

Adopt – A Tree - Program

What is the Adopt-A-Tree-Program?

Council offers local residents the chance to get involved in beautifying our region by caring for trees outside their homes. There are numerous benefits of street trees including cooler streets, more bird and insect life, slowed storm water run off, improved air quality, noise reduction and added privacy. Council continues to care for a large number of trees in our region, but we've found that our street trees have a much better chance of prospering when they receive a little help and care from our residents, particularly when the trees are becoming established.

The Adopt a Street Tree program is a free initiative open to all residents within the Copper Coast Region. To be involved, all you have to do is register your interest and you will be added to our list for future planting. Then, when your adopted tree arrives, simply keep an eye on it, give it a drink if it's looking thirsty; and report any issues to our team to investigate. We're here to help.

What are the benefits of street trees?

Healthy street trees can:

- Provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.
- Provide shade and cool our streets and homes.
- Reduce storm water run off and erosion.
- Improve the quality of the air we breathe.
- Improve our health and our connection with nature
- Identify local heritage and have cultural significance.

How it works?

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1. Contact us to request a free street tree in front of your home (using the form below).
2. You can tell us what type you prefer: deciduous, evergreen, native or exotic. We'll select one or more trees for you, suited to your location.
3. We don't just plant any tree! The trees we recommend are based on many factors at each location and will consider things like:
 - a. power lines
 - b. views/sight lines
 - c. location of underground services
 - d. soil type and condition
 - e. width and depth of your verge
 - f. traffic signals and signage visibility for road users
 - g. adjacent land (e.g. natural areas) and much more.

Note: not all locations are suitable for a street tree. If a tree is not suitable for your place, you could consider to create a 'verge garden'

4. We will come out and plant your new tree. This may take some time as we usually plant in autumn and spring when the trees have the best chance to thrive. Timing also depends on our ability to source different tree species.
5. All we ask in return is for you to care for your tree, give it plenty of water while it settles in, and let us know if it needs a prune or doesn't look healthy.

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Tree tips

- During wetter months you may not need to water trees as regularly.
- Only carry as much water as you can comfortably manage.
- Don't disturb the soil surface extensively under the tree canopy as this will damage tree roots.
- Spreading mulch under the canopy will help retain soil moisture.
- Don't park vehicles on the verge under trees as this compacts the soil and reduces water infiltration.

Should I use tap water?

- Water is an important resource, so where possible, use non-potable (non drinking) water from the bath, shower, sink or washing machine rinse cycle.

How much does a tree need?

- Two or three buckets of water each week during the warmer months.

Taking care of a new street tree:

- Regularly water it in the warmer months
- Hand pull weeds
- Add 75mm of mulch to the base of the plant
- Report vandalism

Make sure NOT to:

- Use grass clippings for mulch (it may harm your tree)
- Prune trees (Council will do regular pruning)
- Spray herbicides or pesticides
- Fertilise the tree (Council will fertilise when required)

What species might be planted and can I choose?

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The majority of trees we plant are drought tolerant native species. However, it's important that our Arborists match the right tree for the right location. So, during the assessment phase, consideration is given to any existing streetscape plantings, the location and any infrastructure present.

Can I plant or maintain my verge after my adopted tree has been planted?

We encourage residents to take ownership of their verge and add plants to support tree health. Benefits include:

- Providing a healthier environment for street trees
- Softening the effect of hard surfaces such as roads and footpaths
- Improving air quality
- Working as natural air conditioners through moisture in leaves
- Reducing stormwater run-off and
- Providing habitat for small creatures like bees, butterflies and lizards.

Why might my verge be assessed as an unsuitable location for a tree?

When assessing the suitability of locations for planting new street trees, arborists take several factors into consideration to ensure that trees will thrive and grow.

The rule of thumb is that they need to ensure that new trees are not planted any closer than 3m from a driveway, 6m from a corner plot or 1.5m from the kerb.

Other factors include existing underground services that will be compromised by digging or tree roots, planting on a corner or driveway that may block line of sight, a nearby home has solar panels that will be shaded, or existing vegetation is present.

Verges come in all shapes and sizes! The two main types of verges that are suitable for trees are the ones that have a separate patch of earth between the

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kerb and footpath, and those that may not include a footpath and are purely landscaped all the way to the kerb (this is still classed as the verge as it needs to be accessible to pedestrians). Sadly, if your verge is fully paved with no earth accessible we will be unable to plant a tree.

Trees have so many benefits, that if you are ineligible for Adopt a Tree but have the room for a tree in your garden we'd strongly suggest investigating planting one

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