

NATURE STRIP

..... Guidelines



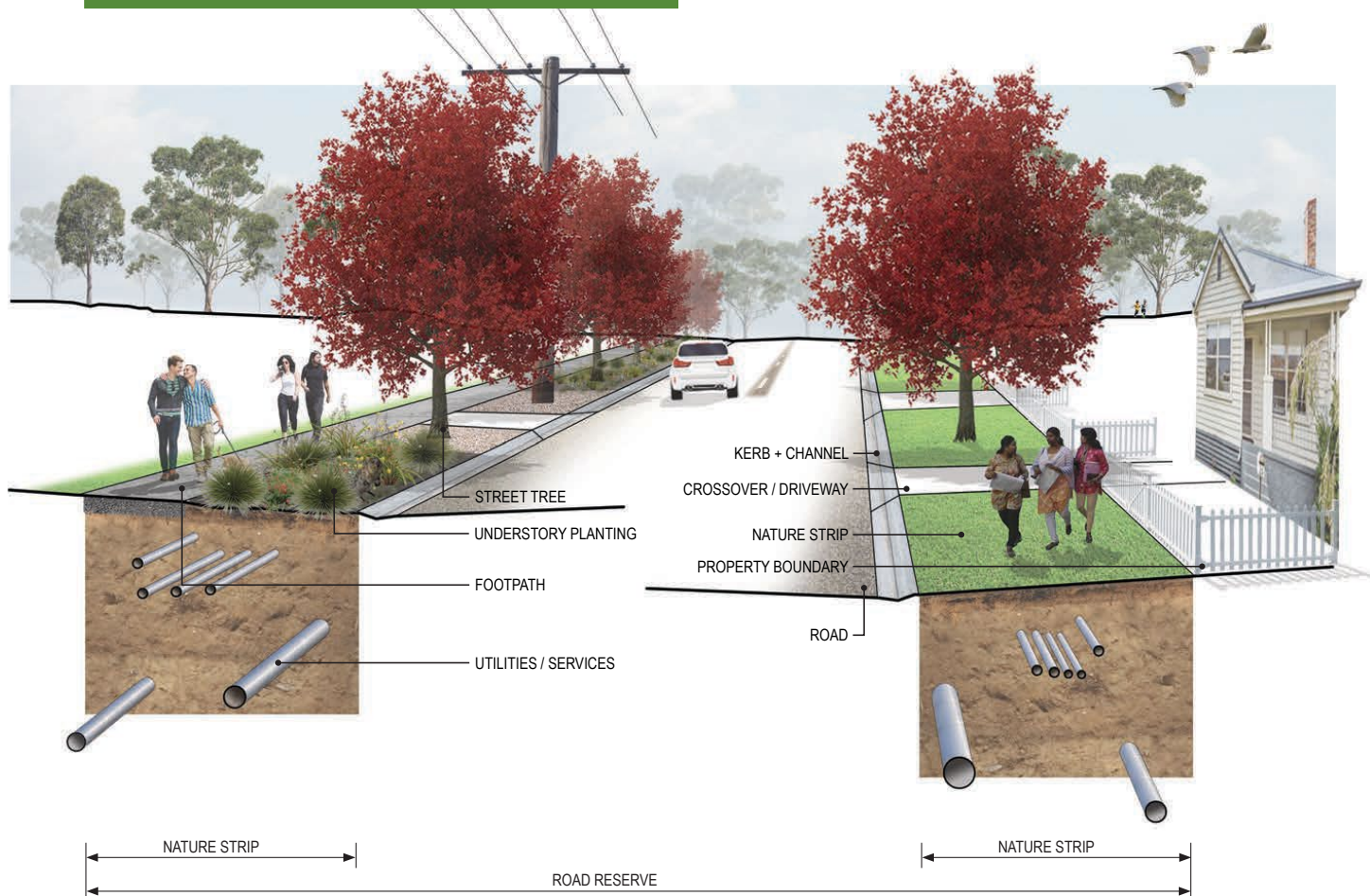


1. What is a nature strip?

A nature strip or verge is the narrow strip of land between your property boundary and the road kerb. This land is public land and can contain utilities including gas, water, sewerage, power (above and below ground), and telecommunications.

Normally nature strips will be covered in lawn, but there are several other things you can do to your nature strip in order to beautify your street.

When carefully planned and maintained, nature strips planted with indigenous or native plants can provide opportunities to improve the local environment, enhance amenity and support local biodiversity.



2. Functions of a nature strip

Nature strips are an integral part of Bendigo's urban environment because they:



Accommodate power poles, light poles, and a range of underground services such as water and gas supply pipes, storm water, sewage, telephone and, sometimes, electrical cables



Allow clear visibility between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians at intersections, curves in the road and near driveways



Allow for pedestrian access along the street where there is no footpath



Allow for penetration of rainwater and air into the soil while reducing stormwater runoff and pollution into local drains and waterways



Provide a flat space for the kerbside collection and emptying of rubbish and recycling bins



Improve soil health and promotes growth of nearby trees and gardens.



