

NATURE STRIP

Landscaping Guidelines

PLANTS

Residents are able to plant their nature strips with a range of ground cover plants, shrubs or grasses provided the following conditions are met:

- ✓ Plants must not exceed 500mm in height at maturity. Near intersections, plants not exceeding 300mm at maturity are recommended to ensure clear line of sight for motorists and pedestrians.
- ✓ Where there is no footpath, 1.2m from the property line is retained as lawn or mulch to allow safe pedestrian access
- ✓ Plants with spikes or prickles or plants considered weeds cannot be used (see Agriculture Victoria website)
- ✓ Ensure safe and suitable access to the footpath for people exiting a parked car.
- ✓ Space must be allowed for waste and recycling bins to be placed for collection
- ✓ Indigenous plant species are preferred due to the benefit they provide to local birds, insects and other small wildlife.
- ✓ When planting food plants, please note that soil contamination (eg. lead) is a common problem in urban areas, and residents are advised to test their nature strip before installing food plants. Affordable testing is available through the VegeSafe program at Macquarie University.

Contact Council on 1300 179 944 or Newport Lakes Native Nursery on 9391 0044 for advice on choosing indigenous plants compliant with these guidelines.

MULCH

Mulch supports plant growth by protecting soil, reducing moisture loss and suppressing weeds.

- ✓ Heavy organic mulches such as bark or wood chips should be applied to resist disturbance by wind and rain.
- ✓ The recommended level of mulch is approximately 75mm which allows rainfall to reach the soil while still reducing evaporation and erosion.
- ✓ Spreading ground cover plants can also be used to avoid the need for mulch once matured.

PROHIBITIONS

The following are not permitted on nature strips:

- ✗ Trees or large bushes greater than 500mm in height at maturity
- ✗ Hard surfaces such as concrete, paving or asphalt (although small areas with non-slip stepping stones for vehicle access or bin movement are acceptable)
- ✗ Irrigation systems
- ✗ Bluestone blocks, bricks, rocks, railway sleepers, edging, retaining walls, planter boxes
- ✗ Letterboxes (these must be on private property)
- ✗ Temporary or permanent electrical wiring (e.g. tree lighting)
- ✗ Synthetic turf, pebbles, scoria, gravel and other loose stones

STREET TREES

Council is responsible for planting and maintaining street trees. These trees are carefully selected to provide habitat for native fauna as well as shade, shelter and cleaner air.

If a street tree is required on the nature strip please contact Council and we will arrange for one to be planted. You can help your tree flourish by watering it regularly and keeping the base weed free and mulched.

Nature strips provide safe public walkways and contribute significantly to the character of our neighbourhoods. Whilst most nature strips are planted with grass, residents may replace this with other plants which can provide benefits like habitat for indigenous plants and animals and food production.

Nature strips in Hobsons Bay must comply with these guideline to ensure our nature strips provide social and environmental benefits while maintaining safety and amenity for the community.



EXCAVATION AND CULTIVATION

Excavation and cultivation must use hand tools only (eg. trowel, spade, fork). Mechanical excavation or cultivation (eg. bobcat, dingo or rotary hoe) may damage street trees, infrastructure and underground services.

Hand tools may still expose some underground services, so the property owner is advised to contact "Dial Before You Dig" on 1100. The owner is responsible for the repairing of any damage to infrastructure caused by landscaping works.



MAINTENANCE

Residents are required to maintain the nature strip adjacent to their property, including keeping it free of trip hazards and protruding objects and ensuring pathways, gutters and driveways are free of weeds, rubbish and mulch.

Council does not carry out renovation or maintenance of nature strips, and is not responsible for reinstating grass after a change in property ownership. Renters should seek permission from the property owner before making changes to the nature strip.

DAMAGED NATURE STRIPS

If the nature strip has been damaged as a result of building work, the property owner or builder is responsible for repair.

Council and utility companies sometimes require nature strip access for maintenance work. If nature strip plantings are disturbed, the service organisation is only responsible for reinstating grass. It is the responsibility of the property owner to restore the nature strip to the desired landscaping.

RESOURCES

Hobsons Bay City Council
Phone: 1300 179 944
Email: sustainability@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

My Smart Garden
Website: mysmartgarden.org.au
Email: contactus@mysmartgarden.org.au

Newport Lakes Native Nursery
Address: 2 Lakes Drive,
Newport 3015
Phone: 9391 0044

Vege Safe Soil Testing/ Macquarie University
Website: <https://research.science.mq.edu.au/vegesafe>