



Moreton Bay Regional Council
Road Verge Planting Guide

2017

Purpose

These guidelines have been developed to inform residents of their obligations and the conditions associated with undertaking plantings within the road verge, on Council controlled roads. Residents are required to fully comply with these guidelines when creating a new verge garden.

Council acknowledges that verge gardens exist which pre-date the guidelines. It is not intended to require those verge gardens to comply with the guidelines unless public safety and pedestrian access issues are raised with Council.

This document is designed to:

- Ensure that all plantings by the community within the road verge are managed in a safe, efficient manner and maintained to an acceptable standard.
- Standardise processes and procedures for the development of community plantings within the road verge.
- Clarify the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in community plantings within the road verge.

Road verge

The road verge forms part of the road reserve between the kerb and the front property boundary, or where no kerb exists, between the table-drain and the front property boundary and is controlled and managed by Council.

The road verge provides a suitable space for:

- Pedestrians
- Footpaths
- Public utilities such as power, water, gas and telecommunications services, and
- Essential services such as bus stops

What can I do?

The owner/occupier of a property may landscape parts of the road verge immediately fronting their property, provided that the works meet with these guidelines.

Works that do not meet these guidelines cannot be undertaken.

It is the owner/occupier's responsibility to maintain garden areas constructed within the verge and to preserve a safe verge environment for pedestrians and road users. Council has a duty of care to ensure the verges are compliant with the relevant legislation, policies and guidelines for the safety of the community.



What is appropriate treatment?

Council supports the installation and maintenance of soft, water wise landscaping on the verge to create a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment. Soft landscaping includes grass (drought tolerant varieties are preferred), ground cover, low shrubs and vegetable gardens. Water wise plants are those that are drought tolerant and have a reduced need for fertilizer. In addition, local native plants can provide a usable habitat for birds, small reptiles and insects, and increase biodiversity within the region.

The installation of hard surfaces/paved areas within the street verge is actively discouraged due to increased stormwater runoff and limited visual amenity.



Design considerations

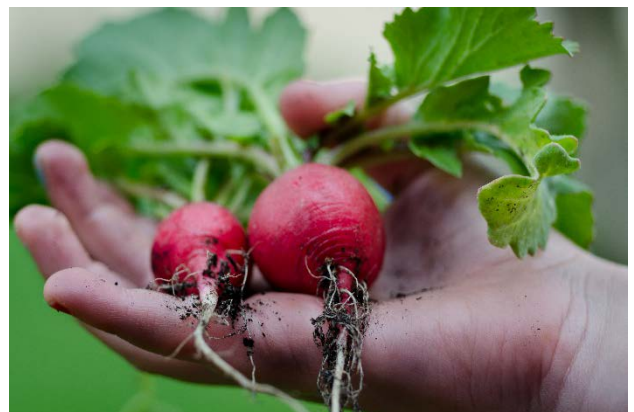
The landscape design must not create any undue hazards to road users or pedestrians. Plants should not interfere with driver or pedestrian sightlines, must be maintained to less than 0.75 metres in height and should not encroach onto footpaths or roadways. The planting of local native plants is encouraged due to their tolerance to harsh, dry conditions and their minimal requirement for fertilizer.

Where a concrete footpath is constructed across the frontage of the property a minimum distance of 0.75 metres immediately adjacent to the kerb, must be kept clear to allow for:

- Passengers to safely alight from any vehicle parked on the road
- To prevent damage to vehicle doors opening out over the kerb and verge
- To allow space for bin collection

Where a concrete footpath is not constructed across the frontage of the property a minimum distance of 2.0 metres immediately adjacent to the kerb, must be kept clear to also allow for pedestrian access.

Ideally the clear area adjacent to the kerb, as outlined above, should remain grassed. Where street trees occur in this space, organic, seasoned, large particle mulch, such as wood chips is considered an acceptable option. Mulch is to be replenished as required and grass is to be regularly cut to ensure that the area is maintained to a suitably safe standard.



