

NATURE STRIP PLANTING GUIDELINES

UPDATE DRAFT 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Glen Eira City Council respectfully acknowledges the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which Glen Eira resides.

We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

What is a nature strip?

A nature strip is an area of public land that lies between the boundary of private property and the road kerb. It does not include the paved footpath area, the kerb itself or driveways.

Nature strips soften and enhance the streetscape by providing a 'green' zone and a buffer between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Nature strips also contain above- and below-ground public utility services including water, sewerage, gas, electricity, and communications infrastructure. They provide space for waste and recycling collection.

(Insert image here of a nature strip)

A More Liveable City

Streetscapes and road corridors are the largest public spaces in a city, and likely to be the most utilised.

These major public spaces are typically limited in their greenery, being largely practical, functional spaces with solid surfaces to safely facilitate movement of people and vehicles.

By the nature of their existence, nature strips play a crucial role in keeping our neighbourhoods healthy and attractive. They help the environment by soaking up rain and reducing water run-off, increasing moisture levels in the air and soil and playing a key role in reducing urban temperatures.

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Nature strips provide areas for the integration of trees and other vegetation into our urban streetscapes, and using plans of action, such as Glen Eira's *Urban Forest Strategy*, these spaces will be essential to increasing canopy cover and reducing the effect of heat islands throughout the municipality.

Nature strips also provide opportunities to enhance habitat and urban biodiversity through the planting of mixed shrubs and groundcovers, particularly when these species are indigenous. While areas may not appear large enough to make a difference, it is increasingly recognised that many small areas of biodiversity can have a valuable, cumulative effect on species diversity in heavily urbanised environments.

Before planting your nature-strip garden

Please ensure you have done the following:

- Read these guidelines to ensure you understand the requirements.
- Talk to your neighbours. Let them know what you are planning and discuss any concerns.
- Choose indigenous plants for your nature strip garden to promote biodiversity and improve habitat connectivity throughout the municipality.
- Plant drought-tolerant species to reduce water use.
- Get an approved Nature Strip Planting Permit before commencing any works.
- Consider safety, particularly when planting near roads.

Legacy gardens

Many nature strips are already planted in Glen Eira. There is no expectation that these gardens be removed or modified, even if they do not fully comply with the new guidelines.

Council is sometimes required to investigate nature-strip gardens where a safety concern has been raised. In these instances, we work with affected residents to modify and maintain the gardens to ensure public safety. In rare

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situations where there is a continued safety issue, Council has the option to utilise local laws to issue orders and penalties.

Clearance requirements

Nature strips are an important part of the municipality's public space network. They are required to be maintained to allow safe access for all. Therefore, there are several clearance requirements to be aware of and adhere to when planning and planting.

Within clearance areas, you can only grow grass, a low ground cover or install mulch.

Footpaths

Footpaths need to be kept clear of vegetation so that everyone can use them. Vegetation that encroaches onto the path can reduce accessibility for prams, wheelchairs, scooters and people who might need assistance with mobility.

- A minimum of 30cm clearance is required to allow for pedestrian safety.
- Plants must always be kept trimmed back from the path edge.

Kerbsides

Nature strip planting can reduce safe and accessible access from the road to the footpath. Plants growing over kerbs can also restrict storm water flow.

- A minimum 60cm clearance is required from the kerb to allow for safe access to and from parked vehicles.
- A 1.5-metre clearance is required where there is a disabled parking bay.
- Plants must always be kept trimmed back from the kerb edge.
- Ensure a suitable area for rubbish bin collection is kept clear.

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Driveways, intersections, and pedestrian crossings

- A minimum 1-metre clearance on either side of a driveway is required to allow for car doors and pedestrian safety.
- No plants exceeding 50cm must be grown within 2 metres of a driveway or pedestrian crossing.
- No plants exceeding 50cm must be grown within 10 metres of a corner or intersection.

