

3.2.4 Verge Treatment

Type:	Regulatory Services, Environmental Health
Legislation:	Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016
Delegation:	
Other Related Document:	Town of East Fremantle Greening Guidelines Maintenance and Removal of Public and Verge Trees Policy Climate Emergency Strategy 2022-2032 Climate Emergency Action Plan 2023 - 2033

Objective

To promote the installation of soft landscaping in the local road verge area, utilising vegetation that optimises permeable surfaces to attain the following objectives:

1. Establish livable, waterwise, and green public corridors and verge areas supporting local wildlife and biodiversity.
2. Establish resilient shaded spaces that not only mitigate urban heat but also contribute to fostering healthy and livable communities within the Town, in response to the challenges posed by climate change.
3. Limit the discharge of stormwater containing hazardous chemicals and materials such as microplastics into sensitive environments, including the Swan River.
4. Enhance the visual appeal of the streetscape and promote public health by contributing to the aesthetic improvement of public spaces.

Policy Scope

This policy is applicable to all land within the road and street verge areas controlled by the Town, where the Town has authority over the road reserve. Although verges are Crown Land, adjacent landowners are responsible for maintaining and enhancing them.

Legislative Requirements

In compliance with the Town of East Fremantle [Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016](#), landowners and occupiers abutting a verge can install a 'permissible verge treatment.' Further details can be found in the Verge Treatment Policy (this policy) and the Town of East Fremantle Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016.

Policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Water Corporation's [Waterwise Verge Best Practice Guidelines](#) and provides further guidance for permissible verge treatments as stated in the Town of East Fremantle Public Places and Local Government Property Local Law 2016.

Design Guide

Residents are encouraged to install permeable soft landscaping with the following requirements:

- Features must be set back to provide clear access to infrastructure (underground services, power poles) and not obstruct lines of sight for pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists.
- For verges without footpaths, plants should be set back at least one metre from the road kerb to allow for pedestrian movement and waste collection.
- Footpaths and kerbing are not to be removed or replaced for landscaping.
- Verge installations must not include unsafe materials or structures.

Verge Garden Materials

The following table outlines acceptable and unacceptable verge treatments. All treatment placed in the verge area should be permeable for water and set back to provide clear sightlines and safety areas for the public and access to any services.

	Material Description
Verge Treatments Approved no approval required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mulch (contained within the boundary of the verge). • Maintained gardens native and waterwise preferred (below 750mm) • Drought-tolerant lawn varieties such as couch, kikuyu, and warm-season buffalo (however, lawn verges not preferred).
Verge Treatments Approved <u>subject to approval</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation installed in the verge. • Edible plants, ensuring regular harvesting and preventing any produce from being left on the ground to decompose (less than 750mm).
Unapproved Verge Treatments When the Town deems a material, structure, or verge treatment to be hazardous or posing a significant risk to the public the material will be deemed unacceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic, spikey, or poisonous plants or plantings. • Paving, concrete, or other similar hardstand materials. • Limestone rubble, gravel, or any similar loose aggregates. • Artificial/synthetic lawn. • Verge trees other than those planted by the Town. • Materials or structures which are unsafe, block sightlines, are loose or slippery, present hazard or are impermeable.

When to apply for a Verge Treatment requiring approval?

A verge treatment application is not required when installing Verge Treatments which are accepted and do not require approval.

To apply for an Accepted Material Type that requires approval, follow these steps:

1. Fill out the Alteration to Verge Form available at [Verge Treatments and Street Trees](#).
2. The Application Form must include a diagrammatic sketch, identifying any proposed Irrigation or Edible Plants proposed for the area. For all irrigation conditions refer to [Verge Treatments and Street Trees – Conditions for installing irrigation](#).

If the application is adjacent to a strata-titled property, obtain written approval for the works from all strata owners/managers.

Underground Services

Before starting any works on the verge, including irrigation and planting, applicants must contact [Dial Before You Dig](#) to identify the location of underground services. For more information, visit <https://www.1100.com.au/> or call 1100 during business hours.

Any works conducted by the applicant on the verge that result in damage or disruption to services must be reinstated at the applicant's expense. The Town, along with service providers, retains the right to undertake necessary works on the verge or authorise others to do so. Periodically, works will be undertaken on the verge, such as tree pruning or service maintenance/upgrades, which may damage or disturb verge gardens. The resident/landowner is responsible for the reinstatement of the verge garden following any works by utility providers or other authorised parties.

Plant Selection

The Town encourages waterwise plant use, offering native plants at the annual Apaca Nursery plant sale every May. Refer to the Water Corporation's [Waterwise Plant Selection Tool](#) or the Town's Greening Guidelines for suitable species.

Street Trees

Residents can apply for a street tree by completing the [Verge Tree Request Form](#). The Town is responsible for planting, maintaining, and removing all street and reserve trees according to its 'Maintenance and Removal of Public and Verge Trees Policy.'

The Town is committed to preserving healthy verge trees that pose no safety concerns. Removal requests lacking suitable justification will not be supported. Pruning of verge trees will only occur if a tree causes adverse impacts, as determined by the Town or its contractor. When installing verge gardens, care must be taken to protect the trunk, canopy, and preserve the root zone of street trees.

Maintenance and Upkeep

The maintenance of the verge is the responsibility of the adjacent owner or occupier, with the Town assuming no responsibility for the health and well-being of approved verge gardens. Once installed, a verge garden is expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Plant growth must be confined within the verge area, avoiding spillage into footpaths or road areas, and should not exceed a height of 750mm.
- Plants must be consistently maintained in a weed-free state and watered as needed for establishment and upkeep.
- The removal of all excess soils and litter resulting from plantings is the responsibility of the applicant and must be conducted at their expense.

In cases where a verge landscaping feature is deemed by the Town to pose a safety concern or fails to meet established guidelines, the Town may instruct the applicant to revise specific aspects or the entirety of the feature to align with this policy and Town requirements. Alternatively, the Town retains the right to remove or mandate the removal of any non-compliant feature at cost to the owner of the adjacent property.

Responsible Directorate:	Operations
Reviewing Officer:	WASO
Decision making Authority:	Council
Date of Adoption:	20/7/21
Policy Amended/Reviewed:	19/11/24