Not permitted

The placement of the following materials, objects and/or barriers are not permitted within the road verge:

- fencing
- concrete slabs
- bricks
- the use of artificial grass
- rocks
- loose inorganic materials (stones & gravel) greater than 5mm in size
- logs
- bollards
- reticulation control boxes
- garden ornaments
- plants with sharp spikes or thorns
- garden stakes

Plants with thorns and spikes include, but are not limited to, roses with thorny stems, yuccas, cacti, and agaves.

Weed species are not permitted within the road verge. For information on plants considered weeds in the Moreton Bay region, refer to <http://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/land-management/health-pests-weeds-diseases/weeds-diseases/invasive-plants>.

Vegetable gardens

Vegetable gardens may be permitted if the vegetation does not exceed 0.75 metres in height, the ground is not raised and remains reasonably level, and stakes or fences are not used. Root vegetables and herbs are particularly suitable for verge vegetable gardens. Plants such as chillies which could be hazardous to children if ingested, are not permitted.

Your verge boundary

The resident must notify their neighbours about any proposed verge treatment works and agree on the location of the boundary between their adjacent verges.

Safety on your verge

Temporary barricades for the purpose of establishing verge landscaping are acceptable provided that the materials used do not create a hazard and are identified with sufficient numbers of reflective markers to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Barriers must not be erected across pedestrian access ways and must be removed once the garden is established (Maximum 2 months).

The level and grade of the verge, and between adjoining verges, is to remain consistent and free of barriers, trip hazards, excessive undulations, mounds, holes, depressions, ridges and terraces. Edgings and dividers are permitted only to the extent required to provide sufficient division, and provided that they are flush with the verge surface.



Access to your verge

Adequate access to the property letterbox for delivery by Australia Post must be provided, and a suitable location is to be provided on the verge in front of the property and immediately behind the kerb line for weekly collection of rubbish bins.

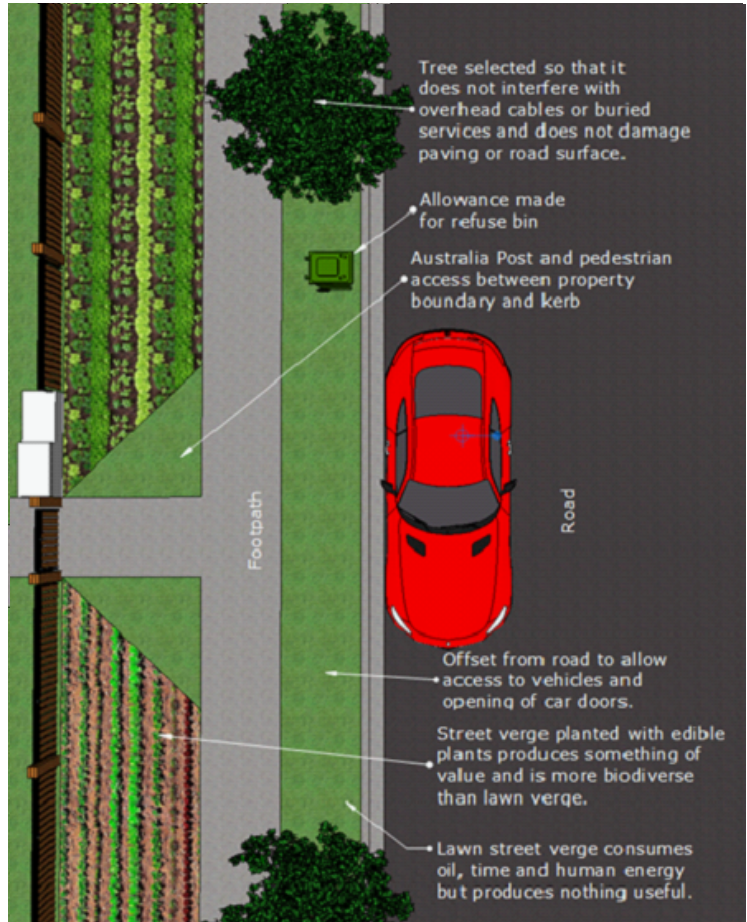
Roads and traffic

For safety, verge gardens can only be constructed on Council managed roads that are either low traffic roads or roads where kerbside parking is permitted. Verge gardens are not permitted on roads under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). Council can provide advice on whether a road is suitable for development of a verge garden, if required.

