



Your nature strip garden

# Maintenance Handbook

Prepared by Philippa Bell  
Ph.D. Candidate  
The University of Melbourne



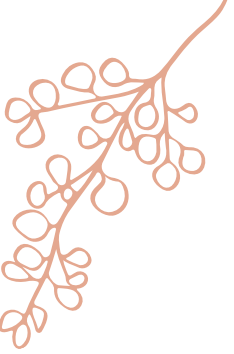
THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE



**Merri-bek**  
City Council



# Council Guidelines



**Merri-bek City Council imposes restrictions on nature strip gardens to support pedestrian and driver safety, please ensure gardens are maintained in accordance to these guidelines.**

- Vegetation must be kept below 50 cm in height to maintain safe sight lines.
- Vegetation must be kept off the road, footpaths and driveways to avoid trip hazards.
- A 30 cm no plant zone must remain on the edge of the road to allow for car access.
- Please read the full guidelines [here](#).

Council reserves the right to remove any planting deemed as inappropriate or unsafe based upon a Council Safety Audit.

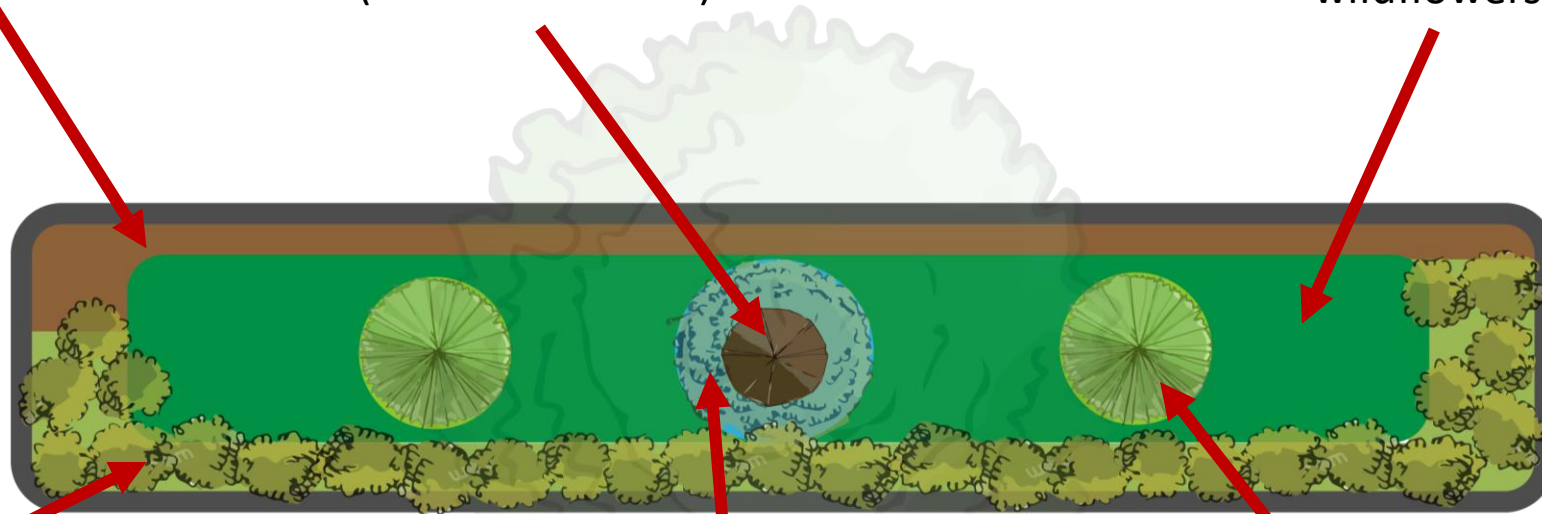
Council and service authorities (gas, water, electricity, etc.) reserve the right to access existing and future infrastructure assets that may be located in and around your nature strip. Be aware that your beautified vegetation could be dug up with little or no warning. While service authorities and Council will reinstate the nature strip to a neat finish only, they are not under obligation to replace lost plants.

