

# Road Verge Planting Fact Sheet

## Suitable Planting Species and Resident Guide

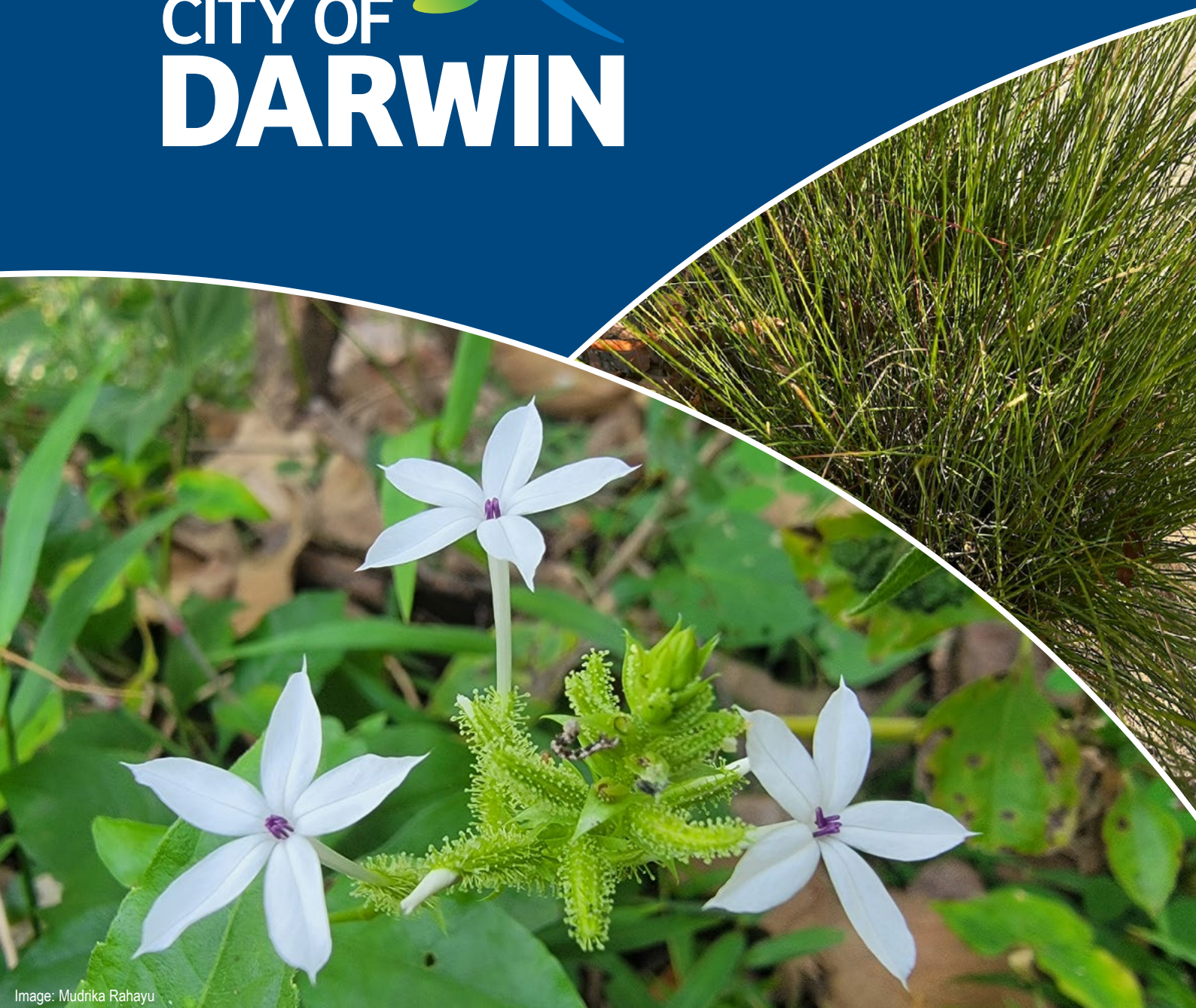


Image: Mudrika Rahayu



# Purpose of this guide

This fact sheet provides educational information for residents and property owners who want to create safe, attractive, water-wise, and biodiversity-friendly planting on City of Darwin controlled road verges.