Services and infrastructure

- **Bollards, telecommunication pits and poles** require a minimum 50cm clearance area around them.
- **Fire hydrants, pay phones, public seats, bike stands and loading zones** require a minimum 1 metre clearance.

Waste collection

Residential waste collection is an essential service and space is required for multiple bins to be placed on the nature strip for accessible collection. Depending on whether you reside at a single, dual or multiple-occupancy address, there may be different requirements for the amount of space necessary for safe bin placement.

Standard bin sizes provided to residents in Glen Eira are 120L and 240L, with dimensions as follows:

- For a 120L bin — height 85cm, width 41cm and depth 41cm
- For a 240L bin — height 95cm, width 50cm and depth 57cm

Bins must be able to be placed on level ground on the kerbside of your nature strip. Easy access should be considered when designing the layout for your nature strip works. This area may be kept as turf or surfaced with graded mulch, granitic or groundcovers.

(Insert images here on nature strip designs) illustrations

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What you can plant

Annuals, perennials, ground cover, low shrubs and low grasses are ideal. High plants can block sight lines for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, which can cause safety concerns particularly for young children.

The tallest specimen that can be planted must not grow above 1 metre, with additional height restrictions as outlined in the clearance requirements.

Plants or materials which could have negative environmental outcomes are not permitted. This includes but is not limited to weed species and poisonous or thorny plants.

Unfortunately, soil contamination (eg. lead) is common in urban areas and airborne contaminants can settle on plants along streets. These contaminants can transfer to edible plants. Due to potential health risks, Council recommends that you do not eat plants grown directly in your nature strip. For this reason, fruits and vegetables are not permitted to be grown in nature strip gardens.

Please refer to the list of recommended plant species at the end of this document.

Rocks and other infrastructure

Infrastructure included within nature strip gardens has the potential to become unsafe and cause accidents.

No elements aside from outdoor plants and mulch are permitted in nature strip gardens. Materials or structures which are not permitted include (but are not limited to) bricks or pavers, rocks, stones, fences, sleepers or edges, planter boxes and other raised structures, irrigation systems, ornaments (includes gnomes and bird baths), and bollards.

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Artificial turf or grass, or the installation of hard, stony surfaces are not permitted. Herbicide applications that permanently remove the nature strip of vegetation are prohibited.

Please contact Council if you are unsure if an item can be included in your nature strip garden.

Trees

Street trees provide shade, shelter, improve aesthetics and offer a haven for urban wildlife.

Trees growing within our streetscapes often have many of their critical roots located within the nature strip and must deal with harsh growing conditions due to the environmental constraints of our streets and paved urban landscapes.

As such, it is important to protect their root zone to allow them to access available water and nutrients to help them grow and thrive.

Newly planted trees need time for roots to establish. Allowing roots of new trees to establish for two years without competing with other plants for water or nutrients gives the tree its best chance to develop into a strong, healthy specimen.

You can identify newly establishing trees as they will have stakes, mulch and plastic water wells. Once the two-year establishment period is completed then residents are welcome to plant their nature strip.

A minimum radius of 1 metre must be kept clear of the tree's trunk to protect the root flair, which is where the tree roots grow out into the surrounding soil.

Always be careful when working around tree roots by using only hand tools when directly beneath the tree's canopy. If an area is hard to dig, don't force it. A tree root may be lying under that section of soil and could be damaged.

Do not mound soil, mulch or grass clippings against the trunk, and ensure that no changes in soil level take place, including excavation or the building up of soil within the tree's drip line, as this can have a major impact on the tree's health.

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Though trees may already exist, residents are not permitted to plant any trees within a nature strip. If you want a tree on the nature strip, contact Council to request installation.

Residents are prohibited from removing, lopping or pruning street trees or damaging tree roots. If you need advice regarding your application in relation to street trees or their root systems, please contact Council and ask to speak with one of our arborists.

