

# Street Gardens



City of  
Newcastle

## GUIDELINES FOR NEWCASTLE RESIDENTS FOR SUBURBAN STREET GARDENS

Front of House  
Kerb Side  
Planter Boxes





# Planting a street garden in Newcastle

Trees and gardens bring many benefits to our streets and city. They keep us cool in summer, give us clean air, and protect our waterways by filtering and slowing down stormwater. They also offer important habitat for wildlife, make our streets more appealing, and improve community health and wellbeing.

We want to create a green oasis in our urban landscape, and every little patch of green helps. We're encouraging residents to play their part by planting a garden on the Council-owned street verge in front of their home. These guidelines explain where and how street gardens can be created safely for the benefit of the community and our local environment.

# Gardening on public land

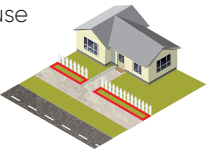
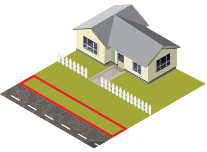
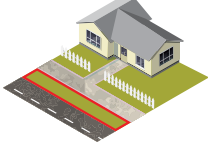
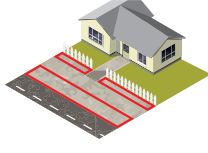
Street gardens can be created in most areas of Newcastle, except in high traffic areas like busy city zones and cycleways. The Council-owned land in front of a house, outside the property boundary, is part of the public road easement and the City of Newcastle (CN) is responsible for its condition and public safety. Residents wanting to establish a street garden are required to complete a simple registration process and agree to comply with the guidelines outlined in this document.

Specifications for all areas of the nature strip are covered on pages 4–6 to ensure the safety of road users, pedestrians and public infrastructure. CN reserves the right to remove any street garden that does not comply with these guidelines.

Residents wishing to install a garden are responsible for all costs and labour associated with the construction and ongoing maintenance of their garden. They will also be responsible for any damage caused to public infrastructure.

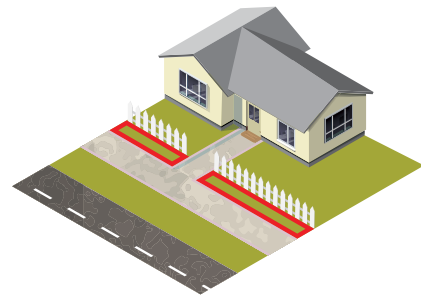
## Street garden zones

Street gardens can be planted in the following zones. Find the relevant zone and corresponding guidelines in the table below for your situation.

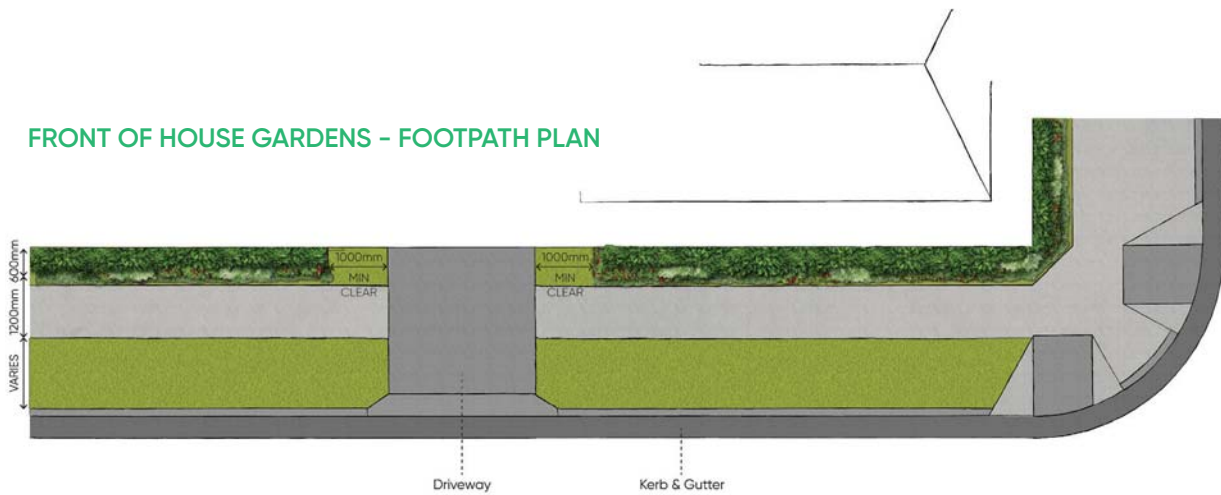
Garden Situation	Guidelines	Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Not growing food plants</li> <li>✓ Verge is unsealed (e.g. mulch/grass/garden)</li> <li>✓ Planting between house boundary and footpath</li> </ul>	Front of house 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Not growing food plants</li> <li>✓ Verge is unsealed (e.g. mulch/grass/garden)</li> <li>✓ Planting on kerb side between footpath and road</li> </ul>	Kerb side  	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Growing food plants</li> </ul>	Planter box 	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Verge is sealed (e.g. concrete/asphalt)</li> </ul>		