## 1. What is a road verge?

A road verge is the public land between the property boundary and the back of kerb or edge of road. Its main purpose is to provide safe access for pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, services, and public utilities. Road verge planting must therefore be designed and maintained so that it improves amenity without creating safety, access, or maintenance problems.

## 2. Key Planting Principles

- Keep the verge safe, tidy, and accessible for everyone.
- Choose low-growing plants that can be maintained to a maximum mature height of 60 cm (H), unless they are approved boundary hedges which are approved at a maximum 150 cm (H) x 80 cm (W).
- Do not use plants that are prickly or spiky, poisonous, heavy-fruiting, recognised weeds or declared weeds or known to trigger common allergies.
- Strongly favour native, water-efficient, and habitat-supporting plants.
- Preserve public street trees and do not prune, damage, or remove them.
- Maintain clear sight lines for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles, especially near driveways and road corners.
- Allow access for utility providers, Australia Post, waste collection, and other service providers.



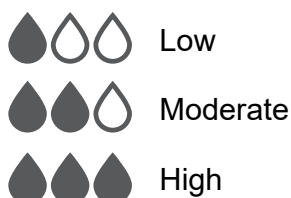


### 3. Suitable planting species

The following species are examples only. Residents should select species that remain suitable for the site, comply with City of Darwin requirements, and are not declared or environmental weeds. Final suitability depends on site conditions, mature height and spread, maintenance, availability, weed status, safety, and City of Darwin approval. Plant availability, suitability and weed status may change over time. Residents are responsible for ensuring all proposed species comply with current Northern Territory legislation and City of Darwin requirements.

## Legend:

#### Water requirements:



#### Light needs:



#### Other information:

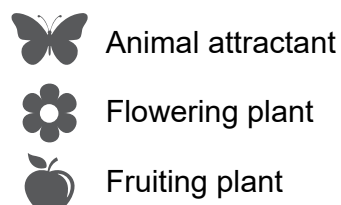
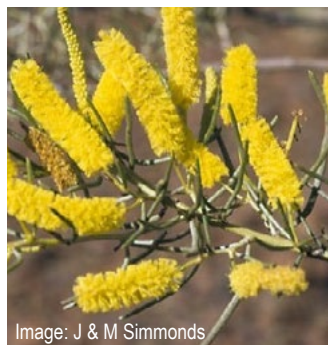


Image: Cheryl Meola



## 3.1 NT Native Groundcovers

Native groundcovers are low-growing native options that can help support local character and biodiversity. Check mature spread and keep plants clear of paths, kerbs, driveways, and services.



### *Acacia hilliana*



**Description:** Evergreen. Low growing, spreading shrub. Strong citronella smell.

**Soil:** Rich, well drained

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers          |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| H 30cm x W 100cm   | Moderate   | Yellow (Mar-Oct) |



### *Acacia lycopodiifolia*



**Description:** Ground cover wattle

**Soil:** Rocky or sandy soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers           |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------|
| H 50cm             | Moderate   | Yellow (Jan-Sept) |



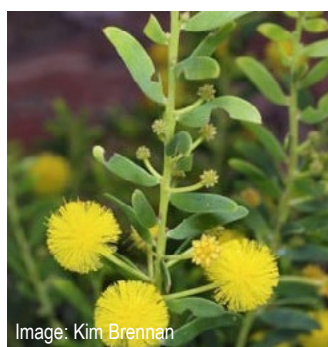
### *Acacia humifusa*



**Description:** Spreading prostrate shrub

**Soil:** Well drained, sandy soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W100cm    | Moderate   | Yellow  |



### *Acacia nuperrima*



**Description:** Resinous, hardy evergreen shrub

**Soil:** Well draining soils, sand, stone, red loam

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers          |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| H 60cm x W100cm    | Rapid      | Yellow (Jan-Oct) |



## 3.1 NT Native Groundcovers

Native groundcovers are low-growing native options that can help support local character and biodiversity. Check mature spread and keep plants clear of paths, kerbs, driveways, and services.



