

Nature Strip Planting Guidelines

June 2025



Acknowledgements



Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people as traditional custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.



Banyule Diversity Statement

Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. Council is committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone: principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.

Community and key stakeholders

Banyule City Council extends a heartfelt thank you to the individuals who participated in the Urban Forest Community Forum (March 2025) to help shape these draft guidelines. Banyule City Council is made stronger by the collective expertise, ideas, enthusiasm and passion of the many people, organisations and businesses committed to an inclusive, healthy and sustainable community.

Photography

All large scale photographs of indigenous plants are courtesy of Tom Crawshaw: Instagram @vicflorafauna

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Thinking of Planting the Nature Strip?	4
What is a Nature Strip?	5
Benefits of Nature Strips	5
Types of Nature Strip	6
Process for Planting a Nature Strip	7
Key Guidelines – Bird’s Eye View	8
Key Guidelines – Street Level View	9
Clearance Zones	10
Further Information	11
Choosing Plants	12
Preparing a Sketch for the Permit Application	12
Approval and Compliance	13
Responsibilities	14
What is Not Permitted on Nature Strips?	15
Find out More	16
Contact Council	16

Thinking of planting the nature strip?

Nature strips do more than just line our streets — they bring life to our neighbourhoods.

They provide space for important services like rubbish collection and water supply, and they support our urban forest by giving trees and plants room to grow.

At Banyule, we know how important it is for our community to have safe, accessible, and green spaces.

These guidelines are designed to help you create a nature strip that supports biodiversity, looks great, and works well for everyone.

Because nature strips are public land, we'll need to make a few simple checks through our free permit system. This helps us ensure plantings are safe and compatible with street infrastructure.

These guidelines apply to nature strips on Council-managed roads. They don't apply to main or arterial roads managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), laneways, shopping strips, median strips, or private property. If you live on a main road, please contact DTP for approval.

To support your project, we've also created a **Nature Strip Planting Toolkit** with helpful resources, including a Recommended Plant List, Weeds List, and Sample Planting Plans.

Let's work together to enrich our streets with biodiverse plantings and create healthier, more vibrant neighbourhoods for everyone.

What is a nature strip?

A nature strip is public land between a private property boundary and the road kerb or gutter. It does not include the footpath or kerb.

Nature strips are part of the road reserve and serve many important functions. They:

- provide space for essential underground and overhead services like sewerage, drainage, electricity and internet
- support street trees and sustainable water management
- provide space for waste collection services
- provide access for people getting in and out of vehicles
- accommodate street lighting, bus stops and street furniture
- improve street amenity.

From time to time, Council and service providers may need access to these areas.

Benefits of nature strips

Nature strips bring beauty and vibrancy to our streets, especially when filled with trees and greenery. They also play a crucial environmental role by helping to:

- reduce stormwater runoff
- filter stormwater before it reaches drains and waterways
- create habitat for pollinators and local wildlife
- provide space for trees that offer shade and cooling.

By enhancing and maintaining nature strips, our community can contribute to making Banyule's streets greener, healthier and more inviting for all.



Types of nature strips

Nature strips come in all shapes and sizes.

Wider nature strips can support more complex layered gardens, while narrower ones are perfect for low-growing plants.

Every strip is unique. Follow the guidelines and pick plants that suit your space to create beautiful and safe spaces.



Typical nature strip

Typical nature strips have a paved footpath along the property boundary and an unsealed area (typically lawn) between the footpath and the road kerb.

The unsealed area can vary in width; some nature strips can be as narrow as 60cm, whilst others can be as wide as 5 meters.



Narrow nature strip

Narrow nature strips may not be able to support taller shrubs.

We recommend planting narrow nature strips with low native grasses or groundcovers.



Double nature strip

Some areas have nature strips with lawn on both sides of a footpath.

These strips might be able to support taller plants in the grass area next to the property.

Residents can also request more street trees in these wide strips.



No footpath on nature strip

Sometimes, a nature strip does not have a footpath next to it.

In these cases, the planting area must begin at least 1.5 metres away from the property boundary.

Footpaths might be added in the future.

Process for planting a nature strip



Read the Guidelines

Read the Nature Strip Planting Guidelines before you apply for a free permit.

