

**Policy Title:** USE OF ROAD RESERVES (NATURE STRIPS) FOR STREETScape IMPROVEMENT  
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Fraser Coast  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# Use of Road Reserves (Nature Strips) for Streetscape Improvement



This policy is to be used to provide direction and advice to residents and Council staff relating to the use of Council Road Reserves (Nature Strips) by residents to assist in Streetscape Improvement, whilst ensuring community infrastructure and public safety are considered and protected.

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### 1. Purpose of this policy

This policy has been prepared to assist residents who wish to utilise Council's nature strips within residential areas adjacent to their property for streetscape enhancement. The purpose of the document is to provide guidelines to allow for this activity whilst maintaining the community infrastructure and public access functions of nature strips.

This policy sets out the process whereby residents can make application to Council to undertake streetscape improvements on Council nature strips.

Residents are required to seek the approval of Council for the planting, removal of, or damage to vegetation on any local government controlled areas or road under Fraser Coast Regional Council Subordinate Local Law 4.

Council reserves the right to not approve any landscaping works or to request the removal of any landscaping works where they have been planted contrary to conditions provided by Council or where Council proposes to undertake future works that may impact upon the landscaping works.

### 2. Who will use this policy?

This policy will apply to people wishing to undertake streetscape improvements to the nature strip in front of their residential property in a residential area within the Fraser Coast Regional Council (FCRC) local government area (LGA). This policy will provide guidance on where planting is permitted and the types of suitable plants.

Maintenance of any approved streetscape works will be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. If you are a tenant you will need to obtain approval from the property owner, body corporate and/or managing agent if you want to make changes to the nature strip.

### 3. Definition of nature strip

A nature strip is the strip of land between a residential property boundary and the formed road pavement. The nature strip is publicly owned land and not part of the adjacent private property.



A nature strip of lawn grass and *Grevillea robusta* (Silky oak)

#### 4. Importance of nature strips

Typically nature strips are planted with turf grass and street trees and shrubs. They are designed to provide a landscape component along street frontages, and have important functions, including:

- **Public safety** – nature strips provide a safe public walking area and allow motorists visibility of pedestrians and cyclists on nature strips
- **Essential infrastructure** – nature strips often house electricity, gas, telecommunications, fire hydrants, water, sewer services either above or below ground
- **Unified streetscapes** – well designed and maintained nature strips create unified streetscapes which can contribute to property values
- **Places for trees** – Fraser Coast suburban nature strips are home to thousands of street trees which soften, cool and provide urban wildlife habitat
- **Cooling effect** – vegetated nature strips contribute to keeping our suburbs cooler in hot weather and allow water to infiltrate into the soil rather than run off into our waterways.

#### 5. Maintaining nature strips

The nature strip is part of the road reserve and although it is managed by Council, Council does not generally undertake regular maintenance, but relies upon residents to perform this function to maintain an attractive streetscape.

##### **Grass, rubbish and weeds**

Residents are able to mow the grass on their nature strip. As well as creating a neat appearance it improves visibility across the nature strip, makes it easier for pedestrians to use the nature strip safely and reduces fire hazards. Residents are encouraged to remove weeds and rubbish on a regular basis.

##### **Responsibility for Approved Plantings under this scheme**

The property owner immediately adjacent to the nature strip is responsible for any garden plantings or other landscape improvements approved to be planted under this scheme. Should the property owner no longer wish to maintain the landscaping improvements, the improvements must be removed and the nature strip returned to grass at the owner's cost.

Trees and shrubs must be pruned to allow a pedestrian or cyclist full access to the nature strip width and a 2.2 metres vertical clearance above the nature strip, and plantings must be maintained to ensure that the line of sight is maintained between the road and nature strip, and to ensure the safety of the public.

Residents are also responsible for pruning trees and shrubs growing on their private property which overhang the nature strip from their garden.

To keep pets, children and waterways safe use organic gardening practices – do not use snail bait or chemical sprays on the nature strip.

##### **Maintain Access for service providers**

The Nature strip contains access pits for services including telecommunications, electricity, fire hydrants, water valves etc. These access chambers are generally located on the property boundary. To maintain access a 1 metre clearance on each side of the access pit must be provided with a minimum of 2 metres clear strip from the road edge to the pit. This will minimise any damage to landscaping by service providers that need access.

