



CREATING YOUR VERGE GARDEN



CONTENTS

PURPOSE	1
SERVICES	2
STREET TREES	2
ASSISTANCE	3
PLANT SUBSIDY SCHEME	3
APPLICATION FORMS	3
MATERIALS	4
DESIGN TIPS	5
VERGE DESIGN EXAMPLES	6
SKETCH YOUR OWN PLAN	7
PREPARATION	8
INSTALLATION	11
IRRIGATION	13
CHOOSING PLANTS	14
RECOMMENDED SPECIES	15

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Acknowledgements

This guide was developed with reference to “A step by step guide to creating a water-wise verge” by the Water Corporation of Western Australia and various other WA local government public documents.

PURPOSE

The City of Fremantle 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 effects
- provide habitat for fauna and improve biodiversity
- improve rainwater infiltration and reduce stormwater runoff
- improve building thermal performance
- display pride in our community

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. Residents may also access the annual initiatives to help subsidise the development of verge gardens.

This guide provides information on how to implement your verge garden successfully.



Image: jba.com.au

SERVICES / RESPONSIBILITY

The verge's primary function is to serve as a corridor for above and below ground service utilities such as street lighting, power, water, sewerage, gas, telephone and fibre optic cables. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the City to install, maintain and remove street trees as required.

Verge landscaping including irrigation, planting and organic mulching is the responsibility of residents. Periodically, works will be undertaken in the verge, such as tree pruning or service maintenance/upgrades, which may damage or disturb verge gardens. The resident is responsible for reinstatement of the verge garden following any works by utility providers or other authorised parties.

STREET TREES

The City of Fremantle has a comprehensive street tree program which includes regular maintenance and annual winter planting. Residents are not permitted to plant street trees on their verge. The City, with access to underground service locations, knowledge of relevant regulations and tree species, takes responsibility for the installation and maintenance of all street trees. Residents are encouraged to participate in the annual street tree installation program by placing a request. For more info, please visit fremantle.wa.gov.au/residents/trees-and-verges



VERGE PREPARATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The City's verge preparation assistance scheme assists those in need with the conversion to a verge garden by providing level preparation and mulch delivery. Some preparation of verges will remain the responsibility of the applicant.

The City will assist with preparation by:

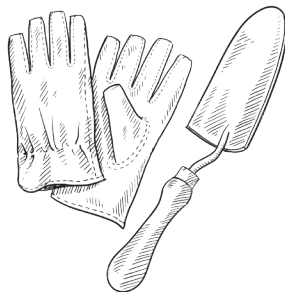
- removing soil, grass and vegetation against hard surfaces including kerbs, driveways and footpaths.
- delivering recycled tree chipping mulch to the residents. The applicant will be responsible for spreading the mulch. (Mulch is subject to availability)

Applications will open each Autumn and 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.

PLANT SUBSIDY SCHEME

The City provides plants to residents through the plant subsidy scheme to help verge garden development and maintenance. Residents can purchase up to 40 plants each May from APACE Nursery at a discounted price of \$1.50 each. Other property types, such as schools or commercial, can apply to the City for larger quantities which will be at the City's discretion.



APPLICATIONS

Application forms are available from:

fremantle.wa.gov.au/residents/trees-and-verges

MATERIALS

The City encourages the use of soft landscaping on verges to improve infiltration of rain water, reduce urban heat island effect, lower maintenance and improve streetscape aesthetics. Preferred materials include native plants, organic mulch, vegetables and herbs, vegetable planters (removable construction type). Plants which are less than 0.7m high at maturity should be chosen to retain sight lines and provide a safe environment for all road and footpath users. Hardscapes such as paving, concrete or gravel are acceptable if less than 1/3 of the verge area.