Can allow vehicles to park safely at the kerbside and for door opening space between the road and footpath



Can visually soften the effect of hard streetscape elements such as roads, footpaths, driveways, fences, and buildings



Provide for pedestrian, pram, pusher and wheelchair traffic between the road and footpath



Act as additional footpath space when two or more people walk together



Provide space for street tree planting



Help to cool the local climate, making for more pleasant environment, especially during hot summer weather



3. Purpose of the nature strip policy guidelines

These guidelines are designed to provide:

- Detail on the functionality and benefits presented by nature strips
- Information on community responsibility to maintain nature strips throughout the City of Greater Bendigo
- Available options for residents who wish to upgrade their nature strip without the requirement for a Working Within Road Reserves (WWRR) permit¹
- How to apply for a WWRR permit to undertake nature strip works that require one
- Information around treatments that aren't permitted

DID YOU KNOW? Parking of any vehicles or trailers on the nature strip is prohibited.

4. Rural road reserves

A rural road reserve is the narrow strip of land between your property boundary and the road in areas outside the urban area designated by the 60 km sign. This land is public land and houses utilities that may include gas, water, power, and telecommunications. These areas are also important for traffic safety, as well as being a place where indigenous or native plants survive and provide opportunities to improve the local environment, provide shade, enhance amenity, and support local biodiversity.

Modification of rural road reserves is **not permitted**.^{2,3}

5. Maintenance of nature strips

Generally, the City does not carry out maintenance of nature strips (excluding street trees). The usual practice is for residents of adjoining properties to maintain the verge by regular mowing, weeding and rubbish removal.

Following the modification of a nature strip, residents are expected to keep the nature strip in a well maintained and safe condition including:

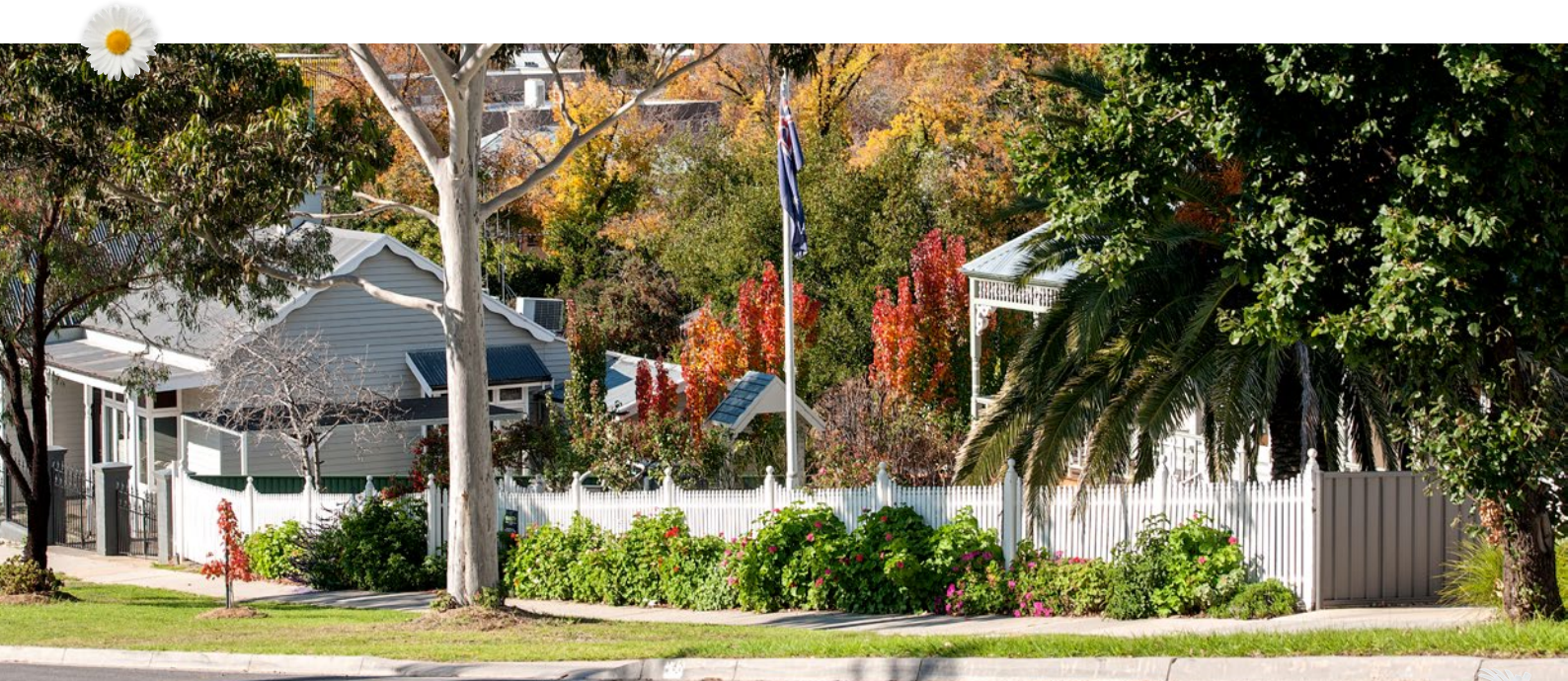
- Any modification work must be in line with the treatments outlined within these guidelines
- Plants are to be pruned so that they do not protrude onto pathways, driveways or back of kerb and maintain specified buffer zones
- The nature strip is to be kept free of weeds and rubbish
- Where mulch is used, a cover is to be maintained over the nature strip. Mulch material must be kept stable and properly contained. No mulch spillage is allowed on the footpath, driveways or in the kerb and channel
- The nature strip is to be free of any tripping hazards and any protruding objects, excluding raised planters approved through a WWRR permit
- Please do not place lawn clippings around the base of trees as the build-up of material around the trunk promotes fungal decay

