

Nature Strip Guidelines



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Introduction

IMPORTANCE OF NATURE STRIPS

Nature strips play an important role in the aesthetic, environmental and social health of the Central Coast municipality. They complement and enhance streetscapes by providing a “green” zone between roads, footpaths, homes and buildings.

Nature strips also create a buffer between pedestrians and traffic as well as space for the establishment of valuable street trees, which play a significant role in beautifying our streets. While the Central Coast Council is the responsible authority for nature strips, we do 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.

The Council is required to provide a safe environment, respond to any public safety issues and minimise risks to the community that could arise from nature strip landscaping. As a result, a number of restrictions are placed on the development of nature strips.

NATURE STRIP DEFINITION

A nature strip is the area of land located between your property boundary and the street kerb. Nature strips sometimes includes footpaths and often include essential above and below-ground public services including water, sewerage, gas, electricity, and communications infrastructure. They also provide space for rubbish collection.

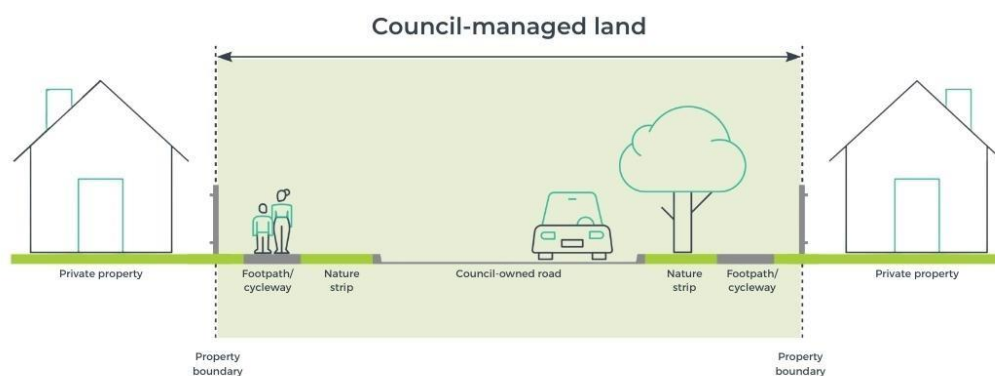


Figure 1: Typical delineation of Nature Strip zone

Legislation

The authority to manage roadways is provided through the Department of State Growth and Road Safety Acts and their related regulations. Under this legislation Council is responsible for Local Roads and State Growth is responsible for Declared Arterial Roads. Council maintains a register of all local roads within the Central Coast Municipality. These guidelines are applicable only to nature strips in urban areas.

Exclusions:

These guidelines are not applicable in rural areas. Where the nature strip is on a declared arterial road or a local road considered by Council to function as a gateway or entrance avenue, a developer may submit plans outside of the requirements of these guidelines for approval through a formal planning process.

Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibilities of property owners/residents, Council, and service providers in relation to planning, establishing, and maintaining a nature strip.

WHO LOOKS AFTER MY NATURE STRIP?

In an urban area, it is the property owner's responsibility to maintain nature strips. Council does not typically maintain (mow, weed or water) nature strips unless they are Council owned street trees, nature strips of Council owned properties or Council managed plantings. To participate in the Councils' street tree program contact Infrastructure Services at isadmin@centralcoast.tas.gov.au.

CAN I PLANT OUT MY NATURE STRIP?

The Council's preferred form of nature strip is grass – it is the easiest for residents to maintain. However, the Council also supports alternatives to grass. Before you begin, you must apply to Council for permission to plant a nature strip garden. Officers will assess each application on a case-by-case basis and ensure they will comply with the conditions for nature strip gardens.

These guidelines outline the circumstances under which nature strip gardens can be created and maintained through landscape treatments other than grass. Residents are required to adhere to the guidelines when undertaking any nature strip construction, landscaping, or alternative treatment other than mown grass.

Your garden must not encroach onto your neighbour's nature strip. We encourage residents to talk with their neighbours before installing a garden in their nature strip.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES IF I PLANT A NATURE STRIP GARDEN?

You must undertake a Dial Before You Dig before any works are undertaken.

Services above and below ground such as electricity, telecommunications, lighting, water, gas, stormwater, drainage and sewage need to be identified. The Central Coast Council will not be liable for any financial penalties that a resident incurs from any damage to services. Dial Before You Dig - Free call 1100 or visit www.byda.com.au

You must maintain the nature strip in a safe and tidy manner. It is your responsibility to ensure that the nature strip continues to be fit for purpose (as defined in the introduction section), meets the design requirements, and does not deteriorate into a public eyesore. If you are no longer able to maintain your nature strip garden it is your responsibility to remove all vegetation, with the exception of any trees, and return the area to grass.

Council is responsible for the planting and maintenance of street trees. The planting of street trees in accordance with the Central Coast Council's Precinct Planting Palettes, or to satisfy developer obligations in new housing or industrial estates, takes precedence over all resident modifications. Council will not contribute to the cost of maintenance, reinstatement, or modification to a nature strip.

The resident/owner will require a Working in Road Reservation Permit before any works can be undertaken. Council also strongly recommends the resident/owner checks with their insurer to ensure they have adequate Public Liability insurance to cater for claims that may arise as a result of any modifications they do to their nature strip. Council accepts no occupational health and safety liability related to works carried out by the public. The resident/owner is liable for all damage to infrastructure located on, or in, the nature strip caused during works carried out by them, or on their behalf.