1



Notify Relevant Parties

- If you're renting, please notify the property owner and seek their agreement to modify the nature strip.
- If you share the nature strip with other residents or an Owners Corporation, let them know your plans. They may want to be involved, and in some cases, their agreement may be needed.
- Letting your neighbours know can help avoid misunderstandings; it might even encourage them to plant their own nature strips too.

2



Complete the Nature Strip Planting Permit Form

- Contact **Before You Dig Australia** to check for any underground services (free).
- Include a rough sketch of your plans in the application. This can be a simple hand-drawn sketch. Make sure the plans meet the Nature Strip Planting Guidelines.
- Include a list of plants you plan to include in the nature strip planting.
- A Council Officer will contact you to discuss your permit application.
- In most cases, you will be notified of the outcome within 10 business days.



3

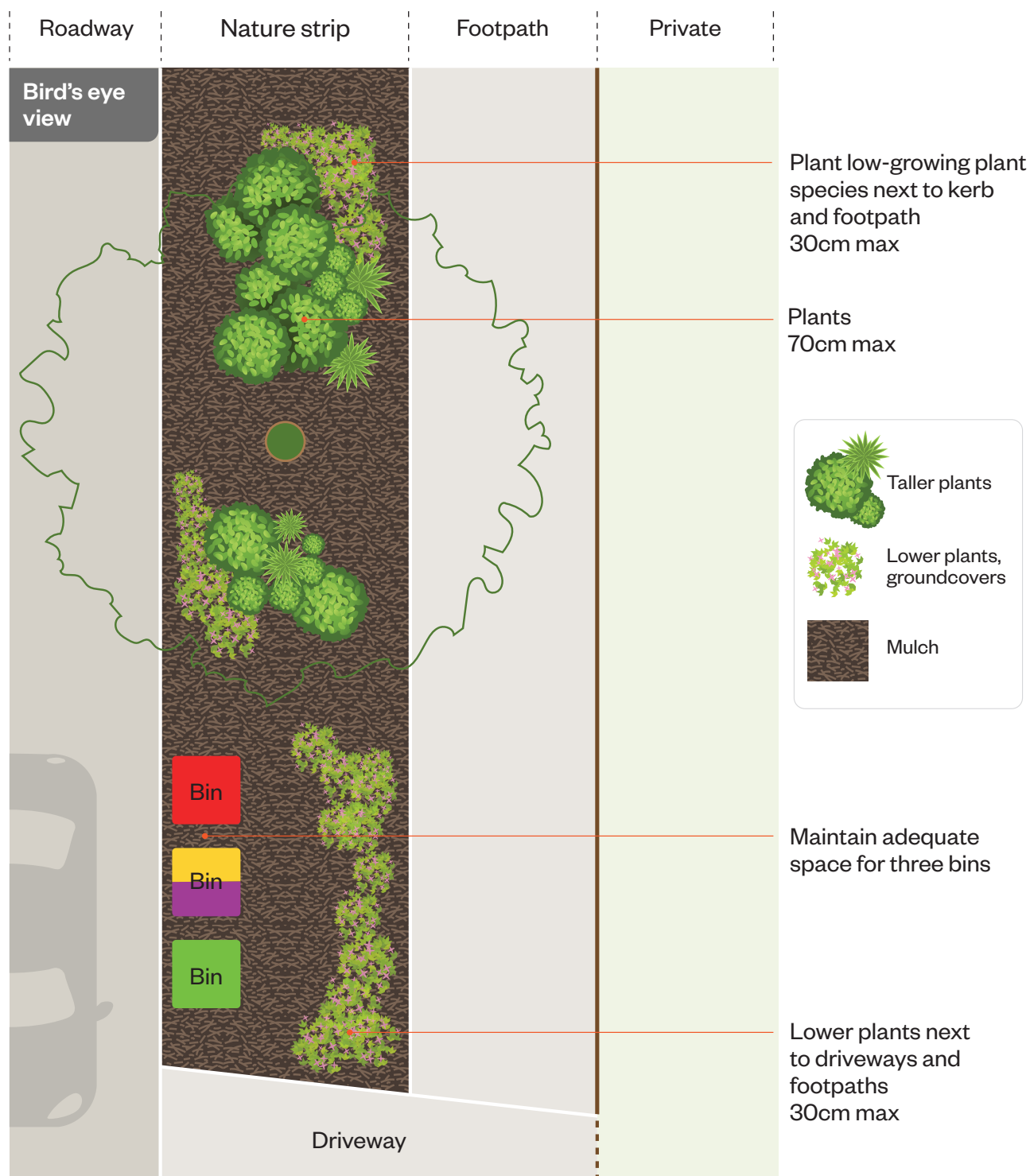


Free Nature Strip Planting Permit Granted

If your permit is granted, you'll receive a \$50 plant voucher or free native plants.