##### **Talk with your neighbours**

You don't have to talk to your neighbours about what you are doing on your nature strip but it can help. Not only will you maintain or build better relations, you might find that they are willing to assist and probably share pride in your achievements.

### **Works by Council and other Service Providers**

From time to time, Council and other service providers may need to excavate the nature strip to access underground services. Although care will be taken to avoid unnecessary damage to landscaping, any reinstatement will be limited to topsoil and seeding. Re-establishment of the landscaping is the owner's responsibility.

### **Overland Flow Paths**

Planting in Stormwater overland flow paths should be avoided. Mulch and soil including fertilisers can be washed into the drainage system polluting the downstream waterways and causing blockages in Stormwater systems.

## **6. Protecting street trees**

Council is responsible for managing trees on the nature strip that are planted as part of Council's beautification programs. Trees that are approved to be planted under this scheme will be the responsibility of residents to maintain.

Residents can help protect the health of street trees by ensuring soil and organic materials are not mounded around tree trunks. This material can increase heat and moisture around the base of the trunk which can lead to decay and a decline in tree health.

Both this policy and Council's existing Tree Management Policy do allow residents to seek approval for the planting of street trees, but approval must be obtained prior to any planting to ensure proper species selection, the protection of underground and overhead services and to ensure public safety. Street trees cool the streetscape, buffer winds, provide habitat for wildlife and can improve property values.

Street trees can be protected by ensuring:

- no vehicles are parked under the drip line of trees
- no excavation occurs under the drip line
- organic material like grass clippings and soil are not deposited around the base of trees as this can cause the tree to rot
- avoid cutting roots greater than 2 cm in diameter when planting under trees.

## **7. Can I park cars on the nature strip?**

Cars and nature strips don't mix. It is illegal to park any vehicles (including trailers, caravans and boats) on the nature strip. Vehicles compact the soil and prevent water and oxygen reaching tree roots and the soil profile. They can also cause physical damage to young trees. Vehicles on nature strips impede the visibility of pedestrians and cyclists endangering their safety.

## **8. Approval Checklist for use of Residential Nature Strips**

Residents wishing to undertake plantings on nature strips are required to seek Council approval prior to undertaking any plantings or associated works. Residents are required to obtain and complete an application form and provide a plan of their proposal. Council will determine if a pre-planting inspection is required and will advise the applicant.

To assist with this process, there are 3 "classes" of application (see below). All of these types of applications require prior Council approval.

A "Class 1" application may not require a Council inspection if it is accompanied by a detailed plan and complies with all Council requirements and clearance zones.

A "Class 2" application will require a Council inspection prior to planting.

"Class 3" items will not be permitted.

<b>Class 1 : Inspection may not be required (subject to submission / approval of plan)</b>	
<b>Turfgrass or Grass seed mix</b>	Turf or Grass seed mix suitable for Fraser Coast. Grass must be weed free.
<b>Ground covers, native grasses, food plants and shrubs less than 0.5 m high</b> – for a list of hardy plants that grow well in Fraser Coast refer to Table1.	<p>These plants can be planted on the nature strip if they comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearance zones</li> <li>• if you are planting under the canopy of street trees do not cut tree roots larger than 2 cm in diameter</li> <li>• the ground may be mounded to 15 cm or excavated to 10 cm – the total height of plants from natural ground level must not be more than 50 cm</li> <li>• Plants must not be prickly, spikey, poisonous or a declared pest species.</li> <li>• Apply 7.5 cm – 10 cm depth mulch to plants. Ensure mulch doesn't spill onto roads and nature strips nor is built up around trees.</li> <li>• Use organic methods to control pests and diseases. Do not use snail bait or chemical sprays on the nature strip.</li> </ul>
<b>Temporary protective fencing</b> of new grass and/or plants for 6 weeks	<p>Temporary fencing using rope or string and hardwood stakes may be installed to protect new plants or grass and must comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearance zones</li> <li>• a maximum installation of 6 weeks</li> <li>• fencing must not present a safety hazard to the public</li> </ul>

<b>Class 2: Inspection Required</b>	
<b>Trees or plants taller than 0.5 metres</b>	Planting new shrubs or trees on nature strips and public land is only permitted with prior Council approval and inspection.

