



88. Nature on the strip



Steve Murphy of recreatingthecountry.com.au uses local grassland plants to enliven his street

The nature strip. One of Australia's most cynical misnomers. Since when did 60 square metres of buffalo grass, mowed fortnightly, become 'nature'? In Alice Springs, it's gravel.

The space between our houses and the street is pretty intensely used. Utilities like water, gas, electricity and internet connections run through channels, under or beside the footpath on which we walk.

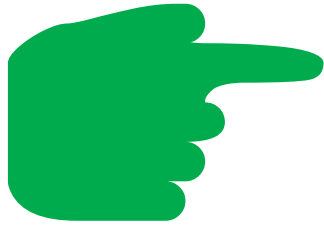
In