

Verge Guidelines

and Waterwise 'Adopt a Verge' Program



Updated 17/01/2023

Contents

Verge Guidelines	3
What is the Verge?	3
Who should maintain a Verge?	3
Do I need approval to landscape my Verge?	3
Guidelines for Verge treatments	4
Guidelines – Materials	5
Acceptable Materials – Landscape Treatments - Application Form Not Required	5
Acceptable Materials – Hardscape - Application Form Required.....	6
Materials - Not Acceptable for the verge	6
Responsibilities	7
Waterwise ‘Adopt a Verge’ Program and Rebate	8
Why ‘Adopt a Verge’?	8
Waterwise Verge Rebate	8
How do I ‘Adopt a Verge’?	9
Creating your new verge	9
Verge Plans - Typical	10
Planting Your Waterwise Verge.....	11
Mulch	11
Watering	11

Revision	Date	Revision Details	Revised by
Verge Guidelines	22 April 2021	Changes to Application Form requirements etc.	Infrastructure Services Shire of Murray
Verge Guidelines and Waterwise Adopt a Verge Program	17 January 2023	Additional Adopt a Verge and rebate information and Typical Verge Plans and other minor amendments	Tasmin Lancaster Environmental Officer Karen Lancaster Landscape Architect

The Shire of Murray acknowledges the Bindjareb people, Traditional Custodians of the land for which the Waterwise Verge Guidelines have been written. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Verge Guidelines

The Shire of Murray encourages residents and landowners to maintain the verge adjacent to their property and to 'adopt a waterwise verge'



What is the Verge?

The verge is the area between the road and your property's boundary. Also known as nature strips, verges are important green spaces within our community that assist with urban cooling whilst creating biodiversity corridors within our towns and suburbs. Road verges provide space for public utilities including water, gas sewer, telephone, stormwater and power. Verges also allow for the creation of streetscapes with paths and street trees, that enhance the amenity of an area and connect our community to nature.



Who should maintain a Verge?

You are responsible for maintaining the verge at the front or side of your property, including any improvement works to enhance your property's aesthetics.

We are responsible for controlling the development of street verges and the provision and maintenance of street trees. We are also responsible for verge maintenance adjacent to our buildings, parks and reserves.

Do I need approval to landscape my Verge?

Generally, approval is not required when laying lawn, installing reticulation or for landscaping that incorporates low shrubs and groundcovers, mulch, organic and other surface treatments such as gravel aggregates, kerbs and rocks, but the installation must meet these Guidelines.

Approval is required prior to the installation of hardscape treatments including concrete, asphalt/bitumen and paving, and an Application Form is required prior to works.

Note that some materials are not acceptable for the verge, including synthetic turf, blue metal dust, road base and particular aggregates

If you are intending to apply for the waterwise verge rebate, we recommend that you read through these Verge Guidelines, and contact our Environmental Services team prior to undertaking any work to ensure eligibility: 9531 7777.



Guidelines for Verge treatments

The following guidelines apply to verges in the Shire of Murray.

Refer also additional information on Acceptable Materials and Responsibilities.

1. Trees, whether endemic or introduced, must not be removed from the verge, unless approved by the Shire.
2. Street trees planted on the verge are a vital part of streetscapes that are a pleasant environment and add aesthetic value for the community. They are to be incorporated into the verge and tree alignment and species selection are to be approved by the Shire.
3. In areas where the road is un-kerbed, drainage is provided in 'swale drainage'. This is sensitive to changes in levels. No fill or crossover is to be constructed which alters the levels of the verge's drainage. If the verge area was to be filled to level the verge from property boundary to the road, then the street's drainage is impacted and may be prone to flooding.
4. Adequate access to the letterbox for mail delivery must be allowed for.
5. A two metre clear zone adjacent to the kerb is to be maintained to provide safe access for pedestrians, and good sightlines for drivers of vehicles.
6. Planting/ vegetation is to be
 - a. Waterwise preferably, requiring low water use
 - b. Kept clear of and not encroaching onto footpaths or road
 - c. Not of a thorny or poisonous nature
 - d. Less than 750mm (75cm) in height (other than trees) and
 - e. Well maintained.
7. Reticulation should be designed and installed so that sprinklers do not cause interference to the safe movement of traffic or the safe use of the footpath / or the 2m verge edge for pedestrians where no footpath exists.
8. Earth mounding and rocks are only permitted as part of a waterwise verge garden design, provided they do not cause a hazard or interfere with drainage; and a two metre clear zone adjacent to the kerb is maintained to provide safe access for pedestrians. As with planting, overall height above natural level is to be no more than 75cm tall.
9. Fences, walls, enclosures, retaining walls, or other similar installations/ obstructions are not to be installed on a verge.
10. Hard, non-permeable materials (including any crossover) must be of an acceptable material. No more than one third (1/3) of the area of the verge (other than the crossover) is to be hard material known as 'hardstand'.
11. No part of the verge should be identified for parking purposes.
12. Treatments not adhering to the Shire of Murray guidelines must be altered at the owner's cost.

