



SHIRE COUNCIL
Blayney

Verge Garden Guidelines

Procedure	25N
Officer Responsible	Director Infrastructure Services
Last Review Date	17/05/2021

Strategic Policy

Introduction

The verge area in front of your home provides scope for the community to help support the greening of our public spaces. These guidelines have been developed to help you create a safe and successful verge garden.

The verge is the Council owned land between your property boundary and the kerb (or edge of the roadway).

Verge gardens make productive use of land in town and the villages. It puts to practical use small patches of land that are otherwise neglected or planted to simplified plant communities, such as lawn verges, that are unproductive or that may consume excessive water and fossil fuels in their maintenance.

Do I need Council approval?

No.

These guidelines detail opportunities for residents to establish and maintain a verge garden that will not impact on community safety, the environment and surrounding infrastructure.

There is no approvals process.

There is an optional self-declaration form that you can complete and provide to Council as a record that your garden complies with these guidelines.

Should Council be requested to investigate verge gardens, it is our preference to work with the resident to take action to remedy the issue and ensure the verge garden is modified to ensure public safety.

Where a verge garden continues to create conflict with public access and safety, Council may direct the property owner to alter any works in the road reserve, within 28 days. Council may alter the works if there is no action by the owner, at full cost to the owner. (*Roads Act (Section 98)*).

Residents can only plant a verge garden in the verge area immediately fronting their property. Verge gardens cannot be extended to your neighbours property without written consent, or onto other public land, including traffic islands and median strips.

Remember, it will be your responsibility to maintain your garden!

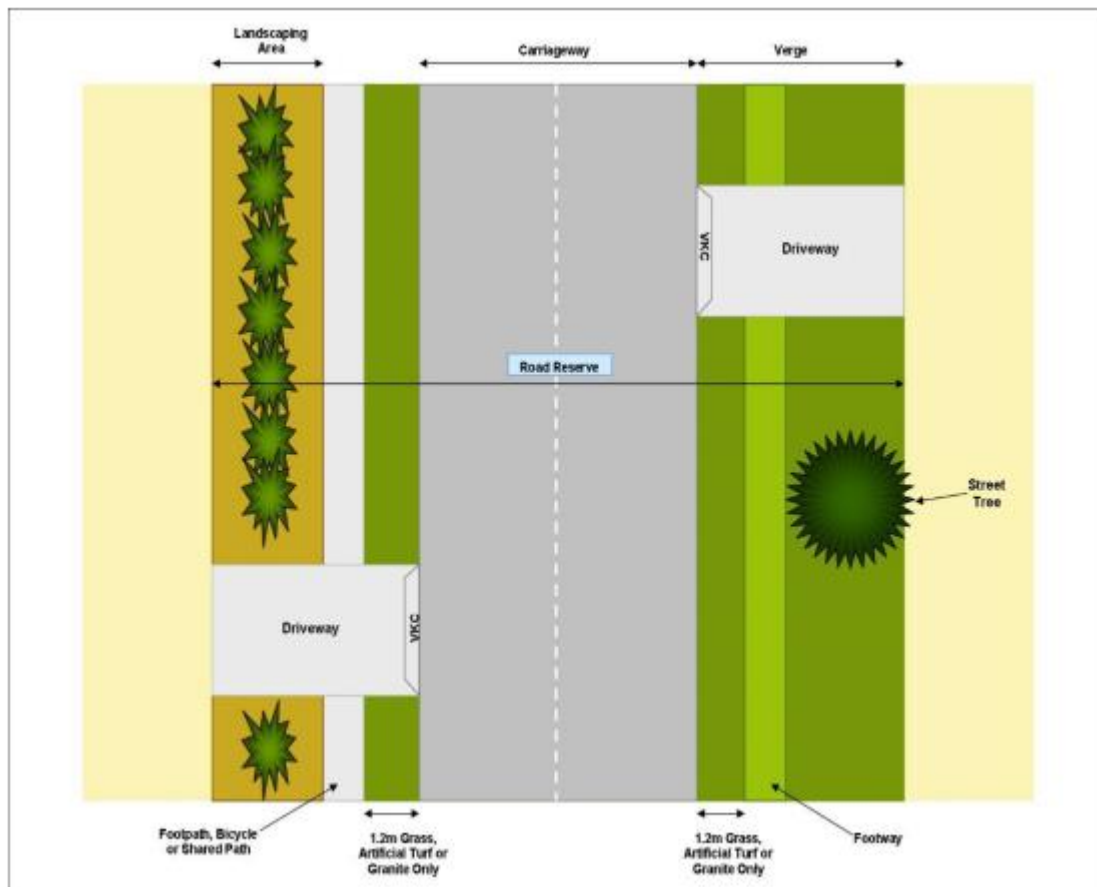
Guidelines for creating your Verge Garden

Here are some "simple rules" to help ensure success.



What is the verge?

The following sketch and definitions will give you some guidance on the verge and where you plant.



Carriageway – the portion of road reserve formed for vehicular traffic.

Driveway – the unobstructed strip across the verge set aside for vehicular access between the carriageway and the adjacent property.

Footpath – a formed (1.5m min. width) path along the verge set aside for pedestrian traffic. Some older paths may be narrower than 1.5m in width.

Footway - the unobstructed strip (1.5m min. width) along the verge set aside for pedestrian access which has not been formed. Its width is dependent on whether a footpath, bicycle path or shared path is proposed for the street and it generally begins 1.2m from the back of the kerb or edge of carriageway.

Hard landscaping – refers to retaining structures or edging/borders including bricks, stones, rocks or railway sleepers, but does not include concrete paving, asphalt or pavers.

Road reserve – the strip of public land between abutting property boundaries and includes the carriageway, footpaths, bicycle paths, shared paths, footways and verges.

Shared path – A formed (2.5m min. width) path along the verge set aside for pedestrian and bicycle access.

Street tree - a tree planted in the verge, of a species and location approved by Council.

Verge – the area between the property boundary and the kerb (or edge of the roadway).



Have you spoken to your neighbours?

It is always a good idea to let your neighbors know what you are planning.

Having a simple conversation; allowing your neighbours to let you know of any concerns they may have, and adjusting your plans before you start work, helps support positive community engagement, and maintains a positive outlook for the greening of these spaces. It is important to remember that the verge is a public space, and if you plan on growing edible plants, passing pedestrians may seek to harvest from your garden, or neighbourhood animals may foul on your garden



Enjoy yourself – but be safe.

Residents are encouraged to create attractive landscapes that complement their homes, the surrounding streetscape, and support the local environment, but enjoy yourself while doing it.

Whenever you are undertaking work, always consider your safety and that of others.

- Wear sturdy enclosed shoes, gloves and sun protection. "Slip, Slop, Slap".
- Never work on the road when planting your verge garden.
- Always maintain safe access for pedestrians and other users of Footways, or Council Footpaths, even during construction.



Ensure you maintain safe access for pedestrians.

It is important that pedestrians can use the verge without verge gardens obstructing their path, and being forced onto the road. If the verge does not have a formal footpath, residents must leave a formed (1.5m min. width) path, free from trip hazards, along the verge for pedestrian traffic.



Can people open their car doors?

Verge gardens should provide a 600mm clearance from the edge of the kerb, so people can open their car door. Should you wish to plant this space choose a hardy groundcover that will tolerate some trampling.



Remember the postie!

Leave enough space for Australia Post or other delivery service to access your letterbox – usually 1m around the letterbox is enough.



What about services and utilities?

Underground service provision such as electricity, water, gas and telecommunications are generally assigned standard alignments, although historically this may not be the case. As these are located in the verge, service utility providers need to access them from time to time for maintenance and repairs.

Always obtain a **Dial Before You Dig** report, by visiting www.1100.com.au or calling 1100 to obtain your free dial before you dig report, and check with Council or other authorities who may not have services registered on the Dial Before you Dig service, before you start digging or excavation works.



Dial Before You Dig is a FREE national referral service designed to assist in preventing damage and disruption to Australia's vast infrastructure networks, which provide essential services we use every day.

Remember to leave 0.2m access around power poles and service pits that are located within the verge. If damage is caused to public utility service due to verge gardening activities, you must report this immediately to the relevant authority for repairs, the costs of which will likely be charged back to you.

Infrastructure upgrades within the verge.

It is the service authorities and/or Councils obligation to upgrade and maintain their infrastructure within the verge, and this may result in the excavation of all or part of your garden. There is no obligation from the service authorities or Council to reinstate a verge garden whilst undertaking upgrade or maintenance of their infrastructure.

Where a verge improvement (that is provided by the property owner) is damaged by a Service Authority, the property owner may negotiate with the service authority about rectification works.

Where Council's activities impact the verge, Council will reinstate the verge to the same standard that existed prior to the commencement of work, excluding that area provided for pedestrian access, defined as the footway zone, that shall only be reseeded with grass. Reinstatement of any verge improvement will ensure it complies with these guidelines.

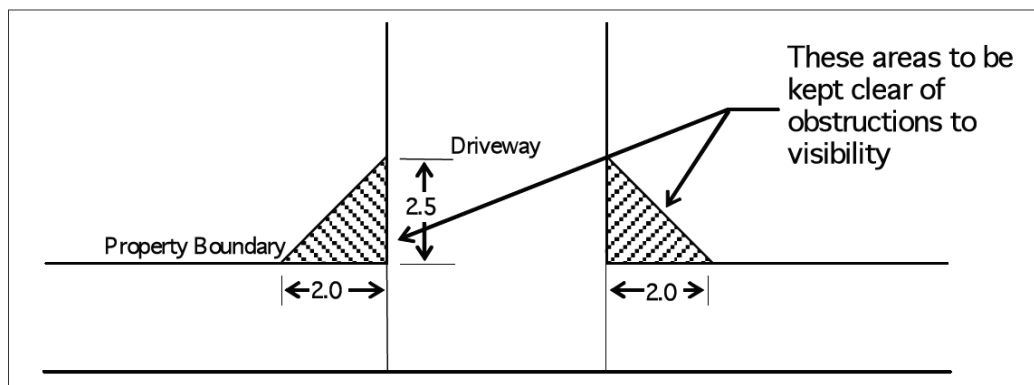


Remember pedestrian and traffic safety!

Verge gardens must not impact on the drivers sight lines, including entering and exiting driveways, delineation of the road edge and / or pedestrian movements.

The streetscape is an important part of community open space and the coordination of plantings is an important aspect of Council works. Council supports plantings (shrubs only) with flora that are drought tolerant and suited to hot, dry summers. Plantings should be maintained to a maximum height of 500mm. A preferred species list for verge gardens is provided at Appendix 2.

Plantings should ensure that no part of the treatment obstructs the required safe sight distance requirements at access driveways according to Figures 3.2 and 3.3 of AS/NZS 2890.1-2004 or Figures 3.3 and 3.4 of AS2890.2-2002 as applicable.



Properties situated at intersections shall ensure that no plantings obstruct safe sight distance at the intersection.



No structures or hard surfaces in your verge garden!

Remember the verge is public land. The area needs to remain free of obstructions and nuisances to others.

It is recommended that only plants and organic mulches are used. The construction of any structure, including retaining walls or fences, of any material or form, between the property boundary and edge of road is not permitted. Council may ask for its removal.

Any edging material, mowing strip, footpath, driveway cross over etc. shall be flush with the surface. Council intends working with owners of existing verge gardens to remove trip hazards, as these present an unacceptable risk to pedestrians.

The following forms of surface treatment are permitted within the 1.5m footpath corridor (whether existing or for a future footpath). This extends to 3m where a boundary fence or other clear delineation of property boundary has been constructed. Council may remove these, without recompense when constructing a footpath or shared path at some time in the future.

- Compacted rubble capped with crusher fines
- Brick, clay paving
- Asphalt or bituminous surfaces.

Outside of the footpath corridor;

- Un-irrigated grassed surface.
- Mulched surface
- Ground cover - Shrubs, low trees (up to 500mm)

The following surface treatments are not permitted on any side:

- Chemically sterilised treatments.
- Structures.
- Retaining walls.



Don't plant trees in your verge – that's Councils role.

Tree planting will only be undertaken by Council (or a group under the auspice of Council) and Council will be responsible for the location of new trees and their maintenance. The planting of trees and shrubs upon verges must comply with the Council "Street and Open Space Tree Policy".

If you would like a tree as part of your verge garden please contact us, and we will make arrangements for someone from our Parks and Recreation team to meet with you, select a tree suited to your verge, and schedule it for planting.

What shall I plant?

Residents are encouraged to be creative and plant verges to suit their own taste. But remember plantings must not interfere with overhead or underground services including water and sewerage infrastructure, water meter servicing and reading, and sewer manholes.

Plants must also not be known or likely environmental weeds.

Growing edible plants along the nature strips of streets within our town and villages is an effective means of inspiring and enabling urban agriculture and contributes to:-

- Neighbourhood beautification
- Visual amenity
- Urban re-greening
- Increased biodiversity
- Environmental and sustainability education
- Improved garden soil profiles through carbon sequestration
- Reduced air temperatures in developed areas
- Developing social capital and community engagement.



Who can help me?

Advice should be sought by contacting Councils Infrastructure Services Department, prior to the commencement of any works on the verge.

When you are planning your verge garden, call Councils Parks and Recreation team.

Local nurseries can assist with appropriate plant selection, and recommend the use of local native plant species where possible.

Watering

Council supports the responsible use of water to maintain plantings by the use of handheld trigger nozzle hoses. It is recommended that residents check the Central Tablelands Water (CTW) website www.ctw.nsw.gov.au for information related to current water restrictions that may apply.