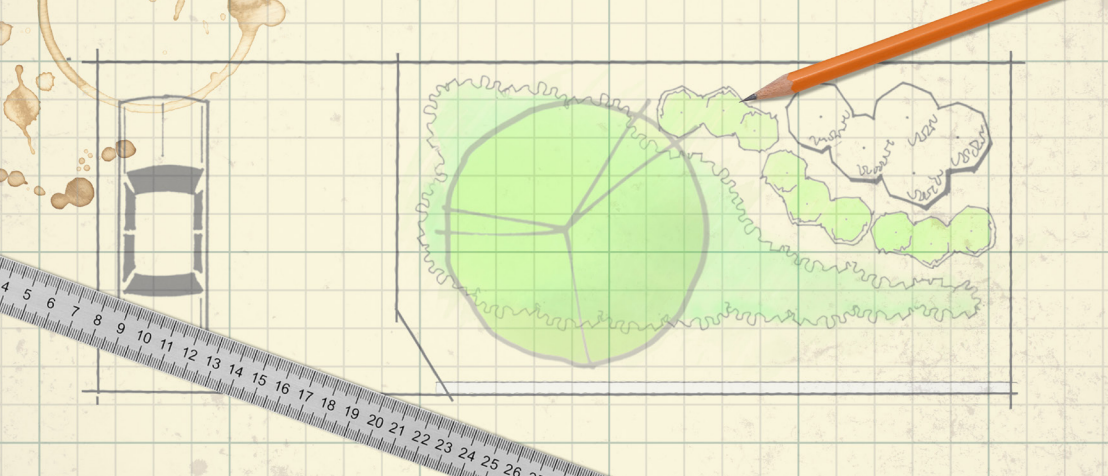
Any materials which could be dangerous, loose, slippery, sharp or block sight-lines are not allowed on verges. Artificial turf is not permitted.

The use of alternative materials such as benches, boulders, hardscapes (more than 1/3 of the verge), timber or raised garden beds, are only allowed on application to the City. Submissions will be assessed based on use, size of the verge, access to services, safety, sight lines, urban heat island effect, ecological services and community amenity.

Please refer to our verge garden policy for more details and/or apply for the use of alternative materials on your verge here:

fremantle.wa.gov.au/residents/trees-and-verges





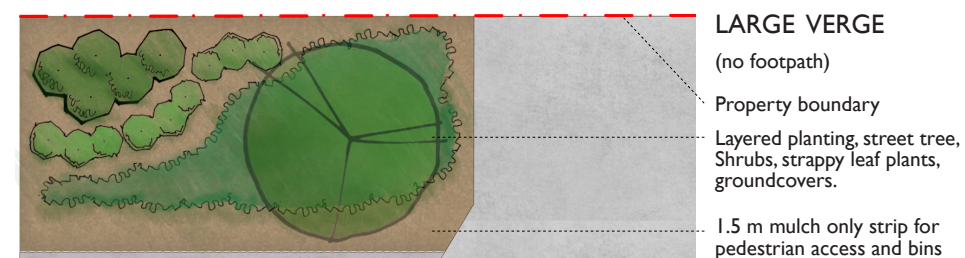
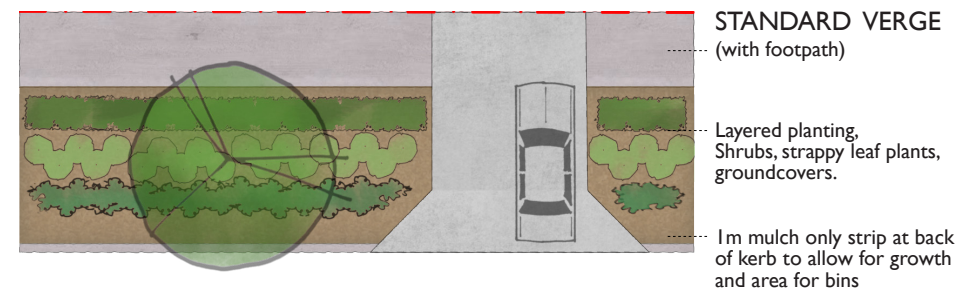
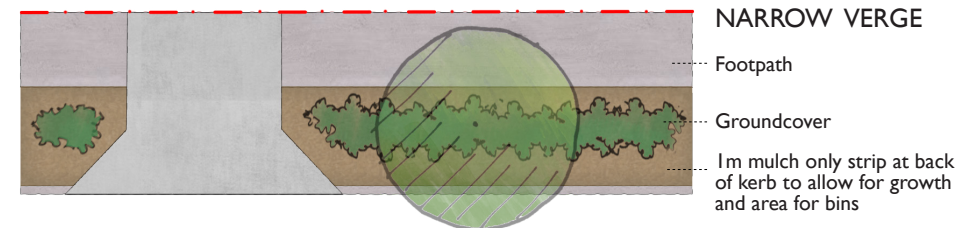
DESIGN TIPS

