



COMMUNITY VERGE (NATURE STRIP) DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The “Verge” is the nature strip of land between the kerb and the property boundary which provides access for many purposes, including:

- Pedestrians;
- Vehicle access;
- Trees and Streetscaping;
- Rubbish collection
- Services such as water, sewer, gas, electricity and telecommunication services

The City of Charles Sturt is committed to greening our streets and encourages residents to establish and maintain the nature strip adjacent their property, however, you need to make sure that your nature strip project is respectful of the needs of others. It must be well-maintained, safe and ensure that the footpath is accessible to everyone.

To ensure public safety, Council and service utility access to this area of land, it is important that these guidelines for verge (nature strip) development are clear and followed.

Please note that if you are not able to comply with the requirements of these guidelines, you will need to contact Council on 8408 1111 to discuss your proposal, the guidelines can be found here.

When developing a plan or design for your verge/nature strip garden, there are many considerations.

Appropriate verge plantings include vegetation that will not reach a height greater than 600mm at maturity and may include small plants, shrubs, turf, grass and/or groundcovers that:

- Are suitable for local site conditions and the existing soil type;
- Preferably indigenous or native species;
- Hardy enough to withstand the harsh street environment;
- Able to tolerate occasional pedestrian traffic;
- Have a low water requirement;
- Vegetable Gardens (see below).

The Botanic Gardens Plant Selector may help you with plant selection:

<http://plantselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/home.aspx>

Other treatments that are appropriate for use in the verge/nature strip are:

- Mulched surface, to ensure that mulch will not spill into the kerb and gutter or path, it must be well retained in the verge/nature strip area;
- Permeable weed mat and mulch, ensuring that mulch will not spill into the kerb and gutter or path; it must be well retained in the verge/nature strip area.

Vegetable or Community gardening in the verge/nature strip

If you want to grow veggies in the verge there are a few considerations before you start to plant and harvest.

Talking with your neighbours before you start a verge/nature strip garden is a good idea; perhaps you can collectively create a small, street community garden? But, remember too, that your garden is on public land and you must be prepared for others to pick and use the produce from the verge/nature strip garden and be aware of animals using the verge/nature strip garden.

Always wash your produce before you eat it.

There may be an increased risk of soil contamination in verge soils, this is mainly because of cars and other vehicles being parked on or next to the verge over many years. For this reason, if you choose to grow veggies in your verge/nature strip garden:

- An important precaution, if you wish to grow veggies, is to have the soil tested for heavy metals or chemical residue; you can have soil tested through a Macquarie University programme <https://research.science.mq.edu.au/vegessafe/>
- Veggie gardens must still be developed within these guidelines (see checklist below).

Irrigation Systems

Manually watered verge/nature strip gardens are our preferred option. However, below ground irrigation systems such as pop up sprinklers and drippers are acceptable in line with the following:

- Water is sourced from your property;
- Any valves or controllers must be on your property;
- Any damage caused to the footpath during the installation of any irrigation system is reported to Council and repaired at your cost;
- Any maintenance or repairs of your irrigation system are your responsibility;
- There are no exposed irrigation components in the verge garden or anywhere else on public land;
- Water is directed away from footpaths and crossovers.

To ensure the safety of all road and footpath users, the following *must* be maintained:

- Sight line clearances for all traffic;
- Access to any underground or overhead services must be maintained;
- The general level and grade of the verge must be maintained;
- People must be able to get in and out of their cars safely and easily;
- Take care around street trees, do not damage their roots and provide adequate space to ensure the successful establishment and growth of any street tree;
- A minimum 10m clearance from any bus stop sign, parallel to the roadway, 2m either side of the pole and 1.5m clearance between the sign and any footpath (in line with DPTI standards);
- Ensure that there is adequate space for the placement and collection of bins
- No structures are to be placed or installed within the verge area e.g. frames or arches to support plantings, garden edging, retaining walls, rocks, bollards.
- Road/vehicular traffic must not be impeded in any way

To ensure the safety of pedestrians, road users and residents, and that species appropriate to the street environment are planted, established and maintained the following may **NOT** be planted in the verge*:

- Trees are not permitted to be planted as part of any verge development. **If you would like a street tree planted, this can be arranged through Councils Customer Contact Team by phoning 8408 1111 or email council@charlessturt.sa.gov.au** be sure to leave a space in your verge/nature strip garden for tree planting. Nature Strip plantings may be disrupted when Council undertakes tree planting in your street, but, we will try to keep any damage to a minimum. Where the tree is planted will depend on any underground services, but, we will do our best to plant in your preferred tree location;
- Plants that are prickly, poisonous, spiky or sharp;
- Weeds of National Significance, declared weeds or alert weed species (refer to Natural Resources Adelaide and Mount Lofty for more information)
<http://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/adelaidemtloftyranges/plants-and-animals/pest-plants-and-animals/pest-plants>
- Concrete and pavers (with the exception of driveways, crossovers and footpaths);
- Rough, coarse and irregular mulch materials that are uncomfortable or difficult to walk on and may present a trip or slip hazard;
- Pebbles, scoria or any other solid treatments;
- Fully impervious membrane under mulch (such as black plastic);
- 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.
- Structures of any type (Planter boxes may be allowed under a formal permit process www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/PlanterBoxes)
- Raised edging of any description.
- **Synthetic Grass (contribution to urban heat)**
- Permeable Paving (Due to ongoing maintenance requirement).

*This is not retrospective, there are a number of verges across the City using the above treatments, however, any upgrade to the verge will be required to be within these guidelines.

To ensure the protection of any underground public utility services such as water, gas, telecommunications and electricity, you should call 'Dial Before You Dig' if using machinery to develop your verge/nature strip on 1100 (during business hours) or visit their website at <https://www.1100.com.au/members/member-listing/sa-nt/> prior to any excavation. Should there be any damage caused to public utility services due to gardening activities, this must be reported to the appropriate authority as soon as possible and repaired at your expense.

If you wish to plant and maintain a verge/nature strip, you will need to also consider your ability to maintain this area on an ongoing basis. Where planted verge/nature strip are not maintained or are planted outside of these guidelines, the development may be removed by Council at the cost of the resident.

Verge/Nature Strip Conversion Programme

A limited verge/nature strip conversion programme is available to residents who qualify as disabled, elderly or disadvantaged and are unable to maintain their verge/nature strip. This service is limited to basic treatments such as mulch to achieve a basic, tidy appearance. All verge

conversion requests will be assessed on an individual basis and will be limited to available funds for this programme. For more information about verge/nature strip conversions contact Council's **Customer Contact Team by phoning 8408 1111 or email council@charlessturt.sa.gov.au**

Verge Management/Nature Strip

Council provides a vegetation management service for verges.

Generally, the service includes four maintenance cycles per year on local roads and eight maintenance cycles on main roads, adjoining schools and on selected roads where there is no property facing onto a segment of verge.

The service includes:

- Mowing of front, rear and side grass verges (between back of kerb and footpath or property boundary);
- Mowing of service strips (between the property boundary and footpath);
- Edge trimming along back of kerb, driveway and footpaths;
- Weed spraying of cracks and expansion joints of footpaths, service strips, property boundaries and driveways where required;
- Street sweeping, clean up and appropriate disposal of associated green waste;

It should be noted that this is not a service that will maintain a lawned area, rather, it is a risk management service to reduce the height and quantity of grass and weeds in the verge area.

If you are interested in verge/nature strip gardening, please consider basic safety precautions such as appropriate clothing, appropriate and safe use of tools and sun protection. You should always remain on the verge/nature strip area and never garden from the roadway.

Do Not Mow /Spray Register

Council maintains a "Do Not Mow" and "Do Not Spray" register for residents who care for their verge. Once you have completed the application form you will automatically be listed on both of these registers to ensure that these treatments are not carried out on your verge/nature strip. If you do not want to be on these registers please contact Council's **Customer Contact Team by phoning 8408 1111 or email council@charlessturt.sa.gov.au**

If you follow all of these guidelines in the checklist, there is no need for you to contact Council, please proceed to complete the **Community Nature/Verge Development Permit**. You must, however, be aware that authorisation to landscape your verge is issued under Section 221(2)(e) of the Local Government Act and that conducting activities outside of the authorisation is a contravention of Section 221 of the LG Act, and an authorised person of Council can accordingly make order to remedy the contravention under Section 262 of the LG Act (and/or the Council can prosecute the offender)

You must also be aware that you must take reasonable care of your own health and safety; and take reasonable care that your acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and, comply, so far as you are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the (City of Charles Sturt); and co-operate with any reasonable terms and conditions provided by the City of Charles Sturt