<b>Class 3: Not permitted</b>	
Ponds, fountains and water tanks	
Permanent fences, constructed garden edging and retaining walls	
Carports, log barriers, chicken runs, play equipment e.g. swings, trampolines and tree-houses, shipping containers, artworks	
Boulders or any large rocks	
Pavers or concrete paths	
Synthetic Turf	
Fixed Irrigation Systems	

## 9. Clearance zones

Clearance zones enable the safe use of nature strips and roads by pedestrians and cyclists.

The following clearance zones must be observed:

- No plants\* allowed within 2.0 metres of the kerb (1.5 metres if there is a concrete pathway). This allows for opening car doors and placement of mobile garbage bins. It also provides a safe path for pedestrians and cyclists if there is no constructed footpath provided between the nature strip and property boundary. At intersections, the clear zone must be maintained around corner with low level planting (0.5m max) to maintain sight distance for vehicles. Refer to Figure 4.
- Where an existing tree, above ground service pillar/post or other obstruction is located within the 2 metre clearance zone indicated above, a clear path 1.5 metres wide must be maintained around the object for pedestrians and cyclists.
- No plants allowed within 1.5 metres of a driveway or bus stop.
- No plants\* allowed within 0.5 metres on either side of a concrete pathway.
- No plants\* allowed within 1.0 metres of a utility e.g. meter pit/electrical box/ fire hydrant/ poles with 2m clear path to the road for unhindered access.
- No plants\* allowed within 0.5 metres radius of the outside of a trunk of a street tree.
- No plants that would obstruct access to mail boxes (if in doubt contact Australia Post).

\* except ground cover plants.

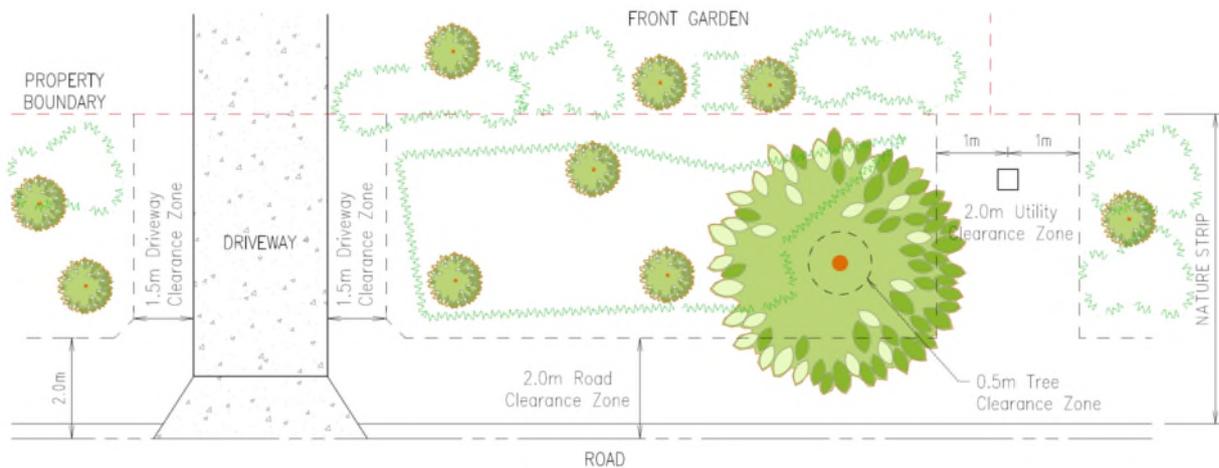


Figure 1 Nature strip clearance zones where no constructed footpath exists.