Related Policies and Strategies:

- NSW Roads Act (1993)
- Statewide Mutual Best Practice Manual- footpaths Nature strips and Medians
- Blayney Shire Council - Street & Open Space Tree Management Procedure

- Blayney Shire Council - Pathway Hierarchy, Standard and Maintenance Policy (Draft)




Council Details

Address: Blayney Shire Council
91 Adelaide Street, BLAYNEY NSW 2799
PO Box 62 BLAYNEY NSW 2799

Website: www.blayney.nsw.gov.au
Email: council@blayney.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 6368 2104
ABN: 47 619 651 511

APPENDIX 1. Sample Verge Gardens

Good Outcomes

	<p>Landscaping area and street trees suitably located and footway clear. Suitability of trees under power lines should be considered.</p>
	<p>Clear footway. Driveway flush, no trip hazard.</p>
	<p>Clear footway. Driveway flush, no trip hazard. Landscaping should not be on roadside of footway. Modifications to the verge plantings may be required to accommodate any future footpath.</p>

Poor Outcomes

	<p>Hard landscaping (timber sleeper retaining wall) and landscaping impedes footway. Modifications to the retaining wall and gardens may be required to accommodate any future footpath.</p>
	<p>Poorly maintained, and impedes footway. Significant trip hazards for pedestrians.</p>
	<p>Poorly located trees, over CTW underground water infrastructure. Well maintained landscaping against boundary fence. Removal of part of the trees will be required to accommodate any future footpath.</p>
	<p>Trip hazard at driveway and landscaping impedes footway and needs to be removed. Well maintained landscaping. Removal of part of the gardens and trip hazard will be required to accommodate any future footpath.</p>

APPENDIX 2. Preferred Species List for Verge Gardens

Type	Name		Mature Height
	Botanical	Common	
Grasses (Dry)			
	dianella revoluta	Blue Flax Lily	1m
	lomandra longifolia	Lomandra	1m
Herbaceous / Shrub			
	Dietes vegeta	Dietes	90cm
	Ophiopogon japonicas	Mondo Grass	40cm
	Gazania	African Daisies	30cm
	Erigeron karvinskianus	Seaside daisy	25cm
	Agapanthus	Dwarf Agapanthus	80cm
	Abelia grandiflora	Dwarf Abelia	1m
Bulbs	Narcissus sp	Daffodil	45cm
	Tulipa sp	Tulip	45cm
	Narcissus sp	Jonquil	45cm
	<u>Cerastium tomentosum</u>	<u>Snow in summer</u>	30cm
	Salvia	Sage smaller sp	To 1m
Succulent	Carpobrotus glaucescens	Pig face	25cm
Annuals			
	Petunias		20cm
	Violets		20cm
	Pansies		20cm

Plants should be maintained to a maximum height of 500mm.

The plants listed are tough and perform well in the local environment.

The list is a guide only, and not comprehensive.

Local nurseries can assist with appropriate plant selection, including different species that may also be suitable, and recommend the use of local native plant species where possible.



Verge Garden Guideline Self-Assessment and Optional Declaration

Blayney Shire Council encourages residents to use this checklist when preparing and planting your verge garden.

There is an optional declaration you can complete and send to Council, which we will keep as a record of your verge garden complying with these guidelines, should Council be asked to investigate at a later point in time.

Please email this declaration to council@blayney.nsw.gov.au

For further information, please contact Council on (02) 6368 2104.

DECLARANT DETAILS (optional)
NAME:
ADDRESS:

CHECKLIST	Yes	No
I have talked to my neighbors and considered their feedback on my verge garden proposal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have planned my verge garden project to ensure safe pedestrian access while I construct my verge garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden is in line with my property boundary, and does not encroach upon my neighbor's verge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have ensured my verge garden will retain a pedestrian access 1500mm wide, which is level and free from trip hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My verge garden has been designed to ensure car doors can open with no plants, or with only low groundcovers within 600mm of the edge of kerb.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have left clear access for the mailman.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have left clear access around service pits and power poles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a safe and accessible place for the collection of waste/recycling bins.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I contacted Dial before you Dig on 1100 or www.1100.com.au and obtained a free services report to confirm that there are no underground utility services that will be impacted by garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I contacted Council to obtain information on any Council or service authority utilities that may be in my verge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my verge garden could be impacted by future infrastructure works, and Council or service authorities may not replace any plants lost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My garden will be maintained to a maximum height of 500mm to ensure line of sight for traffic and pedestrians.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I want to install a tree, I will contact Council to request a site visit, and assess the specific site constraints.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SIGNATURE:	Date
------------	------

End

Adopted:	17/05/2021	2105/009
Last Reviewed:	17/05/2021	
Next Review:	19/04/2022	