- Measure your verge and draw up a plan.
- Calculate the area and how many plants you need.
- Consider your choice of materials e.g. organic mulch and native plants, street trees, vegetables and planter boxes.
- Offset plants minimum one metre from street trees, kerbs, footpaths, services and driveways, allowing them room to grow and spread.
- Layered planting, mixing colours plus groundcovers, strappy leaf plants and shrubs creates aesthetic variety and contrast.
- Flowering native plants look great and attract beneficial insects and birds.
- Leave a space for your bins along the kerb.
- Leave a pedestrian refuge strip if there is no footpath on your side of the street.



Image: Giles Pickard

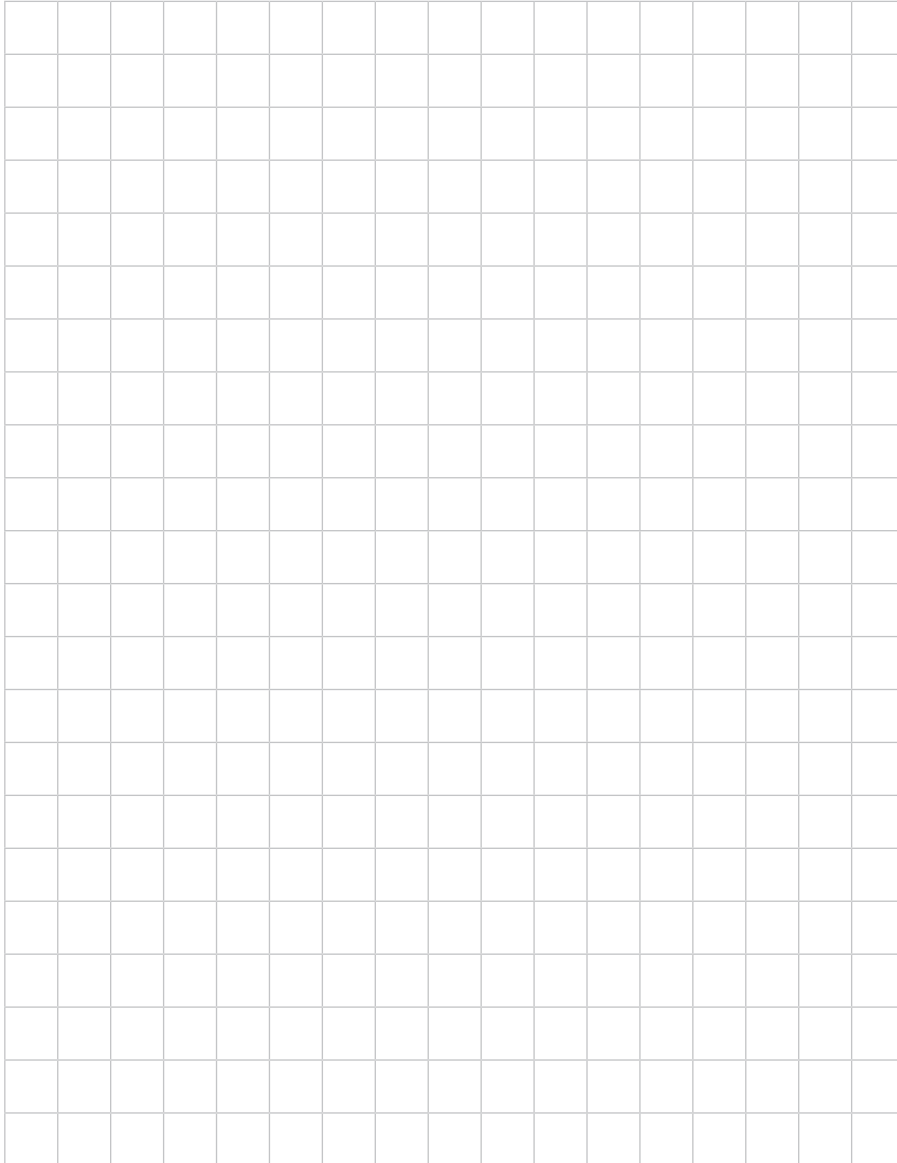