Please refer to our [Protection and retention of Trees on development sites](#) for how to best protect existing trees.

¹Works Within Road Reserve Permit – Vehicle crossing / Nature strip landscaping

²Greater Bendigo City Council City Community Local Law #2.4 – Motor vehicles on Council land

³VicRoads Road Rule 197 – Stopping on a path, dividing strip, nature strip or painted island



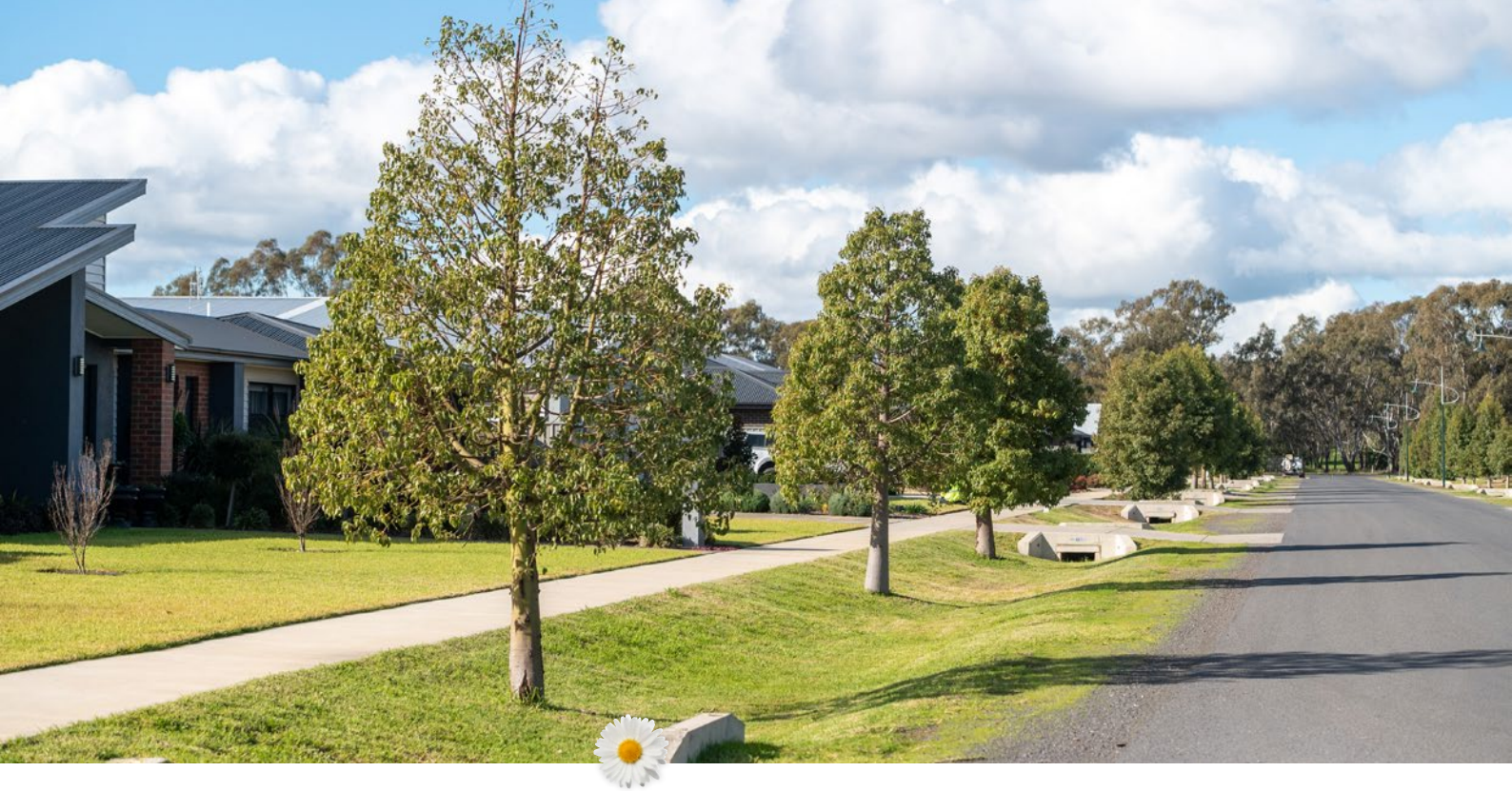
6. Street trees

The City is actively increasing its tree planting efforts under the Greening Greater Bendigo 2020 strategy. When considering alternative nature strip treatments, consideration is to be given to any existing or future street trees. If there is currently no tree in the nature strip, it is quite likely that one will be planted in the future.

The City's planted nature strip trees are not to be pruned or lopped by property owners; all maintenance of City planted trees will be carried out by the City.

If you require a street tree in the nature strip, a request to the City's Urban Forest Planning Unit via the tree requests web-link form. Residents can also contact Customer Service on 1300 002 642 to request a street tree planting.





7. Nature strip modification

Modifying nature strips is permitted, provided the modifications meet the specifications outlined in these guidelines. If any proposed landscaping treatment does not comply with this Policy and any accompanying Guidelines, a permit is required.

Works must avoid any damage to street trees and their root systems, as well as any impact to underground services.

Other than the footpath, hard paving such as concrete or asphalt is not permitted without a permit from the City, as it inhibits access to underground services. A minimum footpath width of 1.5 metres should be retained at all times. Synthetic turf or hard paving, such as concrete or bricks, cannot be used on nature strips as it stops water being absorbed into the ground. This increases flooding during high rainfall, significantly increases surface temperatures on hot days and deprives street trees or other plants of water.