4

Key Guidelines



Gaps in plantings

- Leave regular gaps in the nature strip to allow people to safely exit vehicles.

Waste Collection

- Leave enough space for up to 3 x 240L bins, with around 30cm between each bin, for safe collection.
- For safe collection, bins must be 1m clear of any obstacles such as poles or street signs.

Landscaping Materials

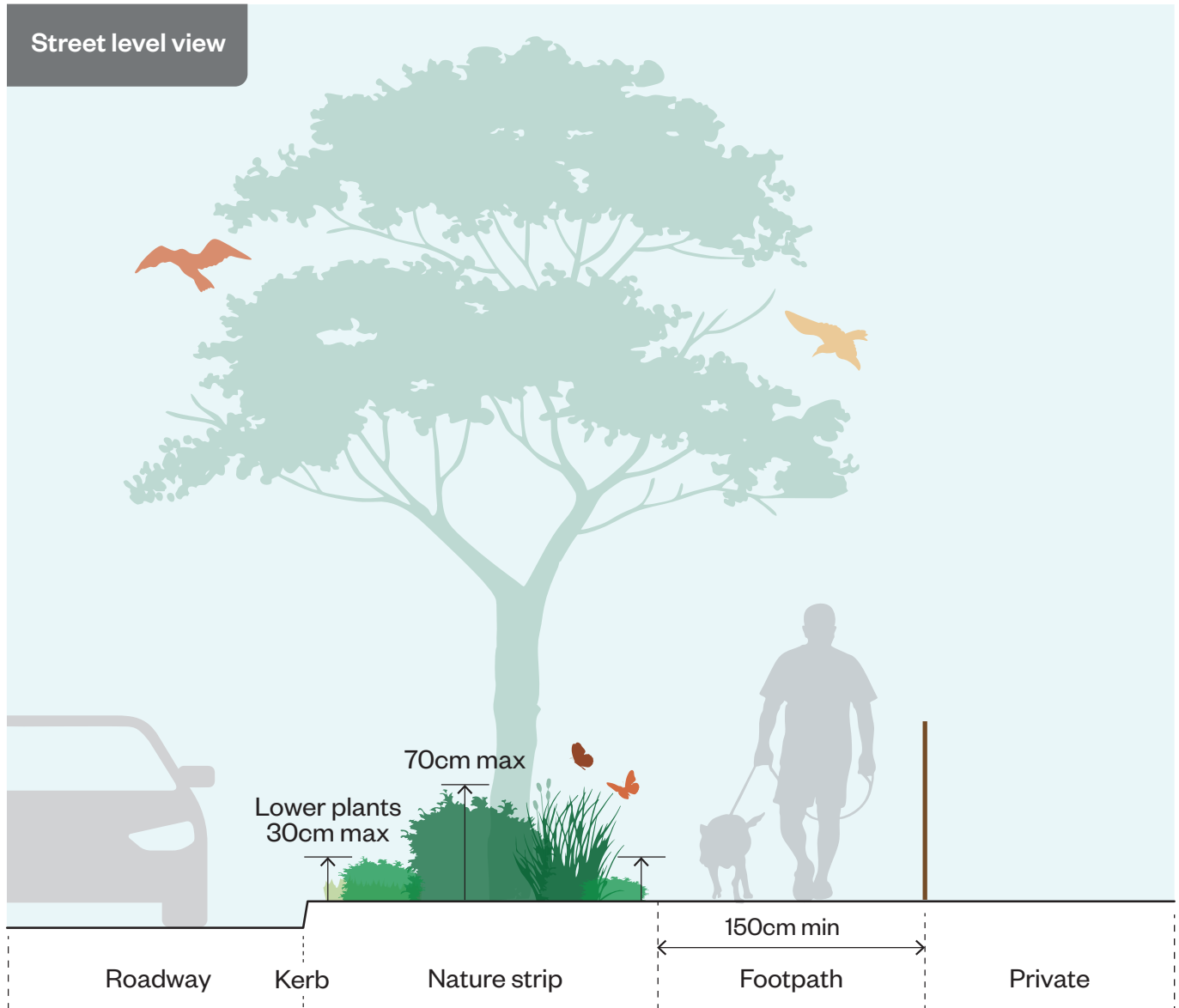
- Use organic mulch or compacted granitic sand, ensuring materials are level with the footpath to help prevent materials from washing or blowing away.