(Insert some images here of tree clearance zones)

Dial Before You Dig

Before making changes to your nature strip, always check for underground services. To do this, contact Dial Before You Dig on 1100 or apply online at www.1100.com.au

Access for utility companies

While Council provides permission for residents to plant areas of the nature strip, utility companies may require access to their infrastructure for upgrades or repairs.

Please be aware that the utility companies are obligated only to repair the nature strip with grass.

Maintenance and repair of nature strips

The planted area must be maintained and kept neat and tidy. Plants must be healthy and thriving, with no weeds, pests or diseases present.

While Council is the responsible authority, it does not undertake any renovation or maintenance (including mowing and watering) of nature strips unless the condition of the nature strip is considered to pose a hazard or Council needs to update drainage assets.

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If the nature strip is damaged as a result of building works on private property, the builder or property owner is responsible for repair and reinstatement of the nature strip. Council reserves the right to reinstate or install a footpath or part of the kerb, channel, or roadway at any time. Council will not provide reimbursement for loss of plants or damage to landscaping where footpath or road works occur.

Car parking

Nature strips are not for the parking of vehicles. Parking on them can damage the nature-strip surface, trees and root systems, kerb and channel, paths, house drain connections and other underground services.

What happens if I no longer wish to maintain my nature strip planting?

If you decide you no longer want to maintain your plantings on the nature strip, you are required to reinstate the area to natural lawn level with the footpath and kerb. The nature strip must also be returned to grass on the sale or vacating of the property. As an option, the new vendor of the property can obtain a new permit if they agree to maintain the nature strip in accordance with the *Guidelines*.

What to do next

The property owner, or tenant empowered to act on their behalf, is responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals before residents plant on nature strips.

Please ensure you have obtained a permit before planting your nature strip. If you do not obtain a permit, or fail to meet the conditions of the permit, Council or utility-asset owners may require you to return the nature strip to its original condition.

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You can make applications on Council's website

<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/services/planning-and-building/building/permits/nature-strips>

Before lodging, you will need the following:

- Property owner's or body-corporate consent (if you are renting or leasing, or living in a multiple-occupancy dwelling)
- Evidence there are no services that will prohibit your proposal
- A planting schedule or plan.

This information can be uploaded and included with your application.

Council officers try to inspect and assess applications within 28 days of lodgement.

Once you receive your Nature Strip Planting Permit, you must commence work within three months.

CONTACT

For further information or guidance, please contact Council's Parks Department on 03 9524 3333, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5.30pm (Tuesday 8am to 7.15pm)

<https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/3007/indigenous-plants-of-glen-eira-2018.pdf>

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Preferred plants

There are many local species of grasses and ground covers appropriate for planting on a nature strip.

Planting species that are indigenous to the Sandbelt Region of Melbourne (south of the Yarra River, along the Port Phillip Bay coastline, extending to Frankston) can increase biodiversity and provide habitat for native birds and animals.



Arthropodium strictum

Chocolate lily

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description of plant: Chocolate-scented, deep-pink-to-mauve flowers in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Prefers well-drained soil. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 30cm to 60cm high, 20cm to 80cm wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Brachyscome multifida

Cut-leaf daisy

Native to Victoria

Description: Various varieties with different-coloured flowers in spring, summer and autumn

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade.

Dimensions: 20cm to 40cm high, 80cm to 1.2m wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com

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Bulbine bulbosa

Bulbine lily

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Grass-like with yellow flowers in spring, summer and autumn.

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Prefers well-drained, moist soil.

Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 20cm to 40cm high, 20cm to 30cm wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Carpobrotus rossii

Karkalla

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Purple flowers

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Prefers well-drained soils. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 20cm high, 2.5m wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Chrysocephalum apiculatum

Common everlasting

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Yellow flowers in spring, summer and autumn

Growing preferences: full sun to part shade. Prefers well-drained soil. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 30cm to 50cm high x 1.3m wide

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com

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Dianella longifolia var. *longifolia*

Pale flax lily

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Strappy plant. Blue flowers followed by blue berries.