Nature strip treatments should also ensure that space is left for waste collection.

A 30cm plant free buffer zone should be left between the nature strip and kerb end.

If modification is considering crossover works. Consent is required prior to the installation of any driveway or vehicle crossing. This consent is separate and in addition to a building permit (if applicable) and ensures that the proposed facilities are designed in accordance with local laws, and the Road Management Act. To find out more go to [vehicle crossings and driveways](#).

8. Existing modified nature strips

If your nature strip is already modified, please contact the City on 1300 002 642 to discuss how it can be brought in line to meet these guidelines.

Alternately you may wish to remove the modifications and revert to grass. The rateable owner adjacent to the nature strip is responsible for anything altered from standard City install, regardless of whether they were the initial installer or not. Any works completed on a nature strip remain the responsibility of the current property owner or occupant to maintain.

9. Permits for driveways, landscaping or other minor works within the road reserve

The road reserve is the public land beyond your property boundary, and includes roadside or nature strips, drains, verges, shoulders, and roadways.

For any treatments not covered within the scope not covered within the scope of these guidelines, such as driveway construction, a Works Within Road Reserve application form must be completed.

You can download and complete a [hard-copy application](#) or [submit an application online](#).

For more information about works within the road reserve, please contact our Engineering and Public Space Unit on 1300 002 642 or engineering@bendigo.vic.gov.au.



10. Treatment options

Description	WWRR permit required	Application Fee required
Turf (Natural)	No	No
Native grass	No	No
Granitic Sand, Organic or Inorganic Material	No	No
Understory planting	No	No
Raised planters	Yes	No
Any treatment that does not fit the descriptions above	Yes	Yes

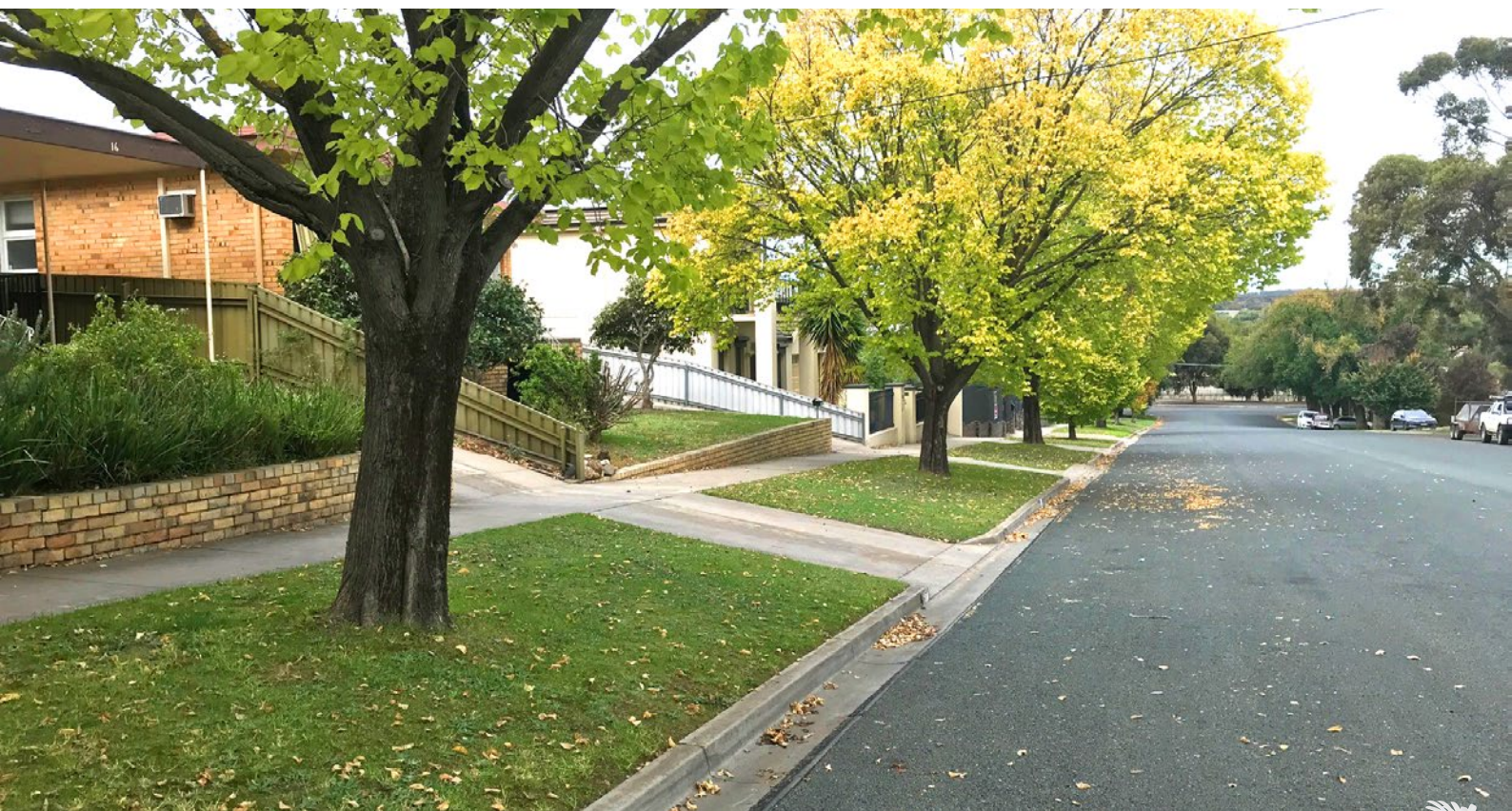
TURF (NATURAL)

Benefits

- ✓ Promotes biodiversity
- ✓ Supports the growth of street trees
- ✓ Green spaces reduce the urban heat and can be several degrees cooler than surrounding hard surfaces
- ✓ Reduces the number of pollutants and storm water runoff into drains and water ways

Considerations

Choose drought tolerant or 'warm season' grasses and these will remain in good health with very little maintenance



NATIVE GRASS

Benefits

- ✓ Promotes biodiversity, carbon capture and soil health
- ✓ Supports the growth of street trees
- ✓ Green spaces reduce the urban heat and can be several degrees cooler than surrounding hard surfaces
- ✓ Species may have indigenous food and fibre links
- ✓ Reduces the number of pollutants and amount of storm water runoff into drains and water ways