Guidelines – Materials

Acceptable Materials – Landscape Treatments - Application Form Not Required

These materials can be installed, either individually or combined into an overall landscaped verge treatment, without written approval from the Shire:

- ✓ Grass, lawn species
- ✓ Plants, low-growing of less than 75cm tall, including prostrate ground covers, low shrubs, strappy plants and ornamental grasses, that ideally are 'waterwise'
- ✓ Mulch, organic, including tree mulch, wood chips and similar
- ✓ Sawdust, compact and level
- ✓ Gravel, aggregates of 10mm to 20mm size, such as limestone, laterite, cracked pea gravel, blue metal, basalt and similar, that can be walked on with ease, installed with the natural soil as their base, in order to maintain verge drainage.
But not those listed as Not Acceptable Materials below including dust, fines or gravel aggregates larger than 20mm.
These are to be installed at a suitable depth to provide long term surface coverage and so that they do not migrate onto footpaths or road.
- ✓ Rocks, decorative feature rocks that are no more than 75cm tall above ground and do not cause a hazard. They must be securely placed into the ground and large enough to remain secure. They must be 2 metres or further from the road.
- ✓ Kerbs, flush concrete, or similar flat garden edging, to delineate between lawn and planting/ other acceptable material/s, that are
 - flush with the level of the lawn and do not create a trip hazard and
 - are no wider than 200mm wide.

Waterwise verge gardens are encouraged.

Please refer to the general Guidelines for Verge Treatments including Hardscape and other materials and also the Responsibilities information provided in this document.



Acceptable Materials – Hardscape - Application Form Required

These materials can be installed as part of an overall landscaped verge treatment, with any of the above acceptable Landscape Treatments; but only with written approval from the Shire, which is required before installation and requires an Application Form

(Application Form available on the Shire's website www.murray.wa.gov.au or phone 9531 7777)

- Paving bricks / concrete pavers and similar
- Bitumen / asphalt
- Concrete

Note:

- That no more than 1/3 of the verge area (excluding crossover) may be covered with any combination of these hardscape materials.
- No part of the verge should be identified for parking purposes.
- These materials must be installed to the Shire's requirements, including compacted sub base and properly maintained edges, to ensure longevity of the surface.

Installation and Maintenance

All acceptable verge materials are to be contained within the verge area and not permitted to spread onto adjacent, road, pavement or paths.

Ongoing maintenance by the land-owner is expected, including mowing, pruning, weeding, watering and top-up of materials to maintain an acceptable verge treatment that is safe and tidy.

Refer Responsibilities for more information.

Materials - Not Acceptable for the verge

These materials cannot be installed as verge treatments/ finishes and will not be approved:

- Blue metal dust
- Road base
- Crushed Brick
- Loose aggregates and gravels larger than 20mm in size, such as limestone rubble, biscuit, or spalls (small boulders) or river stones, unless as part of a Shire verge drainage area, and
- Synthetic turf.

Responsibilities

Shire of Murray Responsibilities

Inspection

Verges may be inspected by the Shire from time to time, to ensure that verge treatments are installed and maintained to the Verge Guidelines.