VERGE DESIGN EXAMPLES



SKETCH YOUR OWN PLAN

Use this space to sketch your verge plan.

Suggestion: measure your verge first and use each square as 1sq/m when drawing



PREPARATION

Preparing your verge garden properly is vital to its success. Follow these steps to ensure low maintenance and thriving plants.

Step 1: Lawn and weed removal

Remove existing grass with a shovel or turf cutter. If required, you may choose to apply an appropriate herbicide to remove difficult grasses such as couch. Wait a few days for the grass to die, then dig it up and remove from your property.

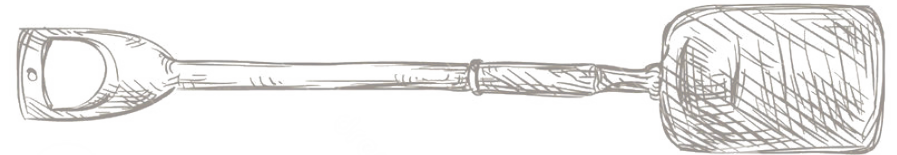


Image:
Emma Young WAtoday



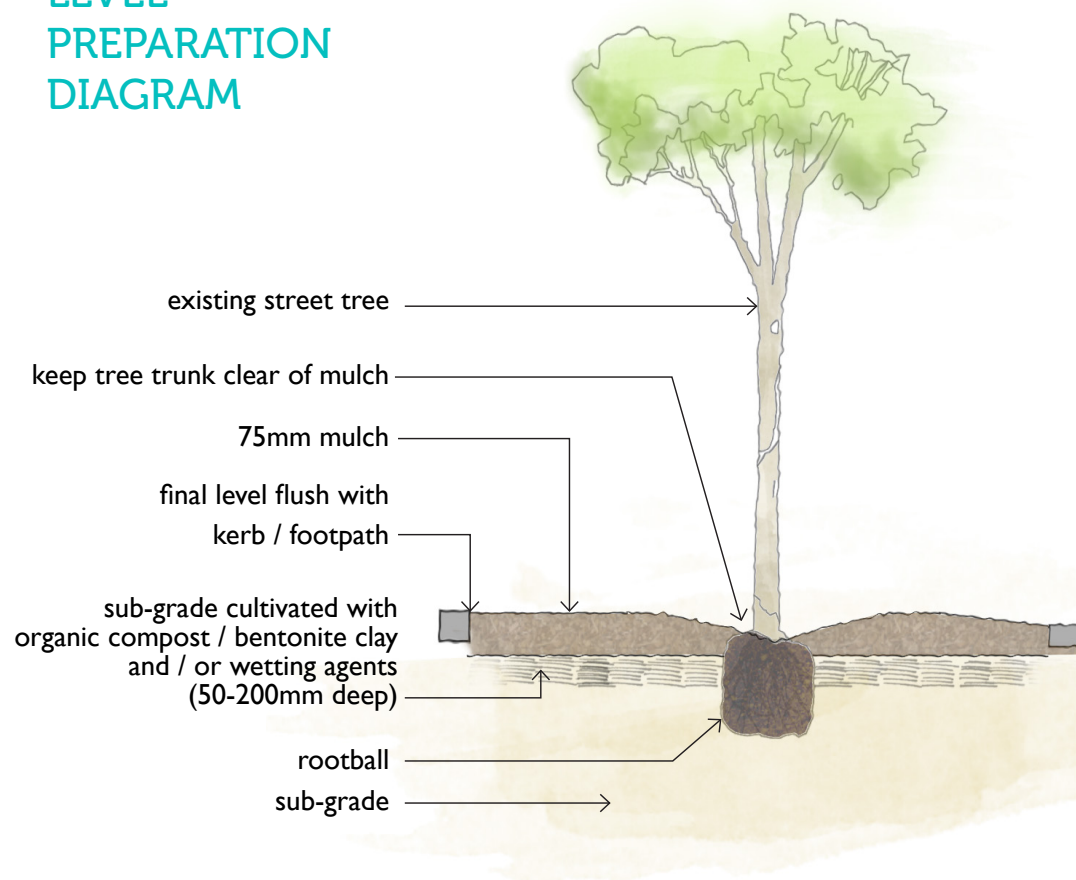
Step 2: Soil preparation and levels (boxing out)