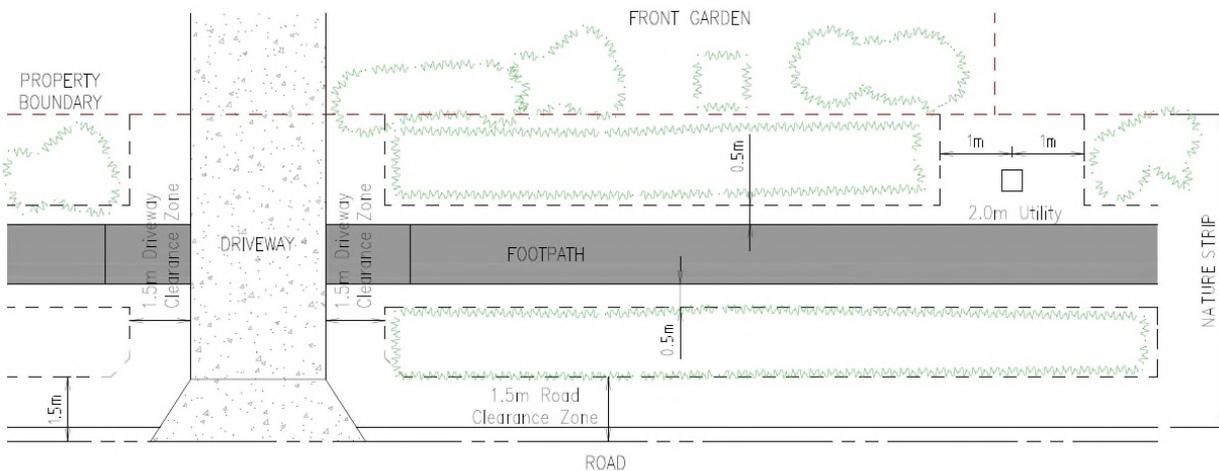


Figure 2 Nature strip clearance zones with central concrete footpath.

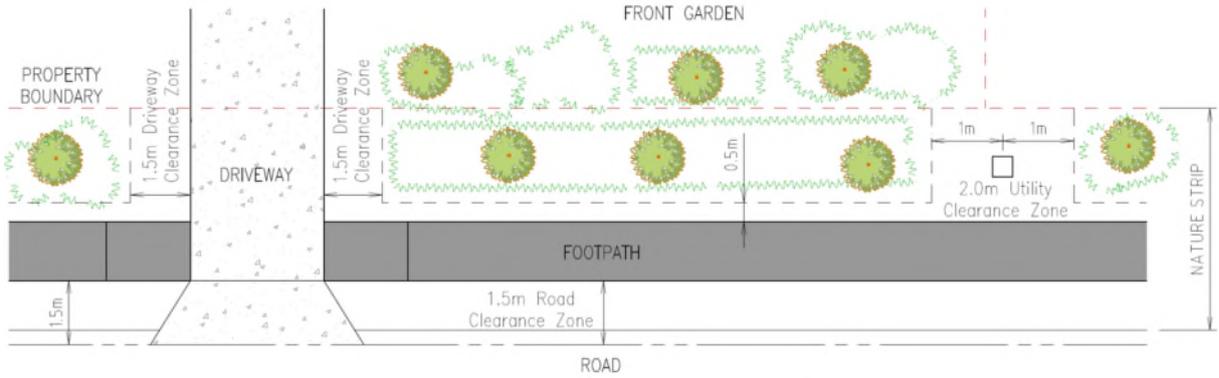


Figure 3 Nature strip clearance zones with concrete footpath adjacent to kerb.