Street Trees

- Avoid harming street trees or underground services.

Key Guidelines

Street level view



- Place taller plant species in the central area of the nature strip.
Maximum height of 70cm.
- Place lower plantings on the outside edges of the nature strip (next to the kerb and footpath) with a **maximum plant height of 30cm.**
- To maintain clear sightlines, use low-growing plants next to driveways and on corner properties, with a maximum height of 30cm.
- Make sure you comply with any clearance requirements for infrastructure and services on the nature strip. See Page 10 for more details.
- To ensure safety, accessibility and proper stormwater flow, do not allow plants, soil or mulch to spill over the footpath or kerb.
- Be careful not to damage tree roots when planting.
- Native and non-native plants can be planted on most nature strips. However, areas within 200m of a waterway or wildlife corridor must be planted exclusively with locally native (indigenous) species.
- Leave a clear space for **three 240L bins per household**. Place bins on flat areas to prevent them from toppling.
- Leave **regular gaps** in the nature strip to allow people to safely exit vehicles.
- If there is no footpath, leave a 1.5 metre space next to the property boundary for pedestrian access.
- Acceptable materials for nature strips include soil, mulch, compacted granitic sand. Other materials are not permitted unless approval has been granted through the permit application.
- Do not plant weed species, spiky or prickly plants.

Clearance zones for infrastructure and services

Infrastructure on the nature strip may need to be accessed, and clearance requirements vary depending on the object. Clearance areas may include materials such as lawn, mulch, or compacted granitic sand, and can be planted with low-growing groundcovers.

This table provides information on how much space should be left around different objects on the nature strip.

Asset type	Clearance needed
 Bike racks  Bollards  Posts (e.g. school crossing post)  Signage	50cm (all around)
 Bike repair station  Public litter bins  Streetlights  Drainage pits  Benches  Parking meters  Fire hydrants  Australia Post Boxes	1 metre (all around)
 Accessible parking spots	1.5 metres (next to kerb)
 Bus stops	10 metres (from flag post)
 Intersections	10 metres (all around)

Further information



Mulch

Mulch helps control weeds, retain moisture and regulate soil temperature. It improves soil quality as it breaks down and provides a habitat for beneficial insects.

- Use organic mulch like woodchips or bark; avoid dyed mulch.
- Avoid fine mulch that can easily wash away, and avoid mulching on slopes.
- Recommended depth: 75mm to reduce evaporation and erosion.



Compacted Granitic Sand

Compacted granitic sand is durable, stable and drains well, making it ideal for paths and service areas.

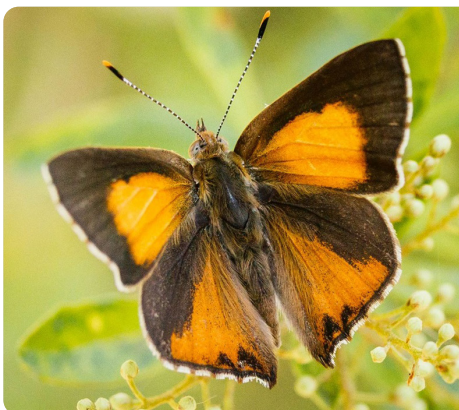
- Limit granitic sand to one-third of the nature strip.
- Apply to a depth of 50–75mm and compact in layers.
- Keep materials level with the footpath to help prevent materials from washing or blowing away.



Herbicides and other chemicals

Herbicides and chemicals can harm the environment, wildlife and beneficial insects like bees.

- Avoid synthetic chemicals to protect biodiversity and waterways.
- Use natural methods like mulching, hand weeding or planting groundcovers instead.



Why plant indigenous species only near wildlife corridors?

Indigenous plants provide food and shelter for local wildlife, support biodiversity, and help animals move safely through the area.

They also reduce the risk of spreading invasive weeds.