When removing existing turf or weeds, bring your soil level down to approximately 75-100mm below the kerb / footpath level to allow for mulch application later. Your finished level after mulching should be flush with the kerb. This helps retain water and mulch within the verge rather than spilling onto the path or driveway. If your verge has an existing street tree, be careful not to damage or expose the roots during preparation.

If your soil looks poor, it probably is. Most soils in Fremantle are sandy and hydrophobic, meaning they do not hold much moisture or nutrients. You should consider applying soil conditioner such as organic compost, clay such as bentonite and soil wetting agents, by manually mixing it into the top 50mm of soil. Remember to leave your finished soil level 75-100mm below the kerb for mulching.



LEVEL PREPARATION DIAGRAM



When buying soil conditioner or wetting agents select products with the Waterwise and Smart Approved WaterMark symbols and refer to the manufacturer's instructions for application rates.

For more information visit watercorporation.com.au/products



INSTALLATION

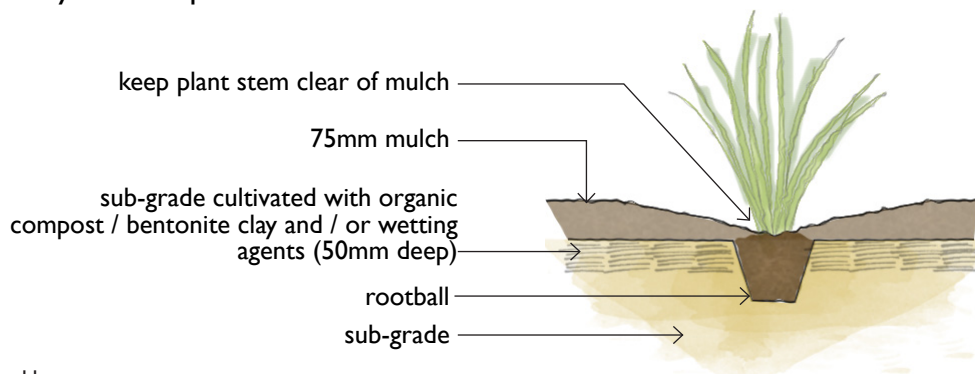
Step 3: Setting out plants

Before digging any holes, set out your plants in their pots. Check the mature size (height and width) of your plants, allowing them room to grow to their full size without obstructing sight lines, access ways and services. In general, keep larger shrubs away from hard surfaces and offset groundcovers approx 1-1.5m away, to stop them spilling over into access ways.

Step 4: Planting

Late autumn / early winter is the best time to plant your verge as rainfall and cooler temperatures will help to establish your new garden without additional watering.

Once you dig your holes, a few granules of slow release fertilizer for native plants can be added before dropping your plants in and backfilling the hole. Gently compact the soil around and then water in your new plants.



Step 5: Mulching

Applying good waterwise mulch will help to reduce plant stress and evaporation loss, suppress weed growth and greatly improve the appearance of your garden.

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 and subject to availability.

Organic mulch is to be placed:

- 75-100mm deep
- level with or below adjacent hard surfaces
- 100mm clear of plant stems
- 500mm clear of street tree trunks.





Step 6: Maintenance

Maintenance of verge gardens is to be undertaken by the resident. Native verge gardens should only require occasional weeding and pruning. Prune plants periodically to ensure good form, maintain sightlines and access. Your garden may benefit from an application of slow release native plant fertiliser once a year. Mulch levels should be monitored and topped up as necessary.

Maintenance of all street trees is to be undertaken by the City. Please contact the City if your tree needs pruning.

IRRIGATION

Ideally your waterwise verge won't need a permanent irrigation system, as once established unirrigated dryland, native plants can survive our hot dry summers with little to no supplementary watering.

If you do require irrigation, Water Corporation recommends sub-surface drip irrigation. If you need help with irrigation, your local Waterwise Irrigator can help.

Remember to check your watering days and be sure to apply for a watering exemption if your new verge garden needs additional watering.

Visit Water Corporation's website for more handy tips, garden design ideas and videos on how to makeover your verge.
<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/save-water/in-the-garden/creating-a-waterwise-verge>

CHOOSING PLANTS

The City encourages local native plants which are hardy, drought tolerant and suitable to local conditions including soil type and sun exposure. You should aim to create an attractive, low maintenance verge garden which allows access to services where required and ties in with the overall streetscape aesthetically. Consider a mix of different growth habits - groundcovers, strappy leaf plants and shrubs as well as colour, flowers and mature size.

Avoid plants which grow over 0.7m high (which will obstruct sight-lines) and plants that are prickly, spiky, poisonous or cause allergic reactions.

To find waterwise plants suitable for your local area and garden type visit [watercorporation.com.au/plants](https://www.watercorporation.com.au/plants)

PLANT ASSOCIATIONS

The City of Fremantle lies within various soil and vegetation complexes. It is important to choose plants which will survive and thrive in the local conditions including soil, plant associations and exposure to sun and wind.



COASTAL
Exposed to wind and salt on or before the first ridge. Soils are typically sandy, rocky limestone and alkaline. Plants must be very hardy in these extreme conditions.