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 30cm to 60cm high, 50cm wide

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Dianella revoluta

Spreading flax lily

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Strappy plant. Blue flowers followed by blue berries.

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 50cm to 60cm high, 80cm wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Kennedia prostrata

Running postman

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Scarlet pea-shaped flowers in spring and summer.

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Prefers well-drained soil.

Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: Prostrate, 10cm high, 1m to 2m wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com

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Myoporum parvifolium

Creeping boobiala

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Dense foliage with white flowers in spring, summer and autumn
Growing preferences: full sun to part shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 10cm to 20cm high, 1.5m to 2m wide.

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Wahlenberia communis

Tufted bluebell

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Blue flowers in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun or partial shade. Prefers well-drained, moist soil.

Dimensions: 15cm to 50cm high, 15cm to 40cm wide

Photo: (CC BY 2.5 AU) Russell Best, natureshare.org.au



Austromyrtus dulcis

Midgen berry

Native to northern New South Wales and southern Queensland

Description: Small white flowers in spring and summer followed by an edible berry

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade

Dimensions: 40cm to 50cm high, 1m to 1.5m wide.

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Banksia blechnifolia

Fern-leaf banksia

Native to Western Australia

Description: Red flower spikes in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun. Withstands dry periods when established. Dimensions:

20cm to 40cm high, 1.2m to 1.5m wide.

Photo: Australian National Botanic Gardens, www.anbg.gov.au



Dampiera diversifolia

Dampiera

Native to southwest Western Australia

Description: Purple to blue flowers in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Prefers well-drained soil.

Dimensions: 10cm high, 1.5m wide

Photo: (CC BY 2.5 AU) Chris Clarke, natureshare.org.au



Goodenia geniculata

Bent goodenia

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Yellow flowers in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 5cm to 10cm high, 30cm wide

Photo: (CC BY 2.5 AU) Russell Best, natureshare.org.au

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Poa labillardieri

Common tussock grass

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 30cm to 70cm high, 40cm wide

Photo: © Colleen Miller, www.victorianflora.com



Poa poiformis

Coastal tussock grass

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 30cm to 70cm high, 40cm wide

Photo: Plants of the Elster Creek Area, www.elster-creek.org.au



Bossiaea prostrata

Creeping bossiaea

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Yellow flowers in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Prefers slightly damper sites.

Dimensions: 5cm to 10cm high, 1m wide

Photo: © Neville Walsh, www.vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au

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Calocephalus citreus

Lemon beauty-heads

Indigenous to greater
Melbourne.

Description: Yellow flowers in spring

Growing preferences: Prefers full sun and slightly damper sites.

Dimensions: 15cm to 60cm high, 30cm wide.

Photo: © J. Lindner, www.greeningaustralia.org.au



Pelargonium australe

Austral stork's-bill

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: White-to-pink flowers in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Hardy in a range of soils.

Dimensions: to 50cm high.

Photo: © David Pitts (DELWP), www.vicflora.vic.gov.au



Rytidosperma caespitosum

Common wallaby-grass

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Variable tufted perennial

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Frost tolerant.

Dimensions: 20cm to 40cm high

Photo: © Neil Blair, www.vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au

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Stylidium graminifolium

Grass triggerplant

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Tufted perennial, pink flowers in spring

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Well-drained soils.

Dimensions: 5cm to 20cm high

Photo: © Neil Blair, www.vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au



Themeda triandra

Kangaroo grass

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: Tufted grass, distinct red-brown spikelets in spring and summer

Growing preferences: Full sun to part shade. Hardy in a range of soils, withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 50cm high, 50cm wide

Photo: © Ilma Dunn, www.vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au



Viola hederaceae

Ivy-leaved violet

Indigenous to Glen Eira

Description: White, purple, mauve flowers all year

Growing preferences: Full sun to shade. Withstands dry periods.

Dimensions: 5cm to 20cm high, spreading

Photo: © Neville Walsh, www.vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au