Choosing Plants

Indigenous plants are native to a specific local area, like Banyule, and may also grow in nearby regions.

Native plants occur naturally in a larger region, such as all of Australia.

Exotic plants are not native to the area and come from other regions or countries.

Weeds are plants that spread quickly and harm local ecosystems. Most weeds are exotic, but some native plants can also become invasive.

Indigenous and native plants are recommended for nature strips because they help preserve biodiversity by supporting local insects and pollinators. They are also well-suited to the local climate and soil conditions.

Preparing a sketch for the permit application

You'll need to include the following in your sketch plan:

- dimensions of the nature strip
- any existing infrastructure (eg pits, posts)
- street trees on nature strip
- proposed design, including planting layout, bin locations, access spaces and materials
- a list of proposed plant species

If you are not sure what species you want to plant, just note this in your application. We can support you with more information.

Please refer to the Nature Strip Planting Toolkit for more information on preparing a sketch, recommended plants, and sample nature strip designs.



Approval and compliance

Residents can modify their nature strips if they meet the following conditions:

- They have been granted a free permit from Banyule Council.
- Work on the nature strip meets the Nature Strip Planting Guidelines.
- Nature strips are maintained in line with the guidelines and Community Local Law 2025

Why is a permit required?

A free permit is designed to make sure nature strips are safe, easy to walk past, and enjoyable for everyone.

It gives Council a quick chance to check your planting plans before you start, so we can help prevent issues like low visibility near driveways, or interference with essential services. We'll also check that the plants are suitable for the area.

By reviewing plans early, we can work with you to create a great space for you, your neighbours and the wider community. We're here to support you and make the process easy.

Permits also help us keep track of planted nature strips, which supports future greening projects and biodiversity planning.

If your permit application isn't approved and you'd like to talk about it, you can contact Council to ask for a review.

What if the nature strip is already planted?

If the nature strip was planted before these guidelines (June 2025), you may need to make a few updates to keep things safe and compliant.

Please also let Council know so we can arrange a free permit.

What happens if the tenants move out and the nature strip is planted?

A well-planted nature strip can be a great asset, offering lower maintenance, a greener streetscape and support for local biodiversity.

Nature strip planting permits are linked to the location and the permit applicant. If you move, please let Council know so we can update details on the permit.

New residents are expected to maintain the nature strip, like they would a lawn. If they can't or don't want to maintain it, they can contact Council for support.



Responsibilities

Banyule Council:

- Council is responsible for street trees on nature strips. We source, plant and maintain all street trees. To learn more or to request a street tree, get in touch with Council.
- To keep our streets safe and ensure access to footpaths and essential services, Council may ask residents to modify nature strips that don't meet the guidelines. This may involve trimming overgrown plants or removing items that are not permitted, such as sculptures or stakes.
- Council works to repair or cover holes and other tripping hazards on nature strips when requested by the community. If an item poses an immediate safety risk, such as a trip hazard or blockage, Council may remove it without warning.
- Council will sometimes add features to improve the street's amenity, such as bus stops, drainage pits and seating. If this requires changes to a planted nature strip, we'll notify residents before work begins. Council is required to restore the nature strip back to soil and lawn seed once work is completed; residents can request alternatives, including topsoil, mulch and native grasses.



Utility and public transport providers:

- Providers such as Melbourne Water and Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), as well as electricity and telecommunications services, will sometimes need to access a nature strip to repair or replace services. They will notify residents before this occurs. Residents who receive notice can remove plantings before works begin, so they can replant after the works are finished
- Service providers may remove vegetation or change the nature strip during their work. Once the work is completed, they are required to restore the nature strip to topsoil and lawn seed. However, residents may be able to negotiate and explore other options such as reinstating the area to topsoil, mulch and native grasses.

Residents:

Council encourages and appreciates the community's ongoing commitment to keeping nature strips well cared for – and helping create vibrant, welcoming streets for everyone to enjoy.

- Residents who want to modify a nature strip must get a free Council permit first. See the steps outlined in this document.
- While residents can't plant, prune or remove street trees, they can request one from Council if the nature strip does not have one yet.
- Street trees benefit from a little extra care — especially in hot or dry weather — so if you can, give yours a bucket of water now and then, and get in touch if you're ever concerned about a tree near you.

What is not permitted on nature strips?

