipt of a submitted induction checklist and provide feedback where required prior to approval. Council can advise if there are any potential or immediate development plans for the intended site.

Verge gardens that are not well maintained, have been abandoned, are unsafe or untidy will be considered non-compliant with these guidelines. Council may issue instructions to restore the garden to a satisfactory standard within 28 days or reinstate the site to turf. If Council does not receive a response within this timeframe, the verge garden will be removed by Council and associated costs will be transferred to the resident.

5.

Plant List

Local Native and Bushtucker Plants

SHRUBS BOTANICAL NAME	SHRUBS COMMON NAME	CLIMBERS, GROUNDCOVERS BOTANICAL NAME	CLIMBERS, GROUNDCOVERS COMMON NAME
<i>Acacia myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle Wattle	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>	Apple Berry
<i>Acacia suaveolens</i>	Sweet Wattle	<i>Carpobrotus glaucescens</i>	Pigface
<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i>	Berry Saltbush	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Gotu Cola
<i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i>	Midjim Berry	<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Old Man's Beard
<i>Baeckea imbricata</i>	Heath Myrtle	<i>Commersonia scandens</i>	Wrinkled Kerrawang
<i>Banksia spinulosa</i>	Hairpin Banksia	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney Weed
<i>Banksia robur</i>	Swamp Banksia	<i>Eustrephus latifolius</i>	Wombat Berry
<i>Bauera rubioides</i>	River Dog Rose	<i>Geranium homeanum</i>	Cranesbill
<i>Boronia ledifolia</i>	Sydney Boronia	<i>Gonocarpus teucrioides</i>	Germander Raspwort
<i>Bossiaea heterophylla</i>	Variable Bossiaea	<i>Goodenia hederacea</i>	Ivy Goodenia
<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>	Daphne Heath	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	False Sarsaparilla
<i>Correa alba</i>	White Correa	<i>Hibbertia dentata</i>	Toothed Guinea Flower
<i>Correa reflexa</i>	Native Fuchsia	<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>	Golden Guinea Flower
<i>Crowea saligna</i>	Crowea	<i>Mirbelia rubiifolia</i>	Heathy Mirbelia
<i>Darwinia fascicularis</i>	Darwinia	<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	Creeping Boobialla
<i>Dillwynia retorta</i>	Heathy Parrot Pea	<i>Oplismenus species</i>	Basket Grass
<i>Einadia hastata</i>	Berry Saltbush	<i>Pandorea pandorana</i>	Wonga Wonga Vine
<i>Grevillea speciosa</i>	Red Spider Grevillea	<i>Pelargonium australe</i>	Native Storksbill
<i>Leucopogon ericoides</i>	Pink Beard-heath	<i>Persicaria decipiens</i>	Slender Knotweed
<i>Lomatia silaifolia</i>	Crinkle Bush	<i>Plectranthus parviflorus</i>	Cockspur flower
<i>Melaleuca thymifolia</i>	Thyme Honey-Myrtle	<i>Scaevola aemula</i>	Fairy Fan-flower
<i>Micromyrtus ciliata</i>	Fringed Heath-myrtle	<i>Scaevola calendulacea</i>	Dune Fan-flower
<i>Olearia tomentosa</i>	Toothed Daisy -Bush	<i>Tetragonia tetragonioides</i>	Warrigal Greens
<i>Phebalium squamulosum</i>	Scaly Phebalium	<i>Viola hederacea</i>	Native Violet
<i>Philothea buxifolia</i>	Box-leaf wasflower	FERNS BOTANICAL NAME	FERNS COMMON NAME
<i>Philothea myoporoides</i>	Long leaf wax flower	<i>Doodia aspera</i>	Rasp Fern
<i>Pimelea linifolia</i>	Slender Rice flower	<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	Bat's-wing Fern
<i>Platysace lanceolata</i>	Native Parsnip	<i>Hypolepis muelleri</i>	Harsh Ground Fern
<i>Plectranthus parviflorus</i>	Little Spurflower	<i>Pellaea falcata</i>	Sickle Fern
<i>Pultenaea linophylla</i>	Halo Bush Pea	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Common Bracken
<i>Rhagodia spinescens</i>	Creeping Saltbush	<i>Sticherus flabellatus</i>	Umbrella Fern
<i>Westringia fruticosa</i>	Coastal Rosemary	GRASSES / LILLIE & SEDGES BOTANICAL NAME	GRASSES / LILLIE & SEDGES COMMON NAME
<i>Beta vulgaris</i>	Perpetual spinach	<i>Austrodanthona var racemosa</i>	Wallaby Grass
<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Borage	<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tussock Sedge
<i>Capsicum species</i>	Chilli	<i>Carex pumila</i>	Strand Sedge
<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	Roman Chamomile	<i>Cissus antarctica</i>	Kanagaroo Grape
<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Lemongrass	<i>Crinum pedunculatum</i>	Swamp Lily
<i>Echinacea sp.</i>	Coneflower	<i>Cymbopogon refractus</i>	Barbed Wire Grass
<i>Lactuca sativa</i>	Perpetual lettuce	<i>Danthonia linkii</i>	Wallaby Grass
<i>Melissa officinalis</i>	Lemon Balm	<i>Dianella caerulea</i>	Blue Flax Lily
<i>Origanum majorana</i>	Marjoram	<i>Dianella congesta</i>	Coastal Flax Lily
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Oregano	<i>Dianella revoluta</i>	Black-anther Flax Lily
<i>Persicaria odorata</i>	Vietnamese Mint	<i>Dichelachne crinita</i>	Long Hair Plume Grass
<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Parsley	<i>Echinopogon caespitosus</i>	Tufted Hedgehog Grass
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Sorrel	<i>Ficinia nodosa</i>	Knobby Club Rush
<i>Salvia elegans</i>	Pineapple Sage	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	Blady Grass
<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Common Sage	<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	Pale Rush
<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>	Rosemary	<i>Juncus usitatus</i>	Common Rush
<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	Salad Burnet	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny-headed Mat Rush
<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Feverfew	<i>Microleana stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Common Thyme	<i>Poa labillardieri</i>	Tussock Grass
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Ginger	<i>Themeda australis</i>	Kangaroo Grass