When working on your verge planting, be aware that you are working in a public place so keep an eye out for other verge users including passing cars, bicycles and pedestrians.

Make sure the height and width of your planting and associated infrastructure is not going to obstruct sight lines for pedestrians, cyclists and cars.

If planting placements are considered inappropriate, Council will notify the resident and require the area to be appropriately rectified or removed. If this notice is not complied with, Council will remove any offending plants or garden structure. In the event of such removal, Council will not be responsible for the reinstatement or cost of items removed, and Council will recover the cost of removing and disposing of materials.



Tips before you start

- Try to use native or water-wise plants and organic products where possible.
- Consider watering by hand with collected rainwater or recycled water (irrigation systems are not permitted) and mulch to retain soil moisture.
- As verge gardens are located on public footways, the Council cannot take responsibility for any damage to gardens or their contents.
- You are responsible for maintaining your garden and keeping it safe, clean, healthy and attractive. Council officers may issue clean-up notices to residents or businesses who fail to maintain verge gardens in a safe and satisfactory condition.
- Stay sun safe while you garden.
- Contact Dial Before You Dig to help locate any underground services on 1100.com.au or call 1100.



Note: *The above garden is a good example of how a verge planting should be maintained. It is compliant because it maintains a minimum 2.0 metre clear area adjacent to the kerb for vehicle access, bin collection, and still allows pedestrian access to the mailbox and across the verge.*

Conflict resolution and complaints procedure

Verge plantings should be visually pleasing and aim to promote local harmony and acceptance by neighbours. However, it is possible that conflicts may sometimes arise. In the event of a conflict arising, measures should be taken immediately to seek its resolution.

Where specific concerns are raised about a verge garden or plantings that pre-date Council's guidelines, Council's Manager Asset Maintenance, in consultation with the relevant Divisional Councillor, will inspect the site and determine on a case-by-case basis if works are necessary to modify the existing plantings.

Circumstances may arise where Council directs a resident to modify their verge garden within a specified period. If the resident fails to undertake the work, Council reserves the right to undertake the work and may seek to recover costs associated with completing the work where justifiable.

Constructing a verge garden

The important question to be asked is; *"Will my verge garden comply with all of the requirements of this guideline?"*

If you answer 'yes' then complete the following checklist and submit to Council. Please note that all responses to the checklist questions should be 'yes' for your proposal to comply.

Once you have submitted the checklist, with an accompanying sketch of your proposed verge garden, you may commence construction.

New community plantings within the road verge checklist



Postal Address
PO Box 159
Caboolture QLD 4510

Parks & Recreation Planning
Ph: 07 3205 0555

Internet
www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au
mbrc@moretonbay.qld.gov.au

ABN: 92 967 232 136

In order to satisfy the intent and objectives of the verge garden guidelines, you are required to complete the checklist below and submit it to Council.

An objective of this checklist is to ensure consistency, openness and transparency when considering the installation of verge gardens on land under the control of council.

Notifier details:

Mr Mrs Ms Miss

Given name/s: Surname:

Street address:

Postal address (if different to above):

Email:

Home number: Mobile: Business/Work:

Note: Contact numbers which you provide may be used to update council's records.