Access to infrastructure located within the nature strip may be required and a buffer must be maintained to assist with access. In the event services are accessed nature strip would be replanted with topsoil and seeded by the responsible authority. Reinstatement of modified nature strips is the responsibility of the resident/owner.

Council reserves the right to remove inappropriate, or unsafe modifications, non-compliant trees/plants, weed species, and to recover any related costs from the resident/owner or management body.

Council reserves the right to install a footpath at any time. Council will not reimburse for loss of plants/damage to landscaping where a footpath is installed.

Suitable safety precautions such as fencing, signage and other public safety measures must be put in place during construction. These measures are not to interfere with pedestrian or vehicle access and are the responsibility of the resident/owner.

Creating community-friendly nature strips

These guidelines provide direction for the planning, establishment and maintenance of nature strips and will be enforced under Council's Vegetation Management Policy. When modifying nature strips, property owners must consider public safety and accessibility. Plants are not permitted in the no planting zones of a nature strip (see figure 2). Following Council's regulations and the recommendations below will minimise impact on other nature strip users and pedestrians.

The following clearances and plant heights are required so that:

- everyone can safely travel on the footpath
- people driving can see people walking and cycling
- people can get out of a car parked on the street
- workers can safely access service pits
- there is space for bins and rubbish collection
- a safe street environment that maintains good surveillance, light and access is maintained.

MINIMUM CLEARANCES FOR NATURE STRIP PLANTING

Keep clear an area on the nature strip adjacent to the kerb to put rubbish bins for weekly collection

The following clearances must be maintained:

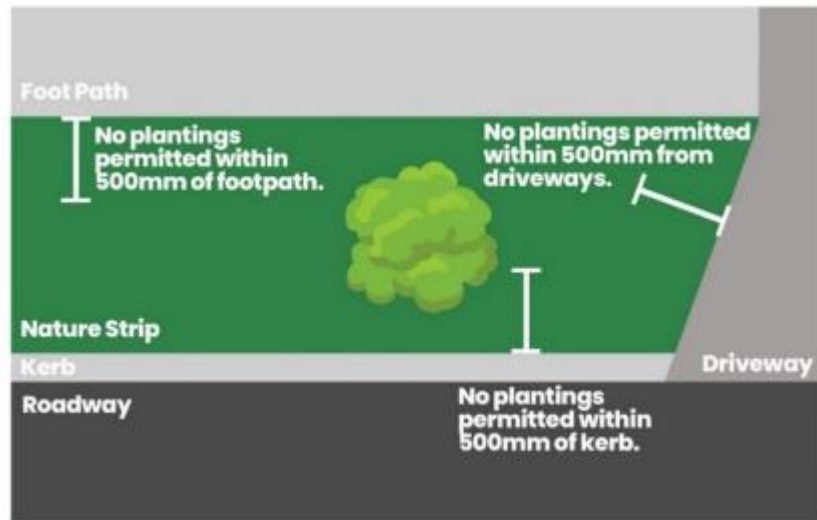


Figure 2: Planting clearances and no planting zones for nature strip gardens.

500 mm from footpaths / or unformed path up against property boundary for pedestrian access

500 mm from driveways

500 mm from kerb / 1000 mm from kerb with adjacent bus stop

500 mm from street tree

Plants must not exceed 1m in height / 500 mm in height when on a corner

WHAT IS NOT PERMITTED ON NATURE STRIPS?

The following are NOT permitted on nature strips (unless a permit is granted by Council):

- Hardscape elements or structures (such as rockeries, retaining walls, paving, sculptures, etc.)
- Fencing (temporary protective fencing may be permitted with written approval from Council)
- Concrete, pavers, or asphalt
- Coarse gravel or pebbles (20mm-63mm particles)
- Synthetic turf
- Declared weeds (Tasmanian Government declared weeds list)
- Trees or large wooded plants (other than Council planted street trees) that
- Prickly, spikey, and poisonous plants, or plants that are common causes of allergies
- Vegetables and Fruit plants/Trees
- Irrigation systems

APPLYING FOR A NATURE STRIP GARDEN PERMISSION.

The below checklist will help you prepare a planting plan and application to Council for your nature strip garden.

- ☐ Have you conducted a Dial Before You Dig and included documentation?
- ☐ Have you shown location of services (eg, water, telecommunications)?
- ☐ Have you shown existing trees?
- ☐ Have you shown your fence line, driveway, footpath, kerb, and entire nature strip?
- ☐ Does your plan show clearance distances as outlined above and allowed for clear access and sight lines?
- ☐ Have you identified any bus stops adjacent to your nature strip?
- ☐ Have you obtained a Working in Road Reservation Permit?
- ☐ Have you listed proposed plantings?

Related documents

- Central Coast Weed Management Plan 2023
- Greening Central Coast Strategy 2021
- Vegetation Management Strategy 2019
- Vegetation Damage Signage Policy 2021
- Guidelines for Tree Protection on Development Sites 2023

Contact Details

Further information can be obtained from:

The Central Coast Council's Infrastructure Services Department on
tel. (03) 6429 8970 or Email: isadmin@centralcoast.tas.gov.au