



Verge Garden Guidelines

Eurobodalla
Shire Council

Acknowledgment of Country

Eurobodalla Shire Council recognises Aboriginal people as the original inhabitants and custodians of all land and water in the Eurobodalla and respects their enduring cultural and spiritual connection to it. Eurobodalla Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land in which we live. Council pays respect to Elders past, present and aspiring. We are on Yuin Country.

How to contact us

In person	Customer Service Centre Corner Vulcan and Campbell Streets, Moruya Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm
Phone	02 4474 1000 For after-hours emergencies call 1800 755 760
Mail	PO Box 99, Moruya NSW 2537
Email	council@esc.nsw.gov.au
Web	www.esc.nsw.gov.au
Councillors	See contact details on our website

What is a verge garden?

A 'street verge' is the area of public land located between a property boundary and a road which is often referred to as a "nature strip". This area represents an opportunity to participate in urban greening and these guidelines have been developed to help you create a successful and safe verge garden.

These guidelines apply to verge gardens. All existing trees in the verge area are to remain and are protected.

Why create a verge garden?

Encouraging the community to get involved with creating verge gardens has wide ranging benefits. Verge gardens create greener spaces which improve our streets' amenity and access to outdoor recreation, provide significant social and health benefits through improved mental wellbeing, natural cooling through shading and sun protection, habitat for our local wildlife and they remove carbon from the atmosphere helping to reduce emissions. Verge gardens help to provide an overall better quality of life for people in the Eurobodalla.

Do I need council approval to plant the verge?

Yes, by following these guidelines, you can create a verge garden that will meet council requirements by not impacting on the safety of the community, the environment and surrounding infrastructure.

You simply need to:

1. Read this document to ensure you can create a verge garden that meets the conditions in the Verge Garden Guidelines;
2. Register your garden via the [online registration form](#) (registration is free) to receive your Council approved sign which is to be installed prior to commencement; and
3. Create and most importantly, maintain your verge garden according to the Guidelines.

Registering your verge garden is essential. Whoever registers the verge garden will be responsible for its maintenance to ensure the verge garden does not become neglected, untidy or unsafe.

Not all street verges will be suitable for a verge garden. Verge gardens can only be created on verges adjacent to urban Council roads.

These guidelines can help you determine whether your verge area is suitable for a verge garden.

Residents can only plant a verge garden in the verge area that aligns with your property. You cannot extend your verge garden to your neighbour's verge or property without their permission or onto other sections of public land including traffic islands and median strips.

To ensure your verge garden is a success, we have created some simple instructions



Talk with your neighbours

Talk with your neighbours and fill them in on your plans for a verge garden.

Understanding your neighbours concerns and adjusting your plans before you commence your garden helps maintain a positive outlook for the greening of these spaces. Together you might come up with a bigger and better plan.

It's important to remember that the verge is a public space. If you plan on growing edible plants, pedestrians passing-by may harvest from your verge garden.



Have fun – but stay safe

We encourage residents to have fun creating attractive landscapes that compliment homes and the surrounding streetscape.

When undertaking work however always consider your safety and the safety of others.

- Wear sturdy enclosed shoes, gloves, and remember sun protection.
- Never work from on the road itself when planting your verge garden
- Always allow for pedestrians to pass though the verge. However during the construction phase, you must cordon off the work zone for public safety.



Ensure you maintain a safe access for pedestrians on your verge

Pedestrians need to use the verge without being obstructed by gardens or forced to walk on the road.

If there is not a formal footpath, please leave a strip of grass at least 1.2 metres wide for pedestrian access.

Please refer to photos below.



Ensure people can open car doors when parking in front of your verge garden

If your verge doesn't have a formal footpath, your verge garden must have a 1.2 metre clearance from the edge of the kerb to ensure people can open their car door.



Leave enough room for the postie!

Leave enough space for the postie to access your letterbox – usually a 1 metre clearance around the letterbox is sufficient.



Check for services

The verge area often contains above and below-ground services including lighting, powerlines and poles, service access pits, water, sewerage, stormwater, gas, telephone, fire hydrants and optic fibre cables.

