



Nature strips

Effectively managing nature strips is a critical component of keeping our waterways healthy. Nature strips are an integral part of the urban fabric of all our major centres across the region. As well as providing a safe walking area, they are designed to complement the neighbourhood's natural setting.



NOT JUST A STRIP OF GRASS

Nature strips (the area of land between the property boundary and the street) is public land and not part of a private lease or title.

While they are public land, it is generally accepted practice across the ACT and region that nature strips are maintained by the landholder or lessee. Street trees are however maintained by the ACT Government or local council. It is an offence to damage or otherwise interfere with street trees.

The ACT Government and surrounding Councils have requirements relating to what you can or cannot do on your nature strip. If you plan to do anything other than grow grass, you will need government approval.

This includes installing pavers, crushed granite or erecting any form of stone, brick or timber walls. It is also illegal across the ACT region to park or store a vehicle or trailer on the nature strip. This causes soil compaction and erosion.



HOW DO I CREATE A 'H2OK' NATURE STRIP?

With approval many things are possible on your nature strip that are more sustainable and help keep our waterways healthy. The key issue is maintaining a stable and resilient ground surface that can absorb water. Vegetation cover is best at achieving this, be it lawn or low garden beds. With approval it is possible to create nature strips which enhance your property and comply with government regulations.

You can improve your nature strip by:

- » **planting a selection of native grasses, wildflowers and small shrubs** that require minimal watering and care. Think about different layers in your plantings to create structure and a variety of micro-environments to suit different creatures.
- » **creating edible nature strips.** Select plants that meet height regulations and be mindful of keeping the garden bed growing all year round by choosing seasonal plants. These gardens take more work to keep tidy and presentable all year round. Watch for soil escaping into the gutter during rain, carrying both nutrients and sediment to our waterways.
- » **create a rain garden** that captures runoff from a driveway or path to support a mix of plantings. If you are lucky enough to already have a rain garden in your nature strip keep it weed free and replace any dead plants with the same species.



Other tips to help keep our waterways healthy include:

- » don't cut the nature strip or front lawn too short. Slightly longer grass (at least 10 centimetres) helps keep and absorb moisture instead of allowing it to run off
- » keep your gutters clear of leaves, bark and twigs, both in summer and autumn
- » keep mulch or garden soil contained so that it does not run into the gutter
- » select low growing hardy plants if you want to save on mowing and create a stable plant cover
- » mow so that grass clippings are turned away from the gutter
- » be modest with fertilisers, using only what your plants will need
- » don't overwater your garden - you waste water and money and wash nutrients into our waterways.

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

There are lots of great sources online that will help you create a nature strip that not only helps keep our waterways healthy but impresses your neighbours too.

- » Canberra Plant Selector
www.actsmart-plantselector.com.au
- » Water Right Garden Web Tool
actsmart-gardentool.com.au/Introduction.aspx

For more information on what you can or cannot do on your nature strip, including maintenance requirements visit:

- » ACT Government, Transport Canberra and City Services
13 22 81
www.tccs.act.gov.au
- » Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Queanbeyan
6285 6000 or 6238 8111
Bungendore
6238 8111
council@qprc.nsw.gov.au
- » Yass Valley Council
6226 1477 | 1300 553 652
council@yass.nsw.gov.au
- » Snowy Monaro Regional Council
1300 345 345
council@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au