Details of planned verge planting works:

I have advised my neighbours and they support the proposal. Proof to be supplied to Council. Yes No

My verge is located on a low traffic Council road or a Council road that permits kerbside parking. Yes No

My verge garden will not obstruct access for utility service providers or normal use of footpaths for pedestrians and cyclists. Yes No

My verge garden will not have an irrigation system or include raised edges such as bricks and fences. Yes No

My verge garden will not have stakes, guide wires or protrusions which may cause a hazard to users of the footpath and road. It will not have spiky or tall vegetation which may block sight lines or impede people using the footpath. Yes No

The nature strip on which I will plant is located on the public footpath outside my property and is not on a corner or street intersection. Yes No

All planting will be carried out by hand with no excavation deeper than 30cm. Mechanised tools and equipment will not be used and care will be taken around drain pipes. Yes No

I have identified any nearby services both underground and above and contacted Dial Before You Dig. 1.5m will be left clear of all services. Proof to be supplied to Council. Yes No

My verge garden will not result in the planting of new trees or the pruning and removal of existing trees. Yes No

I will leave a distance of 1 metre around tree trunks that are less than 300mm in diameter, to protect the health of trees and their root systems. For trees with trunks greater than 300mm in diameter, 2m will be left. It is not permitted to cut, damage or remove tree roots to facilitate planting. Yes No

Access of 1.5m in width will be provided at least once every 6m through the garden. Yes No

My verge garden is not located in an overland flow path and will not allow run-off of materials such as water, soil, mulch or debris onto the footpath, road or into drains. Yes No

Details of planned verge planting works (continued):

I will ensure my garden or gardening activities will not disturb users of the footpath i.e. tools, materials and equipment will not encroach onto the public footpath.

Yes No

The property owner or corporation of my strata scheme has agreed to the verge garden.

Yes No

Certificate of Currency (Public Liability Insurance) has been considered for my garden.

Yes No

A landscape plan of my proposed garden has been supplied to Council.

Yes No

Other supporting information:

Submitting the checklist:

For Council records, please submit a copy of the checklist and signed declaration.

Please:

1. Make sure you have read and understand these guidelines. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your proposal, please contact Council.
2. Plan your verge (nature-strip) garden. Useful things to consider include the amount of sunlight the garden will receive; the type of soil present, potential run off; what style of garden will work best; proximity to trees, other gardens and other physical constraints.
3. Discuss your plans for a verge garden in your street with your neighbours and attempt to accommodate any concerns they may have.
4. Once you and your neighbours are happy with your plans, fill out the checklist and send it to Council.

Declaration of notifier:

I/We, the notifier, declare that the above information is correct in all respects, at the time of submitting this checklist with the Moreton Bay Regional Council. Should any of the details given in relation to this checklist be changed in the future, the notifier shall advise the Moreton Bay Regional Council in writing prior to any such change being implemented.

I/We agree to comply with all Moreton Bay Regional Council local laws and/or all other statutes and agree to pay all costs associated with the reinstatement of any damage caused to Council infrastructure or other public utilities as a result of the proposed activities associated with these works. This includes all work carried out on the notifiers behalf by any agent, sub-contractor or others engaged to deliver remove or carryout any part of the proposed work.

I/We acknowledge that should future placement of Council or essential service infrastructure require the plantings to be removed, no compensation will be due for the removal of vegetation planted under this permit.

I/We, the notifier, declare that the above information is correct in all respects, at the time of lodgement of this checklist with the Moreton Bay Regional Council. Should any of the details given in relation to this checklist be changed in the future, the notifier shall advise the Moreton Bay Regional Council in writing prior to any such change being implemented.

Signature:

Date:

Privacy statement

Moreton Bay Regional Council is collecting your personal information for the purpose of assessing your proposal to construct a verge garden on land under council control. The collection of this information is authorised under the Local Government Act 2009. Your information will not be given to any other person or agency unless you have given us permission or we are required by law.

Submit completed New community plantings within the road verge checklists to:

Post: **Verge Planting**
Moreton Bay Regional Council
PO Box 159
Caboolture QLD 4510

Email: mbrc@moretonbay.qld.gov.au