Always lodge an enquiry with Before you Dig Australia (BYDA) before you commence any digging or excavation work. BYDA is a free referral service to obtain information relating to underground infrastructure. Go to www.byda.com.au to obtain your **free** dial before you dig check for your verge.

The BYDA report will not include council infrastructure (water and sewer) but if the Guidelines are followed in relation to plant selection/size, their root structure should not impact on council infrastructure.

It is also important to leave 1.2 metres access around power poles, fire hydrants and service pits that are located within your verge.

Please refer to photo below



In the event that damage is caused to public utility services due to verge gardening activities, you must report this immediately to the appropriate authority for repairs, the costs of which may be charged back to you.

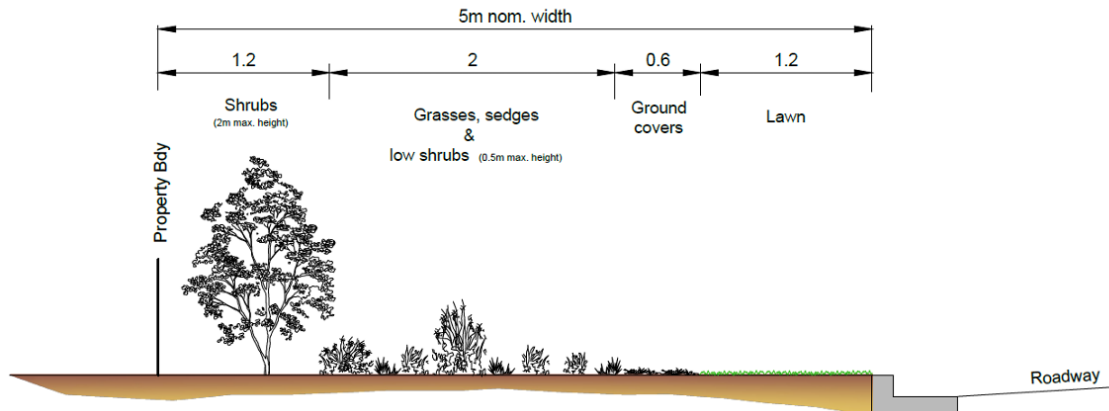


Maintain your verge garden for pedestrian and traffic safety

Ensure that your verge garden does not impact on lines of sight for traffic, including vehicles entering and exiting driveways.

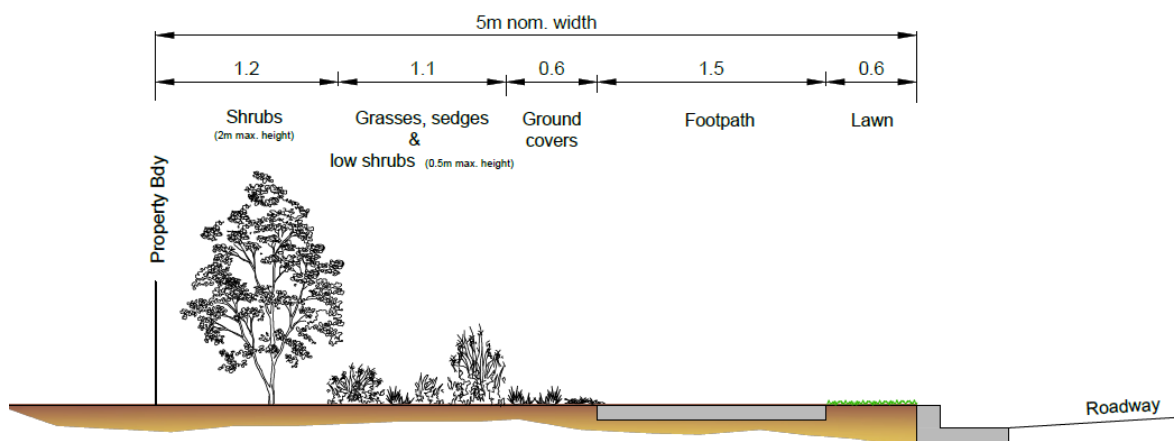
We ask for this purpose that you follow the plant height restrictions as outlined in the Eurobodalla Verge Garden Designs.