# General garden layout

**No plant zones** for car doors and  
for roadside bins

Street tree  
(location variable)

**Centre:**  
Grasses and more delicate  
wildflowers



Roadside ↑

Footpath ↓

**Edge:**  
Hardy plants that can be  
heavily pruned and will  
handle foot traffic

**Tree base:**  
Sprawling plants that will not  
overwhelm the roots of the street  
tree

Low growing shrubs, to  
be kept < 50 cm tall



# Plant Profiles

What you will find in your garden



## Cut-leaf daisy

### *Brachyscome multifida*

**Height:** 0 – 0.5 m

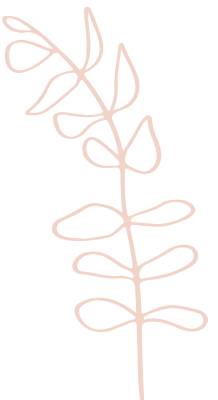
**Flowers:** Purple, blue or white flowers throughout most of the year.

**Pruning:** Prune in late winter to encourage dense growth. This species will also tolerate being trimmed to keep from spilling onto footpaths of driveways.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature but will benefit from light watering in the drier months.

**Benefits:** *Brachyscome* should offer flowers year round, attracting native bees and butterflies. Specifically, *Brachyscome* is associated with butterflies such as the Australian painted lady and dainty swallowtail.

**Garden location:** Edge



## Hop goodenia *Goodenia ovata*

**Height:** <1 m.

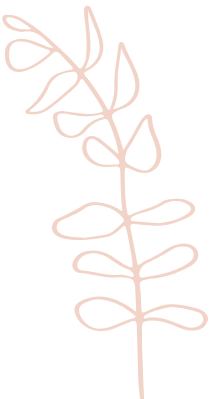
**Flowers:** Small, yellow flowers Aug– Feb.

**Pruning:** Prune in spring and autumn to maintain shape and height. Tolerates severe pruning after flowering.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature.

**Benefits:** Goodinea flowers are attractive to many pollinators, this species is also a larval food plant of meadow argus butterflies.

**Garden location:** Edge



## Spiny-headed mat-rush

### *Lomandra longifolia*

**Height:** 0.5 – 1 m

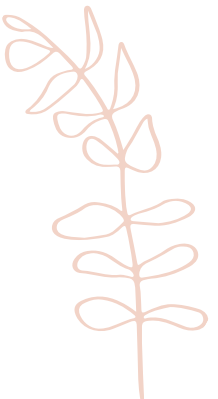
**Flowers:** Produces flower spikes Aug – Dec.

**Pruning:** Prune to 15 cm from the ground every 2 – 3 years. Trim the plant if it becomes too tall, aim to keep height ~ 50 cm.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature, but will benefit from water during long dry spells.

**Benefits:** *Lomandra* is a larval host plant to a number of native butterflies. Seed and larvae eating birds will also visit *Lomandra* for food, or shelter.

**Garden location:** Centre



# Common tussock grass

*Poa labillardieri*

**Height:** 0.5 – 1 m

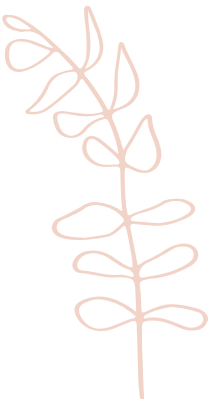
**Flowers:** Green to purple prongs flowering  
Oct - Feb

**Pruning:** Prune in late summer or autumn,  
remove 2/3rds of the plant. Trim the plant if  
it becomes too tall, aim to keep height ~ 50  
cm.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be  
drought resistant once mature.

**Benefits:** A larval host plant to a number of  
native butterflies. Seed and larvae eating  
birds will also visit to forage.

**Garden location:** Centre



## Common everlasting *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*

**Height:** 0 – 0.5 m

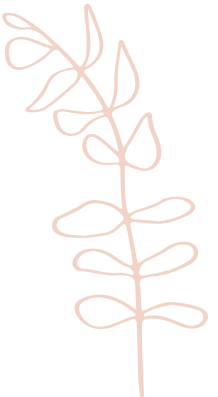
**Flowers:** Dense clusters of yellow flowers  
Spet - Feb

**Pruning:** Prune old flower heads at the base every winter. Trim when necessary to keep the plant below 50 cm.

**Watering:** Water until established. Light watering in summer will prolong the flowering period. If the plant dies back in summer it will likely reshoot after rain.