Verge garden induction checklist



Date _____

First Name _____ Surname _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

If submitting on behalf of another party

Property Owner Name _____

Property Owner Email _____

I have read the verge garden guidelines

I have included photos and a sketch of the area showing measurements and plants with this submission

Induction checklists will be stored on the Waverley Council register for insurance and compliance purposes.

Please return this induction checklist and submit any enquiries to publicgardening@waverley.nsw.gov.au

REQUIREMENTS	Planter Boxes	Garden Beds	Tick if met
1 Maximum depth of mulch around tree roots		10cm	
2 Maximum depth for digging into verge		30cm	
3 Maximum height of plants along driveways and footpath edges		50cm	
4 Maximum height of plants at maturity (subject to point 3)		2m	
5 Minimum length along kerb to remain unplanted (see figure 2)	80cm	60cm	
6 Minimum distance from driveways for kerb verges (does not apply to property boundary verges)	1.5m	50cm	
7 Maximum distance for garden beds without access break for kerb verges (does not apply to property boundary verges)	2.5m	2.5m	
8 Minimum clearance from the trunk of street trees (see figure 2)	1m	1m	
9 Minimum access between garden beds for kerb verges (does not apply to property boundary verges)	80cm	80cm	
10 Minimum height of edging	15cm		
11 Set back from edge of property at street corners and junctions	2m	2m	

PLANTER BOXES (ONLY COMPLETE FOR RAISED PLANTER BOXES)			
12 Minimum height of planter box	15cm		
13 Maximum height of plants in planter box	60cm		
14 Minimum access between planter boxes for kerb verges (does not apply to property boundary verges)	80cm		
15 Minimum length between footpath and planter box to remain unplanted for kerb verges (see figure 2)	60cm		
16 Maximum length of a planter box	1.5m		
17 Planter boxes are positioned away from access points e.g., taxi stands, bus stops, accessible parking			

OTHER PROVISIONS			
18 The verge is located directly in front of my property			
19 I have attached a letter of support from the property owner if this is not the applicant			
20 Neighbours on both sides of my property have been consulted about the garden design			
21 The site is located outside exclusion zones (see section 2)			
22 A sketch of the verge garden is included indicating planting area, any planter boxes and plant species			
23 A photo of the verge garden will be provided to Council once complete			
24 The top level of soil in the garden will be level with or below the top of the kerb and footpath			
25 The verge garden will remain free of spiky plants and weeds (such as cactus or agave)			
26 Materials used will be low risk to reduce injury or cause irritation and toxicity			
27 The verge garden and footpaths will remain free of physical structures that could cause a trip hazard			
28 The verge garden will be regularly maintained to keep it tidy, safe and in an attractive condition			