# Front of house guidelines

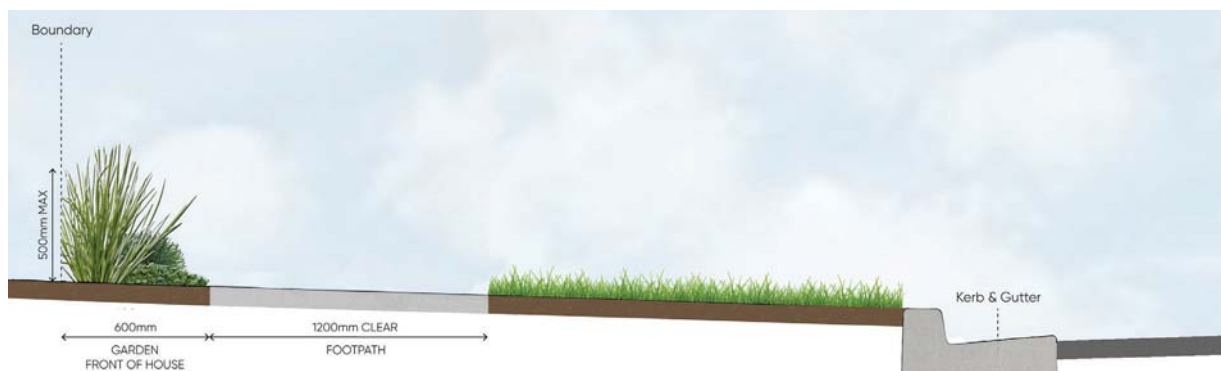
Please follow these guidelines when planting along your fence line between the house boundary and the footpath.



## FRONT OF HOUSE GARDENS - FOOTPATH PLAN



## FRONT OF HOUSE GARDENS - FOOTPATH TYPICAL SECTION

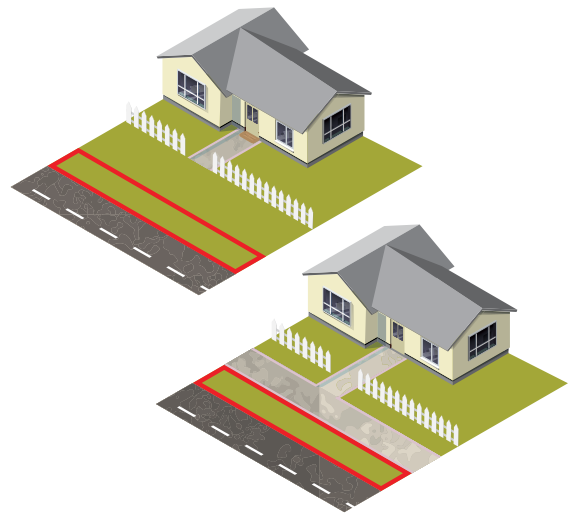


**Note:** Due to health concerns it is recommended that raised planter boxes be used for growing food plants in (especially root vegetables). If you plan to grow food plants, please refer to the *Planter box guidelines* on page 6.

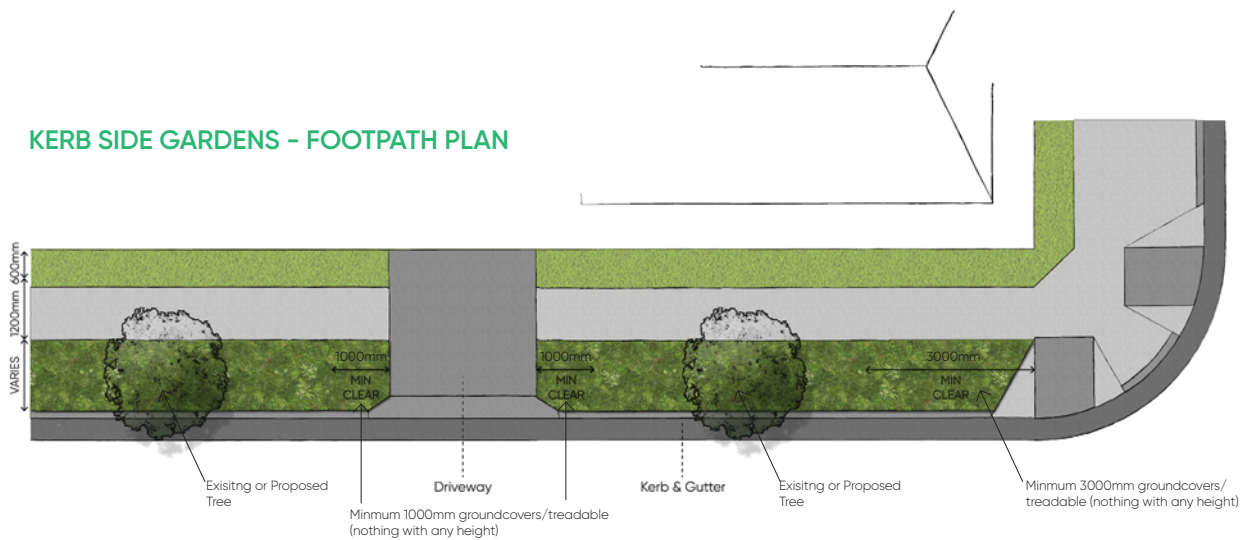


# Kerb side guidelines

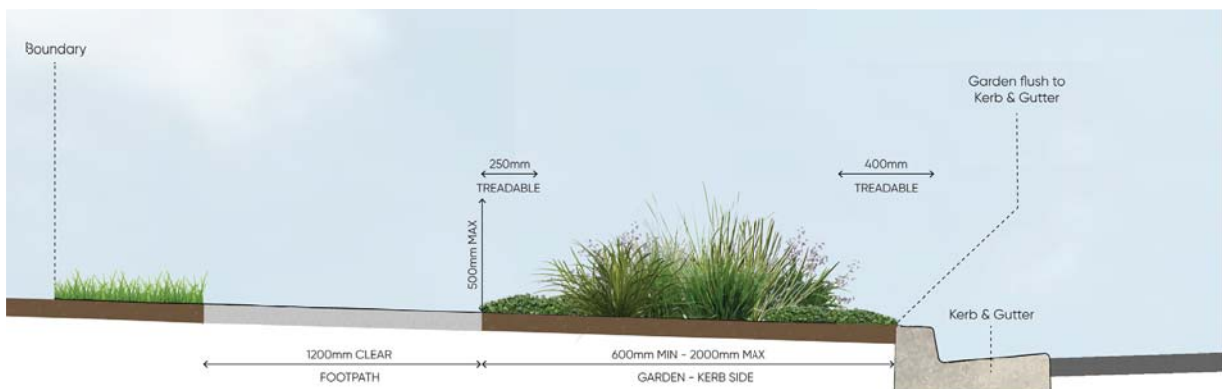
Please follow these guidelines when planting between the foot path and the road. Where the foot path is not sealed (i.e. all grass), please take care to leave a path of at least 1200mm for pedestrian access.



## KERB SIDE GARDENS - FOOTPATH PLAN



## KERB SIDE GARDENS - FOOTPATH TYPICAL SECTION

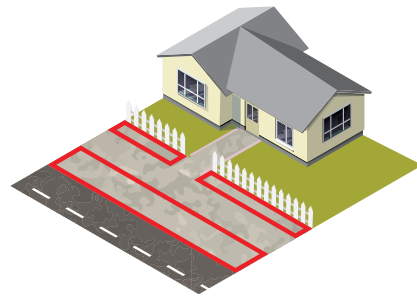


**Note:** Due to health concerns it is recommended that raised planter boxes be used for growing food plants in (especially root vegetables). If you plan to grow food plants, please refer to the *Planter box guidelines* on page 6.

# Planter box guidelines

Please follow these guidelines when planting food plants or installing a garden where the verge is sealed (e.g. concrete/asphalt). Residents are not permitted to excavate sealed public pathways.

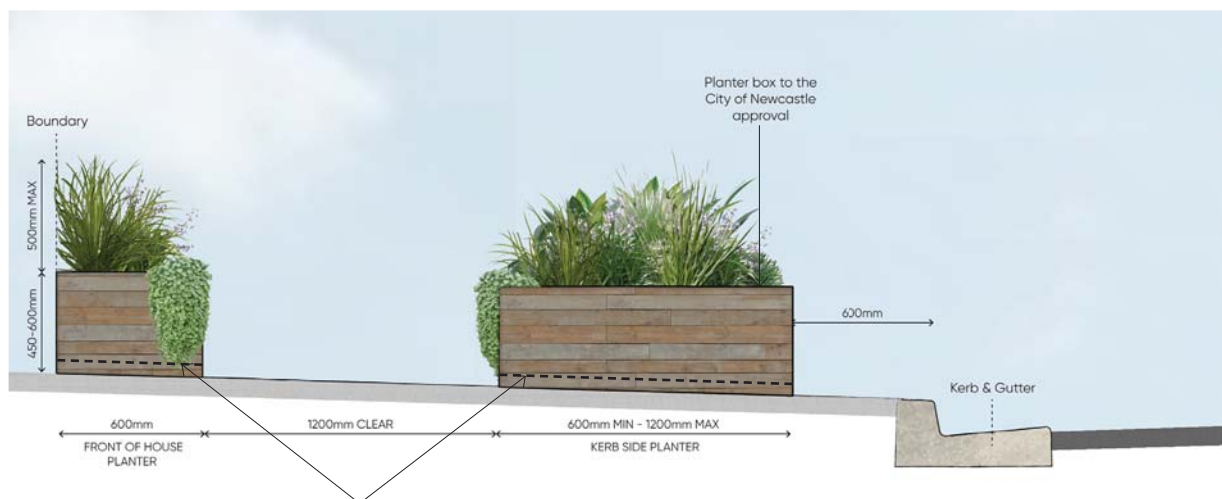
Installing a wicking bed in your raised planter box is a great way to conserve water while maintaining even moisture levels for your plants.



## PLANTER BOXES - FOOTPATH PLAN



## PLANTER BOXES - FOOTPATH TYPICAL SECTION



Planter box to be installed above existing ground level. Planter box drainage shall be directed to the kerb and gutter but not across footpath surface. Planter box should be self-wicking.

# Frequently asked questions

The following are answers to some questions you might have. If we haven't covered your question here, please email us at [mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au) or call 02 4974 2000.

## CAN I PLANT A STREET GARDEN IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE?

Street gardens can be accommodated in most areas of Newcastle, however site constraints mean it's not possible to install street gardens in the City Centre or Business Land Zones, B1-B4 or High Density Residential RE4, as defined in the Newcastle LEP 2012. Search for your address on our interactive map at [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens) or call 02 4974 2000 to discuss.

## WHAT IF THERE'S A STREET TREE IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE, CAN I PLANT AROUND IT?

Yes, as long as only hand held, non-mechanical tools are used to dig and plant. Any tree roots that are found must remain undamaged with bark intact to make sure our existing trees remain healthy and happy.

If there isn't a tree in front of your property, be aware that there might be one planted there in the future. You can find out if a street tree is planned for your proposed garden site by going to [newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au) and searching for *Tree Map*. If there is a tree planting vacancy marked in the space you plan to garden, feel free to plant out the area but be aware that your street garden maybe disturbed when a tree is planted in the future. Alternatively, you could plant some ground covers or low growing plants that can easily be removed when the time comes for the tree to be planted.

## CAN I PLANT A TREE ON THE VERGE?

Residents are not permitted to plant trees on Council-owned land. CN is responsible for all planting and maintenance of street trees in the city and our Living Streets program plants thousands of street trees each year. If you'd like to request that a street tree be planted in front of your house, please indicate this in your street garden registration, or call us on 02 4974 2000.

## WHAT SORT OF PLANTS WOULD BE BEST FOR MY GARDEN?

Plants must grow no taller than 500mm from ground level or 500mm from the top of a planter box. You can find a planting guide of mostly native plants at [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens) or we can post you a copy. It includes species suitable for sites on the coastal fringe, flats and hill slopes that are low growing (less than 500mm in height), provide ideal habitat for insects and wildlife, and are suited to local conditions. Non-native plants can also be grown provided they are less than 500mm in height, not spiky, and not prone to becoming invasive weeds (especially if close to bushland).



## DO I NEED MY NEIGHBOURS' APPROVAL BEFORE PLANTING MY GARDEN?

We encourage you to discuss your plans with your neighbours and try to come to an agreement on a garden that will suit everyone's needs. If you live in a townhouse or unit complex, you will need to obtain written permission from strata or body corporate before proceeding with your street garden.

## I'M A RENTAL TENANT, CAN I PLANT A STREET GARDEN TOO?

Yes, provided you have written permission from the property owner and they are prepared to take responsibility for the garden once your tenancy has ended. CN retains the right to remove any garden that is no longer being maintained, has become unsightly, or poses a risk to public safety.

## I HAVE A TREE PLANTING VACANCY IDENTIFIED ON THE THE TREE MAP IN FRONT OF MY PROPERTY. CAN I PLANT A STREET GARDEN?

Yes, however please be aware that when it comes time for us to plant a street tree your garden may be disturbed.

## I ALREADY HAVE A STREET GARDEN, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

We understand there are a number of street gardens that have already been established and some of them may not meet all of these guidelines. The Council-owned land outside the property boundary is part of the public road easement and CN is responsible for its condition and public safety. If we do notice anything on CN land that we deem to be unsafe, we will contact the property owner and recommend it be rectified.



## WHAT HAPPENS IF A UTILITY NEEDS TO UNDERTAKE FUTURE WORK IN THE VERGE?

There are a range of services e.g. electricity, water, sewer, telecommunications, and gas located in the verge. If works are required on any of these services it may impact your garden. You would be responsible to repair any impacts to your garden.

## ARE THERE OTHER PLACES I CAN GROW FOOD?

If you would like to grow food but don't have enough space at home, or you'd like to share the experience with others in your neighbourhood, why not join a community garden? To find one near you, search for community gardens on our website or call us on 02 4974 2000.

## HOW DO I REGISTER MY GARDEN?

To register your intention to plant a Street Garden go to [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens) and complete the registration form or call us on 02 4974 2000.









# The essential checklist for drama free gardening

- Review the Tree Map (visit [newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au) and search "tree map") to determine whether there is a street tree planting vacancy
- Discuss your garden plans with your neighbours
- Get strata or body corporate agreement if you live in a townhouse or unit complex
- Run a free Dial Before You Dig check on your site at [www.1100.com.au](http://www.1100.com.au) to prevent damage to infrastructure and essential services
- Leave at least 300mm distance from the base of power poles
- Grow food plants in raised planter boxes
- Maintain plants to a maximum height of 500mm from ground level or 500mm from the top of a raised planter box
- Register your garden at [newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens](http://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/StreetGardens)