INLAND
Less exposed to wind, characterised by Tuarts and Banksia trees

RECOMMENDED SPECIES

Groundcovers

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SIZE	DESIGN NOTES
Coral Carpet	<i>Adenanthos cuneatus</i>	0.25 x 2	WA, L ★ ● ●
Coastal Pig Face	<i>Carpobrotus viriscens</i>	0.2 x 1.5	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Kalbarri carpet	<i>Eremophila glabra</i>	0.2 x 2	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Spider Net Grevillea	<i>Grevillea thelmanniana</i>	1 x 3	WA, L ★ 🐦 ● ●
Gin Gin Gem	<i>Grevillea obtusifolia</i>	0.25 x 3	WA, S, L ★ 🐦 ● ●
Green Carpet Grevillea	<i>Grevillea crithmifolia</i>	0.7 x 3	WA, S, L ★ 🐦 ● ● A
Snake Bush	<i>Hemiantra pungens</i>	0.2 x 0.7	WA, S, L 🦋 ● A
Native Wisteria	<i>Hardenbergia comptonia</i>	0.3 x 2	WA, S, L ★ 🦋 ● ● A
Snake Vine	<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>	0.8 x 4	E.AUS, S, L ★ 🦋 ● ●
Glow Wattle	<i>Acacia lasioscarpa</i>	0.25 x 1	WA, S, L 🦋 ● ● A
Running Postman	<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	0.8 x 3	WA, L 🦋 🐦 ● A
Creeping Boobillia	<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	0.5 x 2	WA, S, L ★ ● ●
Thick Leaved Fan Flower	<i>Scaevola crassifolia</i>	0.5 x 2	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Birthday Candles	<i>Banksia spinulosa</i>	0.5 x 1	E.AUS, S, L 🦋 🐦 ●
Australian Bluebell	<i>Billardiera fusiformis</i>	0.3 x 1	WA, S, L 🦋 🐦 ● ● A
Oldfield's Darwinia	<i>Darwinia oldfieldii</i>	0.5 x 1	WA, S, L 🦋 🐦 ● ●
Lemon Scented Myrtle	<i>Darwinia citriadora</i>	0.7 x 1	WA, S, L ★ 🦋 🐦 ● ●
Ground Cover Banksia	<i>Banksia blenchifolia</i>	0.5 x 3	WA, S, L ★ 🦋 🐦 ● ●

LEGEND:

WA : West Australian native

S : Salt tolerant

L : Limestone tolerant

★ : Star performer

🦋 : Butterfly attracting

🐦 : Bird Attracting

● : Coastal vegetation complex

● : Tall forest vegetation complex

A : Available from APACE nursery

SIZE = Height x Width in metres

Kalbarri Carpet



Coastal Pig Face



Gin Gin Gem



Snake Bush



Native Wisteria



Snake Vine



Glow Wattle



Running Postman



Creeping Boobilliana



Fan Flower



Oldfield's Darwinia



Groundcover Banksia



Birthday Candles



Seaspray Darwinia



Strappy plants

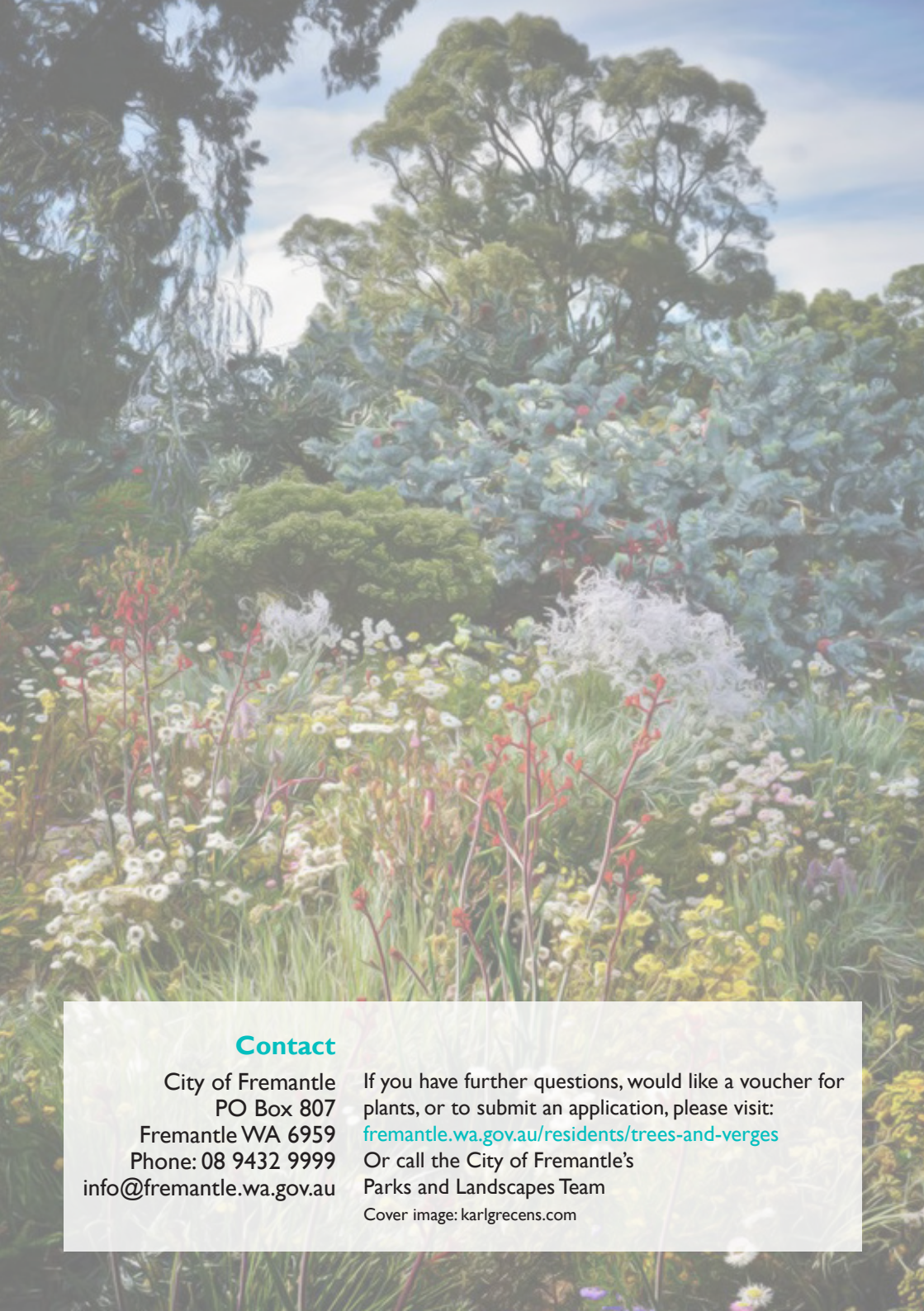
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SIZE (m)	DESIGN NOTES
Cat's Paw	Anigozanthos humilis	0.5 x 0.3	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Mangles Kangaroo Paw	Anigozanthos manglesii	0.8 x 0.4	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Grey Cottonheads	Conostylus candicans	0.3 x 0.8	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Dianella 'Little Rev'	Dianella 'Little Rev'	0.4 x 0.4	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Flax Lilly	Dianella revoluta	0.8 x 0.4	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Native Iris	Patersonia occidentalis	0.6 x 0.3	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Morning Iris	Orthosanthus laxus	0.5 x 0.5	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Nodding Club Rush	Isolepis cernua	0.3 x 0.3	WA, S ★ ● ● A

Shrubs

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SIZE (m)	DESIGN NOTES
Hairy Claw Flower	Calothamnus hirsutus	0.8 x 1.5	WA, S, L ● ● ● A
Common Brown Pea	Bossiaea eriocarpa	0.75 x 0.5	WA, S, L ● ● ● A
Silver Nugget	Leucophyta brownii (dwarf)	1 x 1	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Pink Rice Flower	Pimela ferruginea	1 x 1	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Purple Fan Fare	Scaevola aemula	0.2 x 2	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Coastal Rosemary	Westringia dampierii	1 x 1	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Native Rosemary	Westringia fruticosa	1 x 1	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Couch Honeypot	Banksia nivea	1 x 1	WA, S, L ● ● ● A
Common Dampiera	Dampiera linearis	0.3 x 0.5	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Silky Eremophila	Eremophila nivea	0.8 x 0.5	WA, S, L ★ ● ● A
Darling Range Beaufortia	Beaufortia macrostemon	0.4 x 0.4	WA, S, L ● ● ● A

*Any plant which grows over 0.7m high must be kept pruned to this height or not planted at all.





Contact

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info@fremantle.wa.gov.au

If you have further questions, would like a voucher for plants, or to submit an application, please visit:
fremantle.wa.gov.au/residents/trees-and-verges
Or call the City of Fremantle's
Parks and Landscapes Team
Cover image: [karlgrecens.com](https://www.karlgrecens.com)