Example 1: Verge Garden design without a footpath



Eurobodalla Verge Garden Design

Example 2: Verge Garden design with a footpath



Eurobodalla Verge Garden Design
With Footpath



Do not install any structures or hard surfaces in your verge garden

As the verge is public land, we need to ensure the area remains free of obstructions and nuisances to others.

For this reason, the guideline recommends the use of plants and organic mulches only. We ask that residents do not install sculptures, seating, rocks or other items with hard surfaces where a member of the public could potentially injure themselves.

Garden edging with a 'lip' of no-more than 5 cm is acceptable to contain mulch and to stop it from entering the stormwater drain. It should not be more than 5 cm wide.

Organic mulching 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 may ask for their removal.



What to plant

Residents are encouraged to get creative and plant verges to suit your own style, but you are only permitted to plant either bush friendly (plants that won't spread or become invasive) or edible plants. Check soil quality by undertaking an at-home soil test kit before planting edible plants.

You cannot use plants with spikes and thorns. Be prepared to commit some time and effort and only plant what you know you can continue to maintain. By selecting bush friendly plants that are suited to the location they should be low maintenance, drought resistant and hardy. They will also provide food and habitat for our local wildlife.

It is also important to use mulch to retain moisture and to assist with controlling weeds.

If you live in a bushfire prone area, you may want to consider planting in a way that does not increase your fire risk eg leave gaps between patches of vegetation, and use plants that have fire retardant properties including species with thick or glossy leaves and a high moisture content.

If you don't know where to start, visit the [Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens](#) or contact Council's Natural Resource Team to meet with you at your property to assist with ideas for plant selection.

Plant selection

During your planning phase please familiarise yourself with the [Eurobodalla Bush-Friendly Garden Guide](#). This will assist you to select hardy, water tolerant, colourful species suited to your verge space.

You may also like to visit the [Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens](#) (ERBG) to be inspired by four different Naturescape gardens – Wildlife, Coastal, Cottage and Formal Gardens. The ERBG also offers a wide range of verge garden friendly ground covers, grasses, and shrubs that are native to the Eurobodalla area.



Maintaining your verge garden

Once you create and register your verge garden, you are responsible for ensuring that your verge garden is maintained in accordance with these guidelines. You must ensure your verge garden is maintained and does not become neglected, untidy or unsafe. No material from the garden is permitted to enter the stormwater system as it could be deemed water pollution under *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.

If you have moved into a residence that already has an established verge garden, you will:

- assume responsibility for ensuring the verge garden complies with the program guidelines; and
- Need to register the verge garden (irrespective of whether the verge garden has already been registered by the previous owner) to ensure the contact details attached to the verge garden are up to date.

Should you decide to discontinue your verge garden, you must return the verge area to its original condition. If unknown and unless paved, this can usually be assumed to be ordinary grass/turf. Contact Council to de-register your garden.

If your verge garden is vandalised, you are responsible for any costs incurred in remediating your verge garden. If your verge garden has become untidy or unsafe as a result of vandalism, you will need to remediate your verge garden as soon as practicable.

If a verge garden contravenes any part of these guidelines to the extent that it presents a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of community members, Council may direct the participating resident to remediate the verge garden so that it no longer contravenes the guidelines. Council may issue orders under Section 124 of the *Local Government Act 1991* for failure to comply with requirements of the guidelines or subsequent directions to comply.

If a verge garden poses an immediate and unacceptable risk or a participating resident does not comply with a previous council direction to remediate a verge garden, Council may remove the verge garden.

Council reserves the right to remove or modify a verge garden (in whole or part) in order to undertake any future infrastructure or maintenance work. Any cost associated with restoring the verge garden to its prior state will be borne by the resident with the responsibility to maintain the verge garden.

For further information

For further information on how to create a verge garden please contact Council on 4474 1000 and one of the staff from the Natural Resources Team will provide assistance.

Eurobodalla Shire Council

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