

Verge Garden Guidelines

Brisbane City Council has developed the Verge Gardens Guidelines to help residents who are interested in establishing a verge garden. The guidelines will also help ensure the safety of pedestrians and road users by minimising trip hazards and ensuring community safety and access on this public space is maintained.

These guidelines support Brisbane's vision of a clean, green city that protects and supports our environment by sustainably managing and caring for our natural environment and resources.

What is a street verge?

A street verge is the area of public land located between a property boundary and the adjacent road kerb. The verge provides access from the street to private and public properties. It also accommodates above and below-ground public service utilities such as postal service, lighting, power, water, sewerage, gas, telephone and optic fibre cables.

Do I need permission to plant a verge garden?

Council is not issuing permits for verge gardens but has developed a checklist (included in this guideline) to ensure it will not impact on the safety of the community, the environment and surrounding infrastructure. If your proposed verge garden meets the requirements of this checklist, then you may proceed to plant.

Please note that if you are not able to comply with the requirements of these guidelines, you will not be able to establish a verge garden.

Who is responsible for the verge garden?

The householder is responsible for any verge garden adjacent to their property. While verge gardens are planted in public spaces, priority must always be given to maintenance and access for pedestrian movement, postal and utility services, water and sewerage, power, gas, telephones and optic fibre cables. If adequate access is not provided, householders may be asked to remove or make changes to their garden.

Council is not responsible for reinstating any landscaping or any damage to verge gardens or their contents, caused by animals, persons or weather events. Utility services (e.g. electricity, water or telecommunications) may need to upgrade or service their infrastructure, and where this is necessary, advance notice will be given to the householder if the verge garden is to be disturbed. Please note, utility service providers will not reinstate verge gardens after work.

Council is responsible for planting, removing and maintaining all street trees on the street verge. Council reserves the right at any time to remove any verge garden and landscaping:

- to perform works that are required to manage any service or infrastructure
- that does not comply with this guideline.

In the event that you move into a home with an established verge garden, it is your responsibility to ensure that the verge garden complies with Council's current guidelines. You may choose to:

- retain the garden
- remove the garden and reinstate the verge to the standard of the surrounding surface.



Where do these guidelines apply?

These guidelines apply to verge gardens at properties that are identified as a 'Residential zone' within Brisbane City Plan 2014 and are between the property boundary and the road kerb (allowing a minimum width of 1.2 metres for pedestrian access). You cannot plant on your neighbouring property without their permission.

To find out whether your property is within a Residential zone, visit Council's website at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au and search 'Zoning maps' or call Council's 24-hour Contact Centre on (07) 3403 8888.

How do I ensure safe gardening?

Health and safety precautions are the responsibility of the resident establishing the garden. If you are interested in verge gardening, please consider basic safety precautions such as appropriate clothing, appropriate and safe use of tools and sun protection.

To ensure the protection of any underground public utility services such as water and electricity, you should call 'Dial Before You Dig' on 1100 (during business hours) or visit their website at www.1100.com.au prior to gardening. In the event that damage is caused to public utility services due to gardening activities, this must be reported to the appropriate authority as soon as possible and repaired at the property owner's expense.

Before I start a verge garden who should I consult with?

If you follow these guidelines and can tick the checklist, there is no requirement to contact Council. It would be a good idea to first consult with your neighbours and see if a shared 'community garden' is achievable. It's important to remember that the verge is a public space. If you plan on growing any edible plants, pedestrians passing-by may harvest from your verge garden.

If your verge is currently asphalted, please contact Council to see what options may be possible.

Do I need to provide space for pedestrian access?

Yes. It is important that pedestrians can use the public footpath without being obstructed by verge gardens. To ensure this, you must provide a pedestrian way with a minimum width of 1.2 metres as per Council's current accessibility standards.

In choosing plant and garden bed location, consideration should also be given to:

- visibility of motorists using the road, and those entering or exiting a residential driveway
- maintaining adequate distance from above-ground utilities such as electricity pillars, street lights, and telecommunication cables
- access to post boxes (mailboxes) allowing space between your verge garden and the edge of the footpath (if established) for footpath maintenance
- adequate distance must be maintained between the kerb and the edge of the verge garden at all times to allow access from vehicles to an established footpath or an unestablished pedestrian path.

What materials can I use?

Organic mulching is permitted and should be flush with the footpath or grass area. The use of non-organic materials such as loose gravel, crushed brick or other stone aggregate is not permitted. The use of any hard landscaping materials or irrigation systems is also not permitted.

The use of garden structures such as wood planter boxes is not supported by Council. Should residents use such materials, Council will ask for their removal.

What type of plant species can I use?

Trees or tall shrubs must not be planted in verge gardens. Any plants chosen for use in verge gardens must be groundcovers or low growing species.

Residents are encouraged to use native or water-wise plants where possible. Council has a number of resources to help you select the right plant species and create a sustainable, water-wise garden. Please visit Council's website, www.brisbane.qld.gov.au and search the following options to find out more:

- Green Gardening Guide
- Native plant species for residents.

When planting species, height of the mature plant or plants must be taken into account to ensure there is no obstruction with the visibility of motorists using the road or exiting a residential driveway, and there is no potential for the species to grow into the power lines. It is also necessary to ensure the species will not create overhanging branches that might be a hazard for pedestrians.

Many attractive garden plants have a secret life as weeds in our bushland. There are more than 200 backyard beauties that become bushland bullies when they jump the garden fence. Once there, they smother and kill native plants, removing food and shelter for our wildlife. Residents can use Council's weed identification tool and Brisbane Invasive Species Management Plan for assistance. Both of these are available via Council's website.

Residents are reminded that planting is at their own risk and you must consider the impacts of allergies, thorns and poisonous plants to residents, animals and surroundings.

Checklist

Task	
I have called 'Dial Before You Dig' on 1100 to locate my underground pipes and cables and confirmed that there are no underground pipes or cables that will be impacted by the garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden will not obstruct access for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the normal use of footpaths (made and unmade) for pedestrians and cyclists - utility service providers - Australia Post delivery service - rubbish collection - access from vehicles onto the verge 	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that planting species is at my own risk, and I have considered the impacts of allergies, thorns and poisonous plants on residents, animals and surroundings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden is within a Residential zone as identified in Brisbane City Plan 2014 and will be established adjacent to the front of my property.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden will not include raised edges such as bricks, fences, guide wires or protrusions which may cause a hazard to footpath users.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My garden will not include the planting of trees or tall shrubs and will not result in the pruning or removal of street trees.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will maintain my verge garden to ensure it is safe and tidy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden is located between the property boundary and the road kerb while allowing a minimum width of 1.2 metres for pedestrian access (as per Council's current accessibility standards).	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden does not obstruct the visibility of motorists using the road, entering or exiting a residential driveway.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden will not have an irrigation system.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that utility providers may need to service or upgrade their infrastructure and this may result in the removal of my verge garden (Utilities will provide adequate notice).	<input type="checkbox"/>

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