Items that are not allowed

Items not permitted on the nature strip include, but are not limited to:



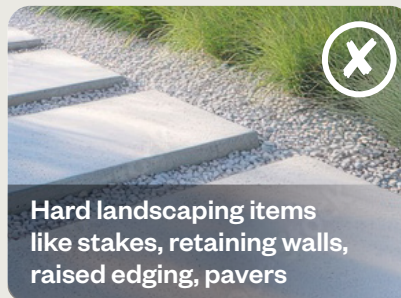
Synthetic grass



Environmental weeds



Prickly, spiky or poisonous plants



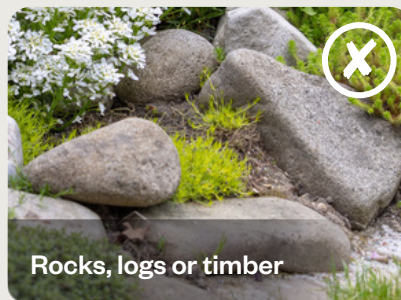
Hard landscaping items like stakes, retaining walls, raised edging, pavers



Planter boxes and garden beds



Bollards, sculptures or ornaments



Rocks, logs or timber



Fruit or vegetable crops



Scoria, pebbles or loose stones



Synthetic weed mats (e.g. plastic sheeting under mulch)



Irrigation systems and lighting

Changes that are not allowed

- Changing the width of the nature strip, road, kerb or channel.
- Changing ground levels or drainage, (e.g. with mounded soil)

Parking on nature strips

- Parking on nature strips can damage public infrastructure, obstruct emergency services and pose safety risks for pedestrians.
- In Victoria, parking on nature strips is prohibited under the Road Safety Road Rules 2017.
- Signage is not required to prohibit parking on the nature strip.



Find out more

For further information or support regarding nature strip modifications, please contact
Customer Service on (03) 9490 4222 or urbanforestry@banyule.vic.gov.au

How to contact your Council

For all enquiries or information about any Council services:

Telephone: **9490 4222**

Email: enquiries@banyule.vic.gov.au

Website: banyule.vic.gov.au

Fax: **9499 9475**

If your hearing or speech is impaired, you can call us through the National Relay Service on **133 677** (TTY) or **1300 555 727** (ordinary handset) and ask for 9490 4222.

Postal Address:

PO Box 94, Greensborough 3088

Council Service Centres:

Greensborough: Level 3, 1 Flintoff Street

Ivanhoe: 275 Upper Heidelberg Road

Office Hours of Opening:

Greensborough: Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5pm

Ivanhoe: Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

Interpreter service:

If you need an interpreter, please contact TIS National on 131 450 and ask to be connected to Banyule Council on 9490 4222.

إذا كنتم بحاجة إلى مترجم، الرجاء الاتصال بالخط القومي لخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية TIS على الرقم 131 450، واطلبوا إيصالكم ببلدية بانيول على الرقم 9490 4222.

若你需要口譯員，請致電131 450聯絡TIS National，要求他們為你致電9490 4222接通Banyule市政廳。

Ako vam je potreban tumač, molimo vas, nazovite TIS National na broj 131 450 i zatražite da vas se spoji sa Vijećem općine Banyule na broj 9490 4222.

Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα τηλεφωνήστε στην Εθνική Υπηρεσία Διερμηνέων Μεταφραστών στον αριθμό 131 450 και ζητήστε να σας συνδέσουν με τη Δημαρχία Banyule στο 9490 4222.

Se hai bisogno di un interprete chiama TIS National al numero 131 450 e chiedi di essere messo in comunicazione con il Comune di Banyule al numero 9490 4222.

Ако ви треба преведувач ве молиме јавете се на TIS National на 131 450 и замолете да ве поврзат со Banyule Council на 9490 4222.

如果你需要一名翻译，请打电话到国家电话翻译服务处 (TIS National) 131 450，再转接到Banyule市政府9490 4222

Haddii aad u baahan tahay mutarjum wac khadka qaranka oo ah TIS 131 450 weydiina in lagugu xiro Degmada Banyule tel: 9490 4222.

Nếu cần thông dịch, xin gọi cho TIS Toàn Quốc qua số 131 450 rồi nhờ họ gọi cho Hội Đồng Thành Phố Banyule theo số 9490 4222 giúp quý vị.