Considerations

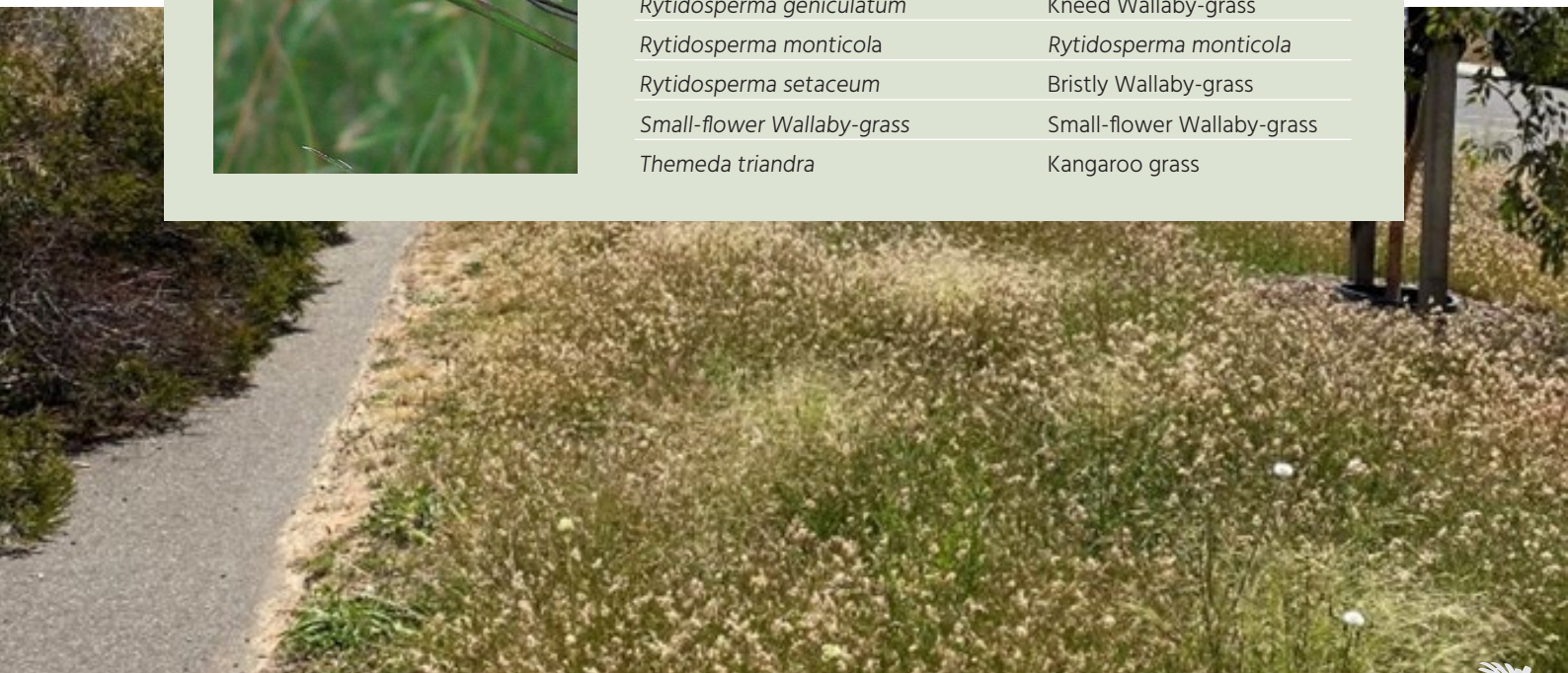
Choose drought tolerant or 'warm season' grasses and these will remain in good health with very little maintenance.

Suggested species are recommended below.



Suggested native grasses and sedges

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Amphibromus pithogastrus</i>	Plump Swamp Wallaby grass
<i>Aristida jerichoensis</i> var. <i>subspinulifera</i>	Jericho Wire-grass
<i>Austrostipa breviglumis</i>	Cane Spear-grass
<i>Austrostipa hemipogon</i>	Half-Bearded Spear-grass
<i>Austrostipa mollis</i>	Soft Spear-grass
<i>Austrostipa scabra</i> ssp. <i>falcata</i>	Variable Spear-grass
<i>Bothriochloa macra</i>	Red-leg grass
<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tall Sedge
<i>Carex tereticauli</i>	Basket Sedge
<i>Chloris truncata</i>	Windmill grass
<i>Isolepis congrua</i>	Slender Club-sedge
<i>Juncus psammophilus</i>	Sand Rush
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	Weeping grass
<i>Poa labillardierei</i>	Common Tussock grass
<i>Rytidosperma geniculatum</i>	Kneed Wallaby-grass
<i>Rytidosperma monticola</i>	<i>Rytidosperma monticola</i>
<i>Rytidosperma setaceum</i>	Bristly Wallaby-grass
Small-flower Wallaby-grass	Small-flower Wallaby-grass
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo grass



GRANITIC SAND, ORGANIC or INORGANIC MATERIAL

This treatment must be done without excavating or stripping more than 150mm of topsoil to lay materials. If more than 150mm of topsoil is to be removed, a WWRR permit will be required.

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A low maintenance alternative to turf 	Mulch on the nature strip must be maintained in a level and weed free condition. The level of the mulch must not extend above the level of the footpath or kerb; This treatment will require periodic weeding and occasional topping up of mulch
	Avoid dark coloured and dyed mulches to reduce heat absorption and leaching of dyes into surrounding landscape
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Permeable surface that supports the health of street trees and soil 	Keep mulches from spilling over into path, driveways or in the kerb and channel
	Do not place mulch around the base of street trees as a build-up of mulch or grass clippings promotes decay
	Pine bark 6mm to 15mm in size, pine wood or hardwood chips 12mm to 25mm in size, to an optimal depth of 75mm and natural in colour may also be used
	Crushed Rock (NOT road base) and Recycled Brick are permitted
	Increased temperature compared to green treatments
	Topping particles used must be no greater than 20mm in size



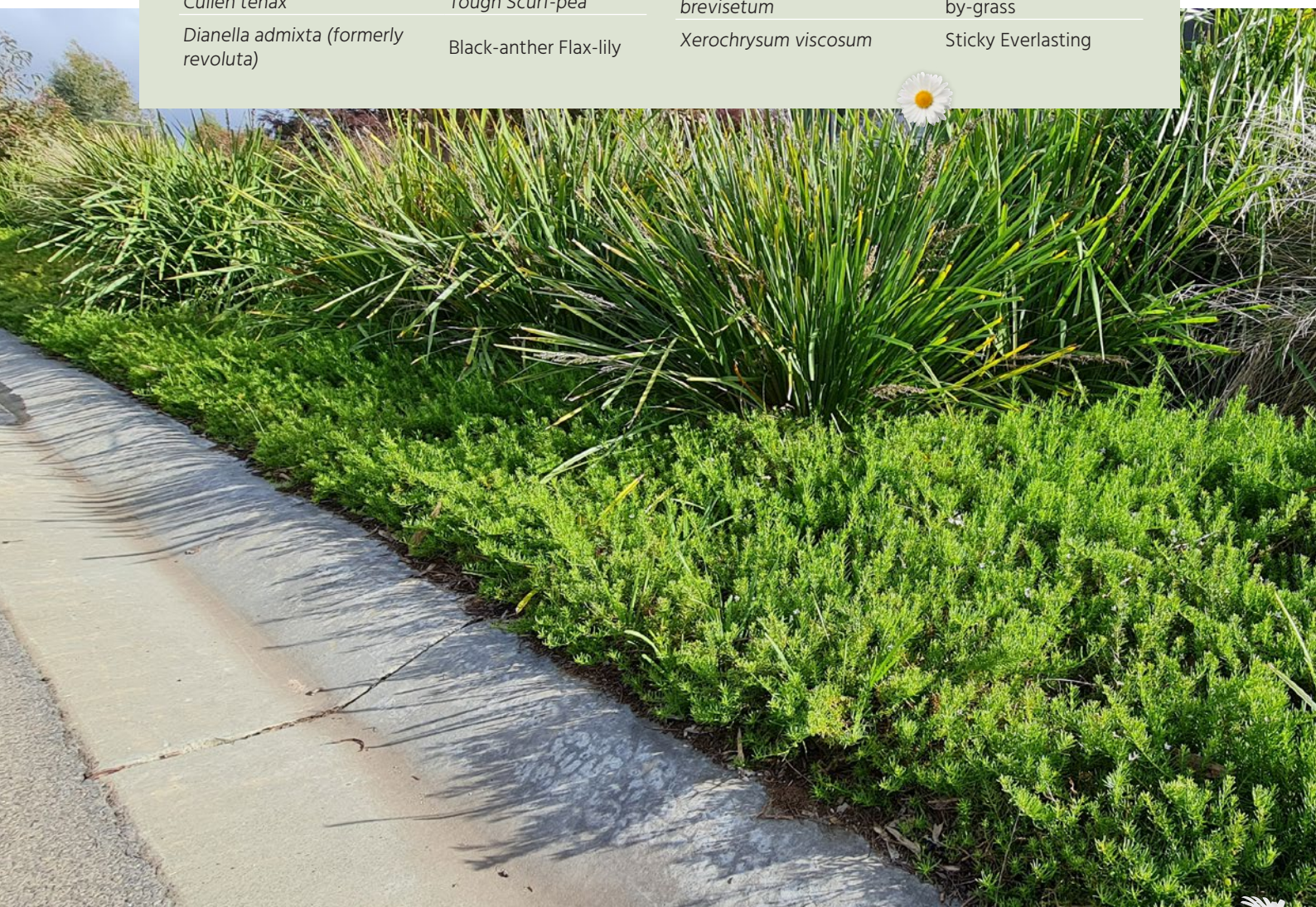
UNDERSTOREY PLANTING

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotes biodiversity in urban areas ✓ Provides habitat for native fauna ✓ Reduces the number of pollutants and amount of storm water runoff into drains and water ways 	The City encourages low growing plant species under 0.5m to be planted. Species must be kept under 1m in height particularly within 1 metre of the road and adjacent driveways to maintain pedestrian and driver lines of sight
	Select plants that grow no taller than 1m height or can be pruned back to 1m in height. This is to maintain visibility along the street
	Select plants that are hardy and that can thrive with little irrigation
	Indigenous plants may be hard to source in, particularly those that are considered threatened species
	Indigenous or native Australian groundcover species are recommended as too are, low growing exotic perennials
	Avoid plants that are known weeds or that are prickly or poisonous. Plants must be maintained so they do not spread or impact on paths, sight lines and trafficable areas
	Adequate space from the Distance back of kerb is kept clear of plantings to allow for people to enter and exit their vehicles and properties safely
	Plantings on corner blocks are limited to ground cover plants to ensure a good line of sight for motorists and a max growth height of 500mm
	Adequate space is left for placing rubbish and recycling bins for collection
	1.2 metres from the property line is kept clear to allow for pedestrian access, mail, paper, and other deliveries
	Irrigation systems must not be placed within the nature strip



Suggested low growing indigenous and native plants

Botanical Name	Common Name	Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	Gold Dust Wattle	<i>Dianella longifolia</i>	Flax-lily
<i>Ajuga australis</i>	Austral Bugle	<i>Eriostemon verrucosa</i>	Bendigo Wax
<i>Arthropodium milleflorum</i>	Vanilla Lily	<i>Euomyrtus ramosissima</i>	Rosy Heath-myrtle
<i>Arthropodium strictum</i>	Chocolate Lily	<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	Cat's Claws
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Bulbine Lily	<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman
<i>Brachyscome multifida</i>	Cut-leaf Daisy	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i> ssp. <i>Coriacea</i>	Wattle Mat-rush
<i>Calocephalus citreus</i>	Lemon Beauty-heads	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny-headed Mat-rush
<i>Calotis anthemoides</i>	Cut-leaf Burr-daisy	<i>Microseris lanceolata</i>	Yam Daisies
<i>Carpobrotus modestus</i>	Inland Pigface	<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	Creeping Boobialla
<i>Celmisia tomentella</i>	Silver Snow-daisy	<i>Pomaderris paniculosa</i> subsp. <i>paniculosa</i>	Inland Pomaderris
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common Everlasting	<i>Prostanthera nivea</i> var. <i>nivea</i>	Snowy Mint-bush
<i>Chrysocephalum semipapposum</i>	Clustered Everlasting	<i>Prostanthera saxicola</i> var. <i>bracteolata</i>	Slender Mint-bush
<i>Correa reflexa</i> var. <i>reflexa</i>	Common Correa	<i>Pycnosorus globosus</i>	Drumsticks
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Common Billy-button	<i>Rytidosperma setaceum</i> var. <i>brevisetum</i>	Short-bristle Wallaby-grass
<i>Crocea exalata</i> subsp. <i>revoluta</i>	Whipstick Crowea	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	Sticky Everlasting
<i>Cullen tenax</i>	Tough Scurf-pea		
<i>Dianella admixta</i> (formerly <i>revoluta</i>)	Black-anther Flax-lily		



RAISED PLANTERS

Benefits	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community participation 	On-going commitment to maintaining plantings
	Is there a more appropriate location to grow your food within your own yard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotes local food production 	Soil contamination - it is the responsibility of the resident to conduct soil testing for contamination before planting fruiting plants and vegetable crops
	Food safety
	Access to utilities
	Biosecurity concerns and control of pests and pathogens, including fruit-fly
	Trip and slip hazards from unharvested produce
	Community support
	Any application for a community garden must comply with The City's (draft) Community Gardens Policy. The City has the right to remove any installation deemed unsafe, inappropriate or a threat to biosecurity



11. Unacceptable treatments

- Synthetic turf, plastic or weed mat
- Modification for vehicle or trailer parking
- Laying of additional paving or concrete
- Irrigation systems
- Aboveground edging or retaining walls
- Letterboxes, which must be on private property.
- Fencing; including metal stakes or star pickets
- Any form of wiring
- Shredded plant products such as wood chips and bark, other than that specified in this Guideline, or pea straw or similar
- Planting of street trees (this is happily done by the City – please make a request and we will program a tree specimen in the upcoming planting program!)
- Crushed rock or toppings larger than 20mm in size, bluestone pitchers, pavers, bollards, sculptures, and boulders
- Planting of species that are known to be weeds of the Bendigo Region
- Fruit or vegetable crops without a permit

Please note that the City has the right to remove any landscaping deemed unsafe or inappropriate.

12. Enforcement

The City is very much aware of the need to provide a safe environment within all areas of the municipality.

The City may remove any modification works that impact on the safety of the public or public services. The landholder will be informed by the City first and have the opportunity to rectify the modifications, before The City initiates any rectification works.

If the property owner fails to act, a delegated City Officer will issue a 'Notice to Comply', directing that the problem be fixed by a specific date. Failure to act in accordance with a 'Notice to Comply' may result in enforcement action by Local Law.

13. Unpermitted species

Any species found on the current declared noxious weeds list must not be planted in any capacity.

Other prohibited weed species are outlined in the below table.

Prohibited Weed Species

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Vinca major</i>	Blue Periwinkle
<i>Gazania linearis</i>	Gazania
<i>Freesia leichtlini</i>	Freesia
<i>Hedera helix</i>	English Ivy
<i>Opuntia spp.</i>	Prickly Pear
<i>Erica lusitanica</i>	Spanish Heath
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese Honey Suckle

14. Related policies and strategies

- [Urban Tree Management Policy](#)
- [Invasive Plants and Animals Policy 2019](#)
- [Greening Greater Bendigo 2020-2070](#)

15. Resources and references

- [Creating Wildlife-Friendly Gardens booklet](#)
- [City of Greater Bendigo - Indigenous Plant Book 3rd Edition](#)

For more information on identification and control of pests and weeds visit:

- [Weeds & Biosecurity - Agriculture Victoria](#)
- [Queensland Fruit Fly Information](#)