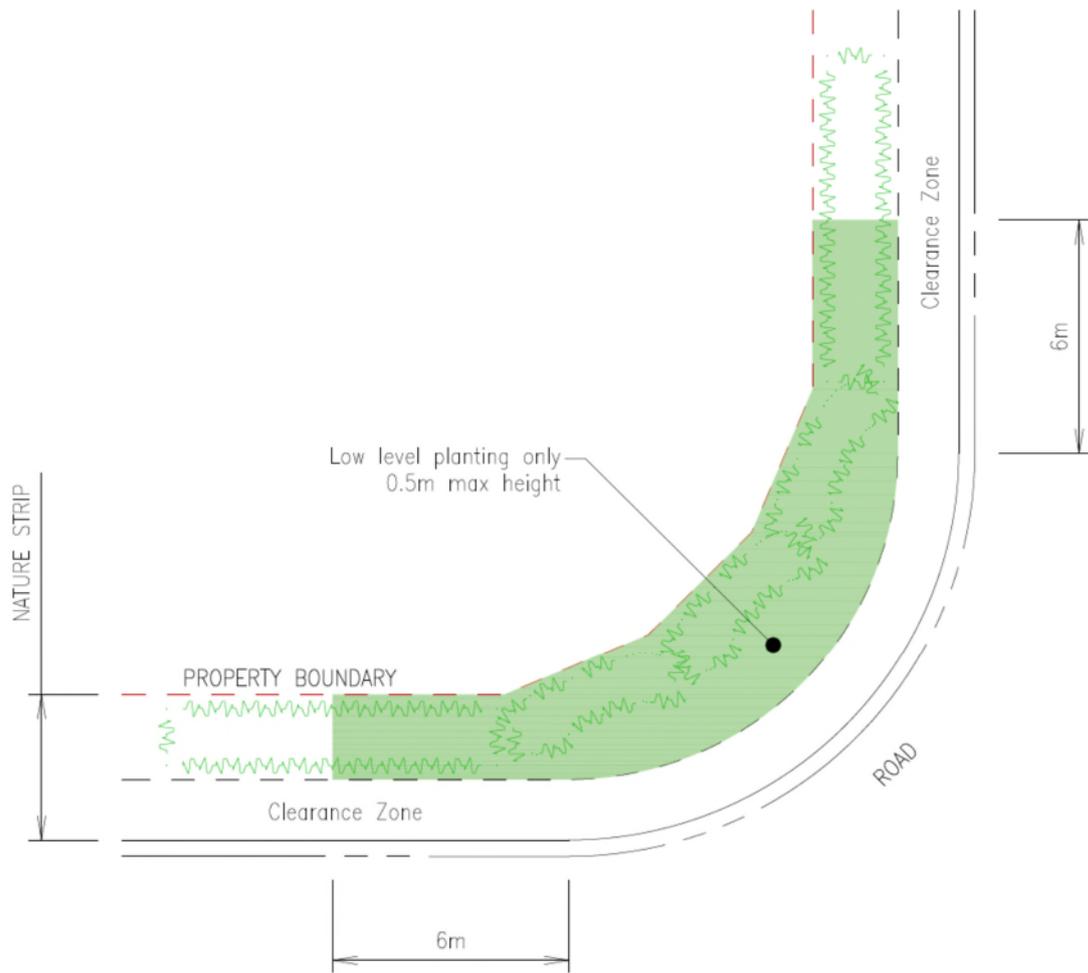


Figure 4 Nature strip clearance zones for intersections.

## 10. Application and assessment process

- a) Complete and submit the “Use of Road Reserves (Nature Strips) for Streetscape Improvement” application form available at [www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au](http://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au) and return to Council.
- b) Allow 28 days for Council to process the application.
- c) Works should not commence prior to receipt of an outcome of your application.

## 11. Dial before you dig

Before starting any work on Council’s nature strip check with Dial before you dig <http://1100.com.au/#> or phone 1100 during business hours. Enquiries are free.



## 12. Disclaimer

Nature strips may contain essential services that need to be accessed. The Fraser Coast Regional Council or public utility providers are not responsible for reinstating any landscaping installed on the nature strip by residents, such as irrigation equipment, gravel, plants or edging.

## 13. Relevant legislation

The use of Council controlled nature strips and road reserves is managed through the Fraser Coast Regional Council Local Laws. A copy of the Local Laws can be found at: <http://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/local-laws>