Compliance

Should a verge treatment not comply with these Verge Guidelines, or local laws, or has otherwise been deemed a safety hazard, the Shire may require the property owner to make the necessary changes to comply. The landowner or resident will be responsible for all costs associated with the works.

Should these changes not be made, the Shire may complete the works at the property owners' cost.

Works in the Verge

The Shire of Murray, and any other authority empowered to do so, such as utility service providers including gas, water, electricity and fire services, may need to periodically excavate in a verge. The Shire of Murray or other authority is not liable to compensate any person for that disturbance nor replace any verge treatment because of such works.

Future Works in the Verge and Footpaths

It is important to note that where there is no footpath, the Shire may build one in the future and this may affect verge landscaping. Where no footpath exists, a two metre clear zone adjacent to the kerb is to be maintained to provide safe access for pedestrians, and good sightlines for drivers of vehicles.

Landowners or residents will not be compensated for any loss of vegetation or other verge treatments caused by footpath works.

Applicant's Responsibilities

- The verge's adjacent land owner/ applicant will be responsible for costs involved in the construction and maintenance of verge treatment/s.
- The necessary Application/s for the verge treatment, including if required a Traffic Management Plan, must be submitted to the Shire of Murray prior to works.
- Contact service authorities and 'Dial Before You Dig' on 1100 to locate all underground services prior to any works, and
- The verge treatment is to be maintained in a safe and tidy condition at all times.
- Accept that the verge remains public property and may be traversed by the Shire and other authorities as and when required; and by pedestrians and cyclists for access along the verge.
- Water and maintain the verge in a manner that does not cause a nuisance to other verge or road users.
- Take all care to ensure that no damage is caused to underground services and other road reserve infrastructure, both during installation and ongoing maintenance of the verge.

Waterwise 'Adopt a Verge' Program and Rebate



Waterwise garden at the Murray Library in Pinjarra

Why 'Adopt a Verge'?

There are a number of benefits associated with adopting a verge and making waterwise verge improvements, such as:

- Reduce water consumption and associated water bills.
- Greener streets and improved streetscapes
- Provide habitat and nature links for wildlife, increasing local biodiversity
- Improved air quality
- Reduce stormwater runoff into rivers and waterways
- Create a cooling effect and reduce temperatures and the 'heat island effect' during summer
- Improve streetscape amenity
- Connecting people to nature
- Promote safer and more comfortable walking environments.
- Improved mental health and wellbeing.

Waterwise Verge Rebate

The Shire of Murray is an endorsed Waterwise Council and encourages residents to undertake and establish waterwise verge gardens.

Well designed and maintained verge gardens require minimal to no irrigation (once established), minimal fertiliser and low maintenance.

To assist our community in undertaking a waterwise verge, the Shire with support from Water Corporation's Waterwise Greening Scheme, will offer a Waterwise Verge Rebate. This rebate will match 50% of the applicant's contribution to a maximum of \$500, subject to an application process.

Only 'soft landscaping' (plants, mulch) will be eligible for the rebate.



How do I 'Adopt a Verge'?

1. Read through these **Verge Guidelines** and select desired species from '**Trees and Shrubs: A guide to native plant species in the Shire of Murray**'.
2. Contact the Shire's Environmental Services team on (08) 9531 7777 or at mailbag@murray.wa.gov.au, or visit the Shire Administration Building at 1915 Pinjarra Road, Pinjarra, prior to installing the verge, to check requirements for the verge to be eligible for the rebate and to provide us with your intended species list.
3. Once the species have been approved, prepare the site and undertake the works
 - o Complete works as quickly as possible to ensure that hazards, such as unattended open trenches, are not created during installation.
4. Apply for the Waterwise Verge rebate (Application attached to this document)
 - o Proof of purchase of soft landscaping (plants and mulch) will be required,
 - o as well as Before and After photos of your verge.



