



D14 Soft Landscaping

Since the introduction of the Planning and Design Code (The Code) all new development must provide a certain area of soft landscaping to minimise heat absorption and reflection, contribute shade and shelter, provide for stormwater infiltration and biodiversity, and enhance the appearance of land and streetscapes.

What is soft landscaping?

The Code defines soft landscaping as *landscaped areas that are pervious and capable of supporting the growth of plant species. It does not include artificial turf or any form of pervious paving or paved/hardstand areas used for pedestrian and/or vehicle movement.*

This means that artificial turf cannot be installed for new developments where approved soft landscaping is being provided. Artificial turf does not contribute to biodiversity, support urban cooling, and allow for proper water infiltration, as it can retain heat, block water absorption, and it does not provide the environmental benefits of living greenery. Where lawn is nominated on the approved plans it must be living lawn not artificial turf.

How much soft landscaping do I need to provide?

For all proposed residential development, soft landscaping should be provided in accordance with the following table:

Site area (or in the case of residential flat building or group dwelling(s), average site area) (m ²)	Minimum percentage of site
<150	10%
150–200	15%
>200–450	20%
>450	25%

Further to this, at least 30% of any land located between the dwelling and the front property boundary should be appropriately landscaped.

Do I need to provide a tree within the soft landscaping?

New dwellings are required to provide or retain trees on site in accordance with the following table:

Site size per dwelling (m ²)	Tree size* and number required per dwelling
<450	1 small tree
450–800	1 medium tree or 2 small trees
>800	1 large tree or 2 medium trees or 4 small trees

The tree size is outlined in the table below:

Tree size	Mature height (minimum)	Mature spread (minimum)	Soil area around tree within development site (minimum)
Small	4 m	2m	10m ² and min. dimension of 1.5m
Medium	6 m	4 m	30m ² and min. dimension of 2m
Large	12 m	8m	60m ² and min. dimension of 4m

Council is currently running a tree rebate scheme where half the purchase price of a tree you plant on your property will be rebated to you. For more information refer to our website -

[Treebate - Tree Rebate Scheme | City of Charles Sturt](#)

How to demonstrate soft landscaping for my development?

Every development application must provide details of soft landscaping shown on the accompanying site plan. The site plan should show the areas to be landscaped and include a plant legend to identify what type of plants will be used.

The plant legend should include a range of planting options for the symbol shown on the plan. This means you can choose from these options rather than only having the choice of one particular species when it comes time to undertake the landscaping.

What if I want to change my landscaping?

Should you want to use planting not originally nominated in the plant legend when completing the dwelling this can be achieved as an amendment to the application provided you are still using alternative planting that we have checked delivers on the performance outcome.

What if my builder has a copy of the plans?

It is strongly recommended that you request and keep a copy of the plans from your builder for your own records. Due to copyright laws council is not able to reproduce and provide copies of plans to land owners.

What happens if I do install artificial turf?

Building inspections carried out by Council Officers are finding more often that artificial turf is being installed and therefore the development is not in accordance with the approval. This is considered a breach of approval and as such, Council will take action to have the artificial turf removed and lawn or other soft landscaping planted. Further it may be possible that Council prosecutes the relevant builder/owner if this is not removed.

More information

The Adelaide Garden Guide has been developed to provide garden design and planting ideas to assist homeowners in achieving The Code's mandatory landscaping requirements. The guide, separated into five parts, provides examples of different garden designs for small, medium, and large sites, lists of the most appropriate tree species for different sites, 3D visualisations, case studies of common infill housing types.

The guide can be accessed via the PlanSA website at [Adelaide Garden Guide | PlanSA](#).