14. Table 1 – Recommended plants suitable for Fraser Coast nature strips

Small to medium shrubs plant list

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height (m)
<i>Acacia suaveolens</i>	Sweet-scented Wattle	1.5
<i>Alpina arundelliana</i>	Dwarf Native Ginger	1.5
<i>Alpinia caerulea</i>	Native Ginger	1-2.5
<i>Alyxia ruscifolia</i>	Chain Fruit, Sea Box	1.5-3
<i>Atractocarpus chartaceus</i>	Narrow-leaved Gardenia	6
<i>Austromyrtus inophloia</i> 'Blushing Beauty'	Austromyrtus	1-1.5
<i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i>	Midgenberry. Midyim	0.3-1
<i>Backea virgata</i> (varieties)	Twiggy Health Myrtle	< 1
<i>Banksia oblongifolia</i>	Dwarf / Fern-leaved Banksia	1-2
<i>Banksia robur</i>	Swamp Banksia	0.5-2
<i>Breynia oblongifolia</i>	Coffee Bush	1.5-3
<i>Callistemon pachyphyllus</i>	Wallum Bottlebrush	1-2
<i>Callistemon pachyphyllus viridis</i>	Green Wallum Bottlebrush	1.5
<i>Callistemon subulatus</i>		1-2
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> var 'Little John' and 'Captain Cook'	Dwarf Bottlebrushes	1-1.5
<i>Callistemon</i> spp (varieties)	Bottlebrushes	
<i>Cordyline rubra</i>	Red-fruited Palm Lily	2-4
<i>Cordyline stricta</i>	Slender Palm Lily	2-4
<i>Cordyline fruticosa</i>	Palm Lily, Ti Plant	2-5
<i>Dracaena fragrans</i>	Corn Plant	1-5
<i>Dracaena marginata</i>	Red-edge Dracaena	3-5
<i>Eriostemon myoporoides</i> and <i>Eriostemon verrucosus</i> hybrids	Wax Flowers	1-2
<i>Gardenia augusta</i> 'Magnifica'	Gardenia	1-2
<i>Graptophyllum excelsum</i>	Scarlet Fuchsia	1-3
<i>Grevillea</i> spp (varieties)	Grevilleas, Spider Flowers	
<i>Hovea acutifolia</i>	Pointed-leaved Hovea	1-2.5
<i>Ixora</i> spp (varieties)	Ixora, Jungle Flame	1-2.5
<i>Kunzea opposita</i>	Honey Myrtle	1.5
<i>Leptospermum liversidgei</i>	Olive Tea Tree	1-2
<i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i> (cultivars) eg M 'Claret Tops'. M 'Snowfire', M 'purpurea compacta'	Honey Myrtle	0.5-1.5 (usually 1m)
<i>Melaleuca thymifolia</i>	Thyme/Feather Honey Myrtle	0.6-1.2
<i>Melastoma affine</i>	Native Lassiandra	0.5-2.5
<i>Metrosideros</i> spp (varieties)	New Zealand Xmas Bushes	
<i>Pavetta australiensis</i>	Butterfly Bush	2
<i>Philodendron</i> 'Xanadu'	Dwarf Elephant Ears	0.6-1
<i>Pultenaea villosa</i>	Hairy Bush Pea	1-2
<i>Ricinocarpus pinifolius</i>	Wedding Bush	1-2
<i>Sauropus albiflorus</i>	Snow Bush	0.4
<i>Syzygium australe</i> / <i>paniculatum</i> (hybrids)	Magenta Lilly Pilly	2-3
<i>Syzygium wilsonii</i>	Powderpuff Lilly Pilly	2-3
<i>Tabernaemontana pandacaqui</i>	Banana Bush	2-4
<i>Westringia eremicola</i>	Coast Rosemary	1.5
<i>Westringia fruticosa</i>	Coast Rosemary	1-1.5
<i>Xanthostemon verticillatus</i>	Little Penda	1.5 (<5)
<i>Zieria smithii</i>	Sandfly Bush	1.5-2

**Groundcover, borders, and tufted or clumping plants plant list**

<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
Anigozanthus spp (varieties)	Kangaroo Paws	0.3-2
Brachyscome spp (varieties)	Rock or Cut-leaf Daisy	< 0.3
Carpobrotus glaucescens	Pigface	< 0.15
Convolvulus sabatius	Ground Morning Glory	0.15
Crinum pedunculatum	Swamp, Beach or River Lily	1-1.5
Cymbopogon refractus	Native Lemon Grass	0.3-1
Dampiera diversifolia	Dampiera	< 0.15
Dampiera purpurea	Dampiera	0.75-1
Dianella brevipedunculata	Clumping Flax Lily	0.5-1
Dianella caerulea	Paroo or Blue Flax Lily	0.5
Dianella caerulea 'Breeze'		0.7
Dianella caerulea 'Little Jess'		0.4
Dianella congesta	Coastal Flax Lily	0.8
Dianella tasmanica 'Tas Red'		0.3
Dietes bicolor	Yellow Wild Iris	0.7
Dietes grandiflora	Wild Iris	0.8
Evolvulus spp (varieties)	Blue Eyes	< 0.3
Gardenia radicans	Gardenia	< 0.3
Gazania (varieties)	Gazania	< 0.25
Goodenia rotundifolia	Round-leaved Goodenia	0.1-0.4
Grevillea spp (prostrate varieties) eg G biternata, G 'Sunshine', G 'Fanfare', G 'Bronze Rambler'	Grevillea, Spider Flowers	< 0.3
Hardenbergia violacea	Native Sarsparilla	< 0.3
Helichrysum spp (varieties)	Paper Daisies	varies
Hibbertia aspera	Rough Guinea Flower	0.3-0.5
Hypericum moseranum 'tricolor'	Hypericum	0.45
Juniperus conferta	Japanese Shore Juniper	< 0.3
Liriope muscari 'Evergreen Giant' and 'Majestic'	Giant Liriope or Lily Turf	0.3-0.6
Lomandra confertifolia ssp confertifolia	Mat Rush	0.2-0.6
Lomandra filiformis ssp coriacea	Wattle Mat Rush, Iron Grass	0.3
Lomandra hystrix	Creek Mat Rush, River Reed	<1.3
Lomandra longifolia	Spiny Mat Rush	0.5-1
Lomandra longifolia 'Tanika'		0.5-0.7
Lomandra multiflora	Many-flowered Mat Rush	0.3-0.8
Myoporum parvifolium	Creeping Boobialla	< 0.2
Ophiopogon spp (varieties)	Mondo Grass	< 0.2
Oplismenus aemulus O hirtellus	Creeping Shade Grass	0.1-0.4
Phebalium woombye	Wallum Phebalium	1-2
Poa labillardieri	Common Tussock Grass	0.5-1
Scaevola aemula 'Purple Fanfare'	Purple Fan Flower	< 0.3
Spinifex sericeus/ hirsutus	Beach Spinifex	<0.3
Strelitzia reginae	Bird of Paradise	1.5
Themeda triandra	Kangaroo Grass	0.3-1
Viola hederacea	Native Violet	< 0.15

**Palms, pandanus, cycads and grass trees plant list**

<b>Botanical Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Height (m)</b>
<i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i>	Alexandra Palm	6-15
<i>Archontophoenix cunninghamiana</i>	Bangalow or Picabeen Palm	6-15
<i>Carpentaria acuminata</i>	Carpentaria Palm	8-15
<i>Caryota mitis</i>	Fishtail Palm (clustered)	9
<i>Caryota rumphiana</i>	Fishtail Palm	10-15
<i>Cycas media</i>	Zamia Palm, Nut Palm	2-6
<i>Cycas revoluta</i>	Japanese Sago Palm	1-3
<i>Freycinetta excelsa</i>	Climbing Pandanus	
<i>Laccospadix australasica</i>	Atherton Palm	3-7
<i>Lepidozamia peroffskyana</i>	Pineapple Palm, Scaly Zamia	2-5
<i>Licuala ramsayi</i>	Wedge-leaf Fan Palm	5-15
<i>Linospadix minor</i>	Jakarungle	1-4
<i>Linospadix monostachya</i>	Walking Stick Palm	2-3
<i>Livistona australis</i>	Cabbage Tree Palm	10-20
<i>Livistona decipiens</i>	Small or Weeping Cabbage Palm	5-12
<i>Livistona muelleri</i>	Dwarf Fan Palm	6-10
<i>Macrozamia douglasii</i>		< 3
<i>Macrozamia moorei</i>	Zamia Palm, Giant Burrawang	2-6
<i>Normanbya normanbyi</i>	Queensland Black Palm	9-15
<i>Pandanus spiralis</i>	Screw Palm	10
<i>Pandanus tectorius</i>	Beach or Hala Screw Pine	6-10
<i>Ptychosperma elegans</i>	Solitaire Palm	6-12
<i>Ptychosperma macarthurii</i>	Macarthur Palm	5-10
<i>Wodyetia bifurcata</i>	Foxtail Palm	6-12
<i>Xanthorrhoea johnsonii</i>	Forest / Northern Grass Tree	1.5-3
<i>Xanthorrhoea latifolia</i> ssp <i>latifolia</i>		
<i>Xanthorrhoea resinosa</i>		2.5
<i>Xanthorrhoea</i> spp (varieties)	Grass Trees	