**Benefits:** Attractive to pollinators like native *Lasioglossum* bees, a larval food plant for Australian painted lady butterflies.

**Garden location:** Centre



## Creeping boobialla

### *Myoporum parvifolium*

**Height:** Prostrate form, 0 – 0.5 m

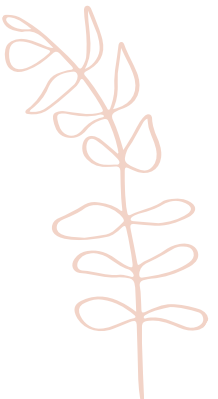
**Flowers:** Small white flowers Sept – Feb.

**Pruning:** Rejuvenate with hard pruning at the start of spring.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature, but will benefit from water during long dry spells.

**Benefits:** Attractive to pollinators like native *Lasioglossum* bees.

**Garden location:** Centre



## Heath wattle

### *Acacia brownii*

**Height:** 0.5 – 1 m

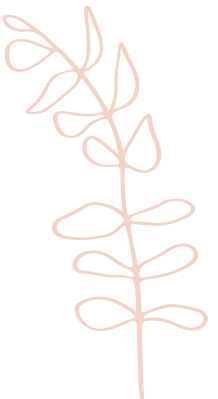
**Flowers:** Yellow flowers Jul – Nov.

**Pruning:** Prune lightly, when needed, to maintain shape and keep under 50 cm tall.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature.

**Benefits:** Attractive to native butterflies and bees, dense foliage provides shelter for small birds.

**Garden location:** Centre



## Common correa

### *Correa reflexa*

**Height:** Prostrate form, 0.3 – 0.6 m.

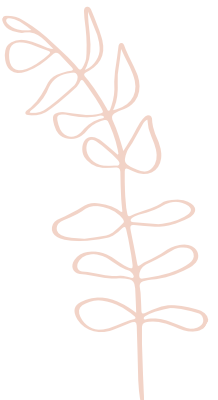
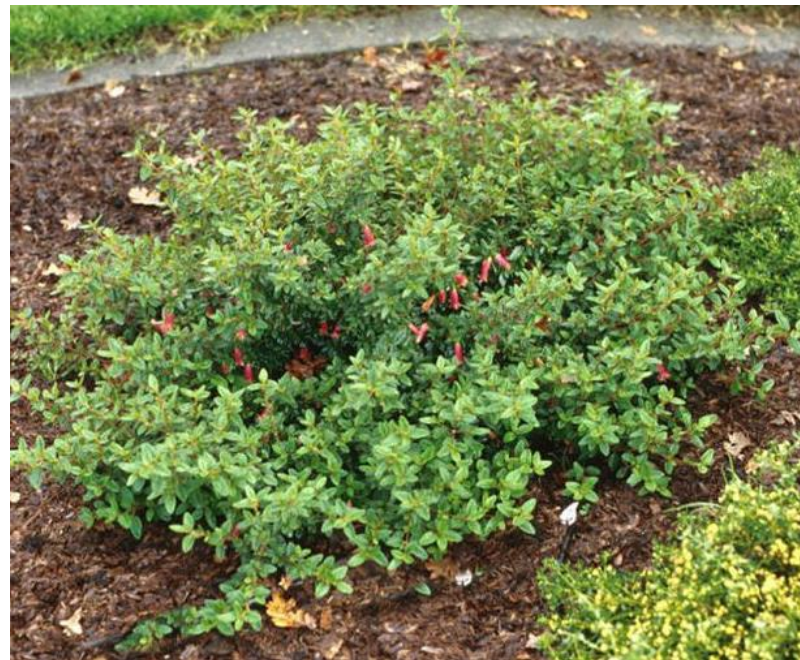
**Flowers:** Red and green tubular bells, Feb – Sept.

**Pruning:** Aim for light pruning to encourage dense foliage, but if necessary *Correa* will tolerate harsh pruning to keep below 50 cm tall. Prune after flowering.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature but will benefit from light watering in the drier months.

**Benefits:** Attractive to native bees such as *Hylaeus*. *Correa* are great nectar producers and will attract small insectivorous birds and the dense foliage will provide shelter as these birds feed.

**Garden location:** Centre



## Running postman

### *Kennedia prostrata*

**Height:** 0 – 0.5 m

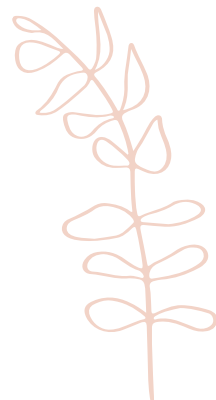
**Flowers:** Red and yellow pea flowers, April – Dec.

**Pruning:** This plant shouldn't need to be pruned except to keep it from running onto the road, footpaths and driveways. If this happens, prune as required any time of year.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature but will benefit from light watering in the drier months.

**Benefits:** Attractive to many pollinators, notably, Megachilid bees.

**Garden location:** Tree base



# Bluebells

*Wahlenbergia sp.*

**Height:** 0 – 0.5 m

**Flowers:** Small, purple to blue, Oct – March.

**Pruning:** Bluebells may die back during winter, if they don't, prune to ground level.

**Watering:** Water until established, should be drought resistant once mature but will benefit from light watering in the drier months.

**Benefits:** Attractive to many native pollinators, particularly native bees like *Lasioglossum*.

**Garden location:** Tree base

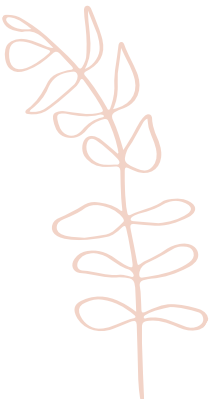
**Species composition:**

*W. stricta* ([tall bluebell](#))

*W. communis* ([tufted bluebell](#))

*W. gracilis* ([Australian bluebell](#))

*W. multicaulis* ([branching bluebell](#))



# Pruning Schedule

Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	As required
Common everlasting	Hop goodenia Common tussock grass	Cut-leaf daisy Bluebells	Hop goodenia Creeping boobialla Common correa	Spiny-headed mat-rush Heath wattle Running postman

Generally, plants are pruned after flowering or before a growth period to encourage rejuvenation and dense foliage.

On nature strips, pruning will also be essential to ensure plants stay below 50 cm in height and off roads, footpaths and driveways.

See plant profiles for pruning details.

# Watering

- Your garden will need regular watering while establishing, as we are planting in autumn there should be a good amount of natural rainfall to help with this.
- Supplementary water, however, may be required for the first few months if we have a drier autumn. Watch for wilting during this time.
- Although many of these plants are drought tolerant, I recommend some watering during the hottest and driest parts of summer.
- See plant profiles for more watering details.

# Weeding

- There is no schedule for weeding your garden, just remove weeds as required.
- We are planting in high densities to reduce the space available for weeds to establish, as your garden grows and plant cover increases, weed occurrence should also decrease.
- Invasion of couch, kikuyu and buffalo grass may be likely if you share a nature strip with your neighbour. We have reduced the likelihood of invasion by establishing a barrier on the edge of the garden. However, it may be beneficial to make sure your neighbour remains 'on top' of their lawn maintenance.



# Common weeds



Dandelions, *Taraxacum sp.*



White clover, *Trifolium repens.*



Capeweed, *Artotheca calendula*



Ribwort, *Plantago lanceolata*



Sow-thistle, *Sonchus oleraceus*

It is likely that your garden will do some self-seeding, so it is important to know what is a weed and what isn't. These are some of the most common weeds you will come across.

# Contacts

Philippa Bell – The University of Melbourne:  
[philippab@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:philippab@student.unimelb.edu.au)

Charlotte Napper – Conservation Programs Officer,  
Merri-bek City Council:  
[CNapper@merri-bek.vic.gov.au](mailto:CNapper@merri-bek.vic.gov.au)



**Merri-bek**  
City Council



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE