



Section 8



Tips for your garden and landscape



When designing your garden and outdoor spaces, it's a good idea to seek professional landscaping advice. They'll help you create a space that will thrive in the Canberra climate and is enjoyable to be in too.

Here are some extra things to know and do before you get started on your landscaping.

Free plants

If you've bought a new residential block in the ACT, you're entitled to an allocation of plants from the Yarralumla Nursery. The ACT Government runs the Free Plant Issue Scheme to help you beautify your new home and suburb. For more information contact Access Canberra at accesscanberra.act.gov.au or phone 13 22 81.

Cat containment



Most new suburbs in the ACT are cat containment areas. This means you must keep any pet cats contained within your block of land. Cat containment areas help protect our native wildlife from being injured or killed by cats. Cat containment also helps keep your treasured pets happy, healthy and safe.

There are several ways cats can be contained to your block and still be able to explore. This includes installing a purpose-built enclosure which allows them to explore without the risk of roaming.

The cat containment symbol is used in cat containment areas to remind you about these requirements. You can find out more about cat containment on the Transport Canberra and City Services website at tccs.act.gov.au.

Turf supply

If you are using grass or turf in your garden, ask the supplier to certify it does not contain fireweed seeds. Fireweed is a highly-invasive and highly-spreadable weed that can have a devastating impact on surrounding pastures and make grazing animals very sick.

Fencing

When you are building your fence there are several things to consider, such as the height of your fence and the materials you use. For more information contact Access Canberra at accesscanberra.act.gov.au or phone 13 22 81.

Materials like brush or timber may catch alight easily and should not be used for fencing in Bushfire Prone Areas. You should also give thought to how your fencing materials will last over time or if they will need regular maintenance.

The colour of your fence is also important. Dark colours are more likely to absorb heat in the summer, so consider using lighter colours.

If your block has a common boundary, you'll need to discuss your fence with your neighbours. This includes the material, colour and how you will pay for the fence. If you share a fence with several neighbours, you'll need to talk to everybody involved.

If your fence crosses an area utility providers may need to access (for example, to check your meter or trim some trees), you should check with them about any other conditions that might apply.

Some blocks have extra fencing requirements, particularly if they are near major roads or public open spaces. These blocks are identified in the Block Details Plan and Block Details Table for your community.



Did you know?

Did you know that as a new residential land owner, you're entitled to a portion of plants to help establish your garden?

“Plants with flowers provide an important source of food for bees and birds.”

Waterwise gardening

Like other parts of Australia, Canberra experiences periods of high rainfall and storms, mixed with periods of drought or low rainfall.

Try to choose drought-tolerant plants that can cope when it's dry. At the same time, your landscape needs to cope with lots of water during storms. You can do this by using a mix of surfaces such as grass, plants and permeable pavers (which let the water soak through).

Remember, grass may not cope well during a drought, so choose climate-wise plants instead. And don't forget the mulch; it helps your plants thrive in dry weather. Just be sure it doesn't wash into the stormwater drains when it rains.

Promoting biodiversity

When choosing plants for your garden, select a variety of plant species. By using a mix of native Australian species and introduced species you'll support biodiversity. This helps create much-needed habitat for our native wildlife. Make sure to choose plants suitable for the Canberra climate.

You should also consider choosing plants which support bees and birdlife. Plants with flowers provide an important source of food for bees and birds.

Shade in a changing climate

The Canberra climate is changing, and our city is expected to get warmer. By including shade in your garden it will keep cool and be more pleasant to be in, even when it's hot outside.

Try to use natural shading where possible. This includes growing climbing plants on your fences or pergolas, and planting trees which will create shade once they grow.

You should also include deciduous trees which lose their leaves each winter. They provide shade in summer and sunlight in the colder months, making them perfect for a Canberra garden.

Bushfire awareness

When designing your garden and selecting plants, you should consider the possibility of a bushfire.

There are some plants which resist the effects of fire and can even slow it down. These are good options to choose if you live in a Bushfire Prone Area or if your block is near an open space. Talk to your local nursery or landscaping professional for plant recommendations.

You should also take care of your garden to make sure you don't gather large amounts of material, such as leaves or rubbish. These could catch alight during a bushfire and easily spread to your house.

Edible gardens

Enjoy easy access to delicious fruit and vegetables with a productive garden. Not only is it a source of inexpensive fresh food, it's a healthy activity the whole family can enjoy.

When planting your garden, think about including a space for edible plants. It doesn't have to be a large area, but it will need enough sunlight. It will also need shade in the hottest part of the day in summer. You will need to use good quality soil to provide nutrients for your growing plants. They will also



need watering. Try to reduce the amount of water you use with efficient irrigation systems or water from your rainwater tank.

Your nature strip and street trees

Your nature strip (the area of public land between the property boundary and the street) will form an important part of the character of your new community.

Even though nature strips are not part of your block, well-kept nature strips can enhance property values and deliver environmental benefits.

When planning your garden, think about how you will maintain your nature strip. Try not to park on your nature strip, as it may damage the area and stop it from absorbing water.

Trees in the nature strip create shade during summer, helping to keep our city cool. They also support wildlife such as birds and make our streets more appealing and walkable. Take care not to damage the trees near your home, and be sure to water them in very hot weather.

Find out more about what is allowed on your nature strip, and how you can get approval to carry out works, through Access Canberra at accesscanberra.act.gov.au or phone 13 22 81.

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