### *Grevillea formosa*



**Description:** Prostrate ground creeping plant

**Soil:** Well drained soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 100cm   | Fast       | Yellow  |



Image: J & M Simmonds

### *Gardenia psidiodes*



**Description:** Fast growing ground cover. Easily pruned and maintained

**Soil:** Well draining soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 30cm x W 100cm   | Fast       | White   |



Image: Mudrika Rahayu

### *Plumbago zeylanica*



**Description:** Small herb with small flowers, small pill shaped seed pods and sticky hairs

**Soil:** Well draining soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Fast       | White   |



Image: Sulistiyo Mujiko

### *Sesuvium portulacastrum*



**Description:** Evergreen. Upright, clumping

**Soil:** Well drained soils

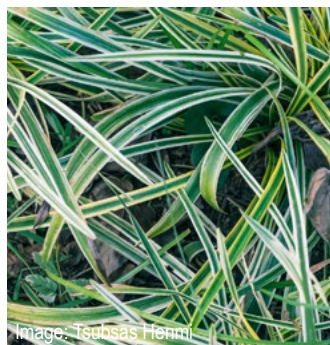
| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers      |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| H 30cm x W 100cm   | Fast       | Pink/ Purple |





## 3.2 Grasses and Sedges

Grasses and Sedges are soft-textured, water-wise planting that can create habitat and a naturalistic verge character. Note: Maintain height and remove dead material so the verge remains tidy and safe.



### *Carex morrowii*



**Description:** Clumping, semi evergreen sedge

**Soil:** Moist fertile, well-drained soils to wet boggy

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers          |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Moderate   | Spike (Sept-Nov) |



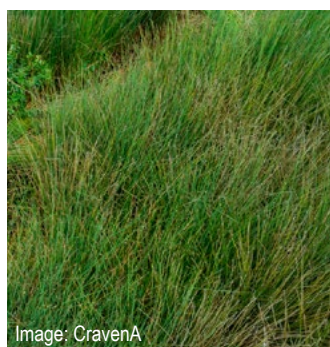
### *Fimbristylis dichotoma*



**Description:** Tufted annual or perennial sedge with tiny glossy pale yellow nuts

**Soil:** Moist, Fertile, well drained soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers  |
|--------------------|------------|----------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Moderate   | Spikelet |



### *Lepironia articulata* hedge



**Description:** Tall perennial sedge

**Soil:** Water logged, boggy conditions

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers             |
|--------------------|------------|---------------------|
| H 150cm x W 60cm   | Moderate   | Spikelets (Mar-Oct) |



### 3.3 Herbs and Edible Plants

Native herbs and edible plants can provide sensory interest and support small-scale productive planting where appropriate. Note: Keep edible planting tidy, avoid attracting pests, and do not allow plants to spread into pedestrian areas.



Image: JohnatAPW

#### *Capsicum annum* "Apache"



**Description:** Dwarf chilli pepper (very hot)

**Soil:** Well drained, fertile soil. Avoid water logging

| Height at maturity | Growthrate      | Flowers |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 40cm    | Moderate - Fast | White   |

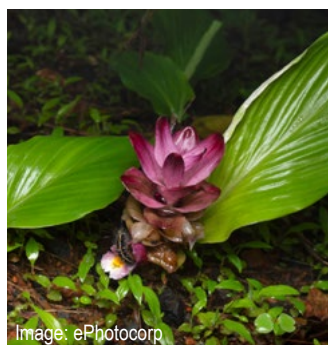


Image: ePhotocorp

#### *Curcuma australasica*



**Description:** Lush, tufted bright green leaves. Herbaceous perennial.

**Soil:** Fertile loam or sandy loam soils, well draining

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers                 |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| H 60cm x W 50cm    | Fast       | Purple/ Pink (Apr-Sept) |



Image: Teine

#### *Mentha australis*



**Description:** Low growing perennial herb

**Soil:** Moist - wet clay rich soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers         |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------|
| H 40cm x W 60cm    | Fast       | Pink (Apr-Sept) |

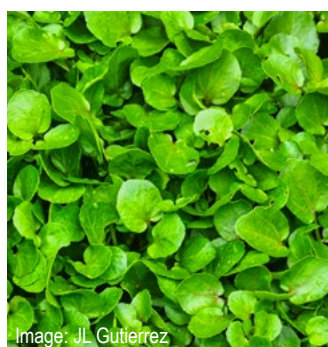


Image: JL Gutierrez

#### *Nasturtium officinale*



**Description:** Vibrant edible annual or short lived perennial with circular leaves

**Soil:** Poor and well draining soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers             |
|--------------------|------------|---------------------|
| H 60cm x W 100cm   | Fast       | Yellow/ Red/ Orange |



### 3.3 Herbs and Edible Plants

Native herbs and edible plants can provide sensory interest and support small-scale productive planting where appropriate. Note: Keep edible planting tidy, avoid attracting pests, and do not allow plants to spread into pedestrian areas.



#### *Petroselinum crispum*



**Description:** Bright green, curly pungent leaves

**Soil:** Mildly acidic well draining soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 30cm x W 30cm    | Fast       | White   |



#### *Raphanus sativus*



**Description:** Fast growing biennial herb

**Soil:** Well draining soils.

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers     |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Fast       | Pale Yellow |

### 3.4 Boundary Hedges

Boundary hedges are colourful and often mass planted as border edging. Note: Use only against boundary fencing with sufficient room to spread to 80cm at maturity without overhanging the pedestrian access or inhibiting sightlines.



#### *Canna tropicaliana*



**Description:** Fast growing evergreen perennial. Loses colour in shade. Orange blooms.

**Soil:**

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers    |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| 120cm              | Fast       | Dry season |



#### *Lomandra longifolia*



**Description:** Compact green mat-rush. Can struggle with high humidity.

**Soil:** Requires well-draining soil to survive.

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| 60cm               | Moderate   | Blue    |





### 3.5 Shade Tolerant Groundcovers

Shade tolerant Groundcovers are useful where verges are shaded by buildings, fences, or existing street trees. Note: Check toxicity and local suitability before planting, particularly where children or pets may access the verge.



Image: Cheryl Meola

#### *Ophiopogon japonicus*



**Description:** Evergreen tufted perennial.

**Soil:** Fertile, well drained soil.

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 30cm x W 30cm    | Slow       | White   |



#### *Spathiphyllum picasso*



**Description:** Evergreen tufted perennial

**Soil:** Fertile, well drained soil

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Slow       | White   |



Image: Kwangmoozaa

#### *Philodendron xanadu*



**Description:** Compact evergreen shrub with curly leaves

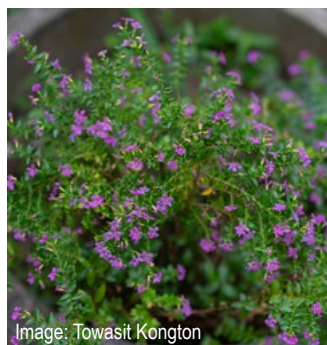
**Soil:** Rich, loose well draining mix

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Slow       | N/A     |



## 3.6 Ornamental low Groundcovers

Ornamental low groundcovers can provide hardy, low-maintenance cover and help reduce bare soil. Note: Use only where species are not invasive, allergenic, or hazardous in the local context.



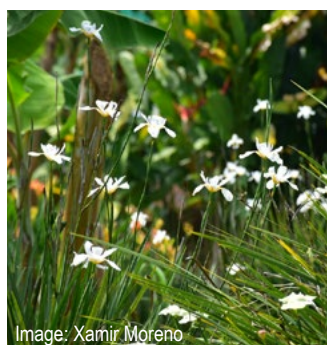
### *Cuphea purpurea*



**Description:** Bushy small shrub

**Soil:** Rich, well drained soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Slow       | Purple  |



### *Dietes iridioides*



**Description:** Clump forming perennial

**Soil:** Rich, well drained

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 60cm x W 60cm    | Moderate   | White   |



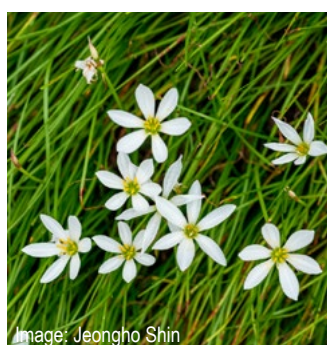
### *Tradescantia spathacea*



**Description:** Vine developing flat coverage for walls

**Soil:** Variety of soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 20cm x W 100cm   | Slow       | N/A     |



### *Zephyranthes candida*



**Description:** Upright grassy foliage

**Soil:** Rich, well drained soils

| Height at maturity | Growthrate | Flowers |
|--------------------|------------|---------|
| H 30cm x W 30cm    | Slow       | White   |



## 4. Plants and materials not to be used

- Plants that are prickly, spiky, poisonous, heavy-fruited, declared weeds, recognised weeds or common allergy triggers.
- Plants that grow taller than 60 cm unless they form part of an approved boundary hedge. Strongly favour native, water-efficient, and habitat-supporting plants.
- Artificial turf, loose rocks, pebbles, paving, stones, concrete edging, solid edging, star pickets, fencing, guide wires, or protrusions.
- Snail baits and unnecessary herbicide or pesticide use.

## 5. Road verge planting guide

1. **Check the verge width:** the verge should be at least 300 cm wide and located between the property boundary and a formed road.
2. **Locate services:** contact “Before You Dig” Australia before works begin and identify underground services.
3. **Plant by hand:** do not excavate deeper than 30 cm and do not use mechanised excavation equipment. This avoids contact with services that may be in the verge.
4. **Design for access:** keep 60 cm clear from the road edge and leave a 150 cm pedestrian clear path where no formed path exists.
5. **Protect street trees:** leave a 150 cm radius around street trees with trunks 30 cm or less, and a 250 cm radius around street trees with trunks greater than 30 cm.
6. **Use safe mulch:** use biodegradable mulch such as woodchip, leaves or compost and prevent runoff onto paths, roads or drains.
7. **Water wisely:** use water-efficient planting and pay attention to irrigation leaks, overspray, and ongoing water costs.
8. **Maintain regularly:** water, weed, prune, replace plants, remove litter, and control pests and diseases.





## 6. Frequently asked questions

### **Do I need approval before planting?**

Yes. Planting on a road verge must be authorised by City of Darwin before works begin. Natural grass establishment does not require authorisation.

### **Can I plant a tree on the verge?**

No. Residents cannot plant trees on City of Darwin controlled land. You may request tree planting through City of Darwin, and it may be considered as part of council's tree planting program.

### **How tall and wide can my plants be?**

Road verge planting by residents must be maintained to no more than 60 cm high at maturity with no overhanging the footpath or kerb at maturity. Boundary hedges must be maintained to no more than 150 cm (H) x 80 cm (W) to meet the hedge requirements.

### **Can I grow herbs or vegetables?**

Small edible or herb-style planting may be suitable only if it remains safe, tidy, low-growing, non-invasive and compliant with City of Darwin requirements. Residents should avoid plants that attract pests or create trip, sightline, or maintenance issues.

### **What happens if utilities need access?**

City of Darwin and utility providers may remove verge planting where access is required. Removed planting may not be reinstated beyond grass establishment, and compensation will not be provided.



## 7. Application process guide

1. Read the Road Verge Planting Policy and Road Verge Planting Requirements / Application Form and checklist.
2. Prepare a simple description of the proposed planting, including plant species, layout, and maintenance approach.
3. Obtain underground service information through Before You Dig Australia before preparing your application.
4. Obtain written consent from the property owner or owners' corporation if you are an occupier or part of a strata scheme.
5. Complete the application checklist honestly and accurately.
6. Submit the application to City of Darwin in person, by post or by email.
7. Wait for written authorisation before starting any works.
8. Plant and maintain the verge in accordance with the approved application and current requirements.

## 8. Property owner responsibilities guide

- Maintain the planting so it remains safe, tidy, attractive, and compliant.
- Water, weed, prune, replace plants and remove litter as required.
- Control pests and diseases without relying on harmful or unnecessary chemicals.
- Keep plants clear of sightlines, roads, paths, driveways, hydrants, utility pits, poles, pillars, and service access points.
- Preserve existing public street trees and request City of Darwin assistance for pruning, trimming, or removal.
- Repair or pay for damage caused to City of Darwin infrastructure or public utilities by the planting or associated works.
- Understand that City of Darwin may remove non-compliant or unsafe planting, and costs may be recovered where remedial works are not completed.
- If the property is sold, the new owner or occupier is responsible for ensuring the road verge planting complies with current requirements.