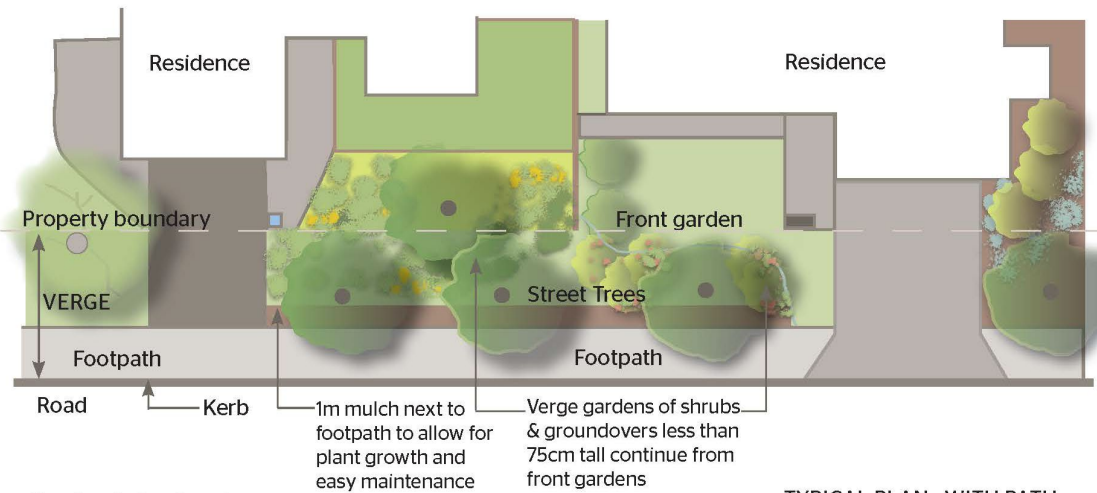
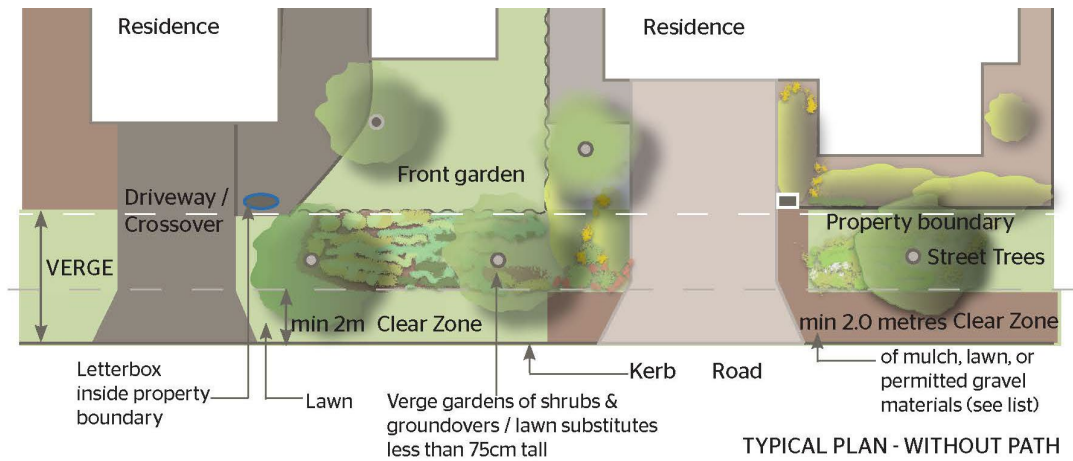
Creating your new verge

Look at your verge and determine:

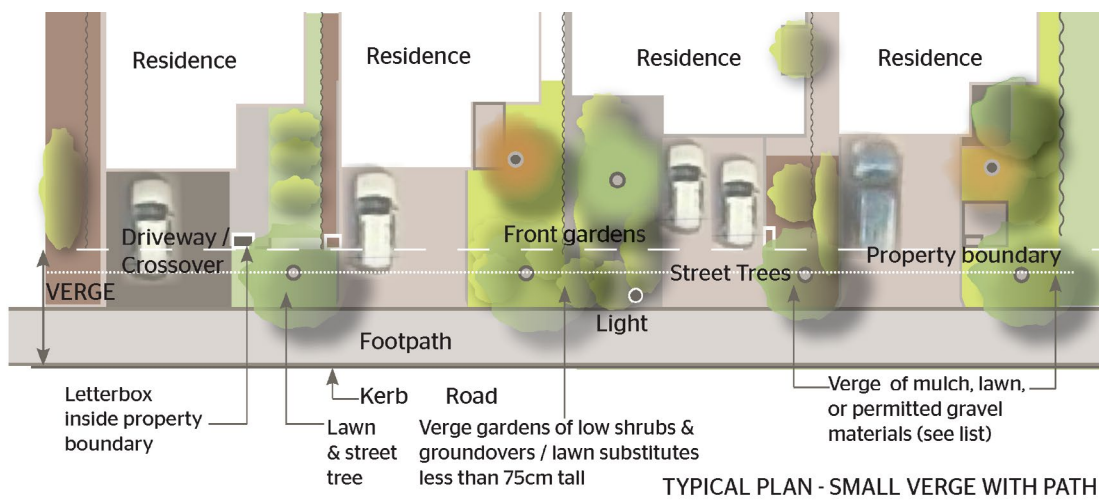
- o Soil type – sand, clay, gravel, loam or duplex (often sand over clay)
- o Sun exposure
- o Existing street tree/s or plants
- o Street trees are not be removed or pruned.
- o Where there is no street tree, one can be requested on the Shire of Murray website <https://www.murray.wa.gov.au/> or by contacting Infrastructure Services on (08) 9531 7777
- o Plant selection
- o Footpath / clear zone/ access to letterbox and for bins
- o Contact service authorities and 'Dial Before You Dig' on 1100 to locate all underground services prior to any works
- o Adhere to the Guidelines for materials etcetera and
- o Take note of the Responsibilities listed earlier in this document and
- o Refer to the typical Verge Plans for guidance.

If you are applying for the Waterwise Verge Rebate, no works are to commence until approval is received in writing from the Shire.

Verge Plans - Typical



Plans drawn by Karen Lancaster
Landscape Architect Shire of Murray 2023



Planting Your Waterwise Verge

The ideal time to plant is throughout the months of May to August. The weather is generally cooler and wetter, giving your plants a chance to establish prior to our hot dry summers. Keep in mind that most plants will still require some watering over at least the first summer.



Cantwell Park Pinjarra - Bush Tucker Trail

Mulch

After planting, spread a 5-10cm thick layer of coarse organic mulch across your verge, keeping it clear from the plant stems. Mulch will help reduce plant stress, suppress weed growth and reduce evaporation of water from the soil.

The finished mulch level shall be contained below the adjoining kerb/footpath. This will ensure the mulch stays in place and does not spread across the footpath or flow into stormwater systems where it can be a hazard.

The Shire provides free mulch for **pick-up by residents only**. Available from the corner of Phillips Rd and Baker St, Pinjarra 6208.

If bagged mulch is used, the Shire recommends Waterwise or Smart Approved WaterMark products.

<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Waterwise/Waterwise-products>

<https://www.smartwatermark.org/products/waterwise/>

Watering

Ideally, once established, your waterwise verge will not need a permanent irrigation system. If you do require irrigation, sub-surface drip irrigation is recommended. For help, contact your local Waterwise Irrigator.

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

<https://www.watercorporation.com.au/Waterwise/Waterwise-specialists>

Waterwise Verge Rebate

Application Form — to be completed once your waterwise verge has been approved and installed



Congratulations on installing your waterwise verge!

Property Address

Lot or House No _____ Street _____

Suburb / Town _____

Applicant details

Name _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Details of soft landscaping (plants and mulch)

Please attached a copy of all receipts

Details of rebate items plant names & quantities; mulch quantity	Cost (\$)	Approved Y/N (Shire to complete)



Please attach your before and after verge photos (electronic preferred) and check the box below.

- I acknowledge that my verge photos, including any future photos, may be used in Shire and Water Corporation publications including print and digital material.
Shire Officers will inspect the garden periodically and may take photographs.

Please provide your bank account details for the rebate.

BSB _____

Account No. _____

Account Name _____

Please return your completed form to Shire of Murray, attention Environmental Services

mailbag@murray.wa.gov.au or post PO Box 21, Pinjarra 6208



For any enquires contact Environmental Services on 95317777

We will aim to process your application as soon as possible but there may be delays, so please be patient.

We look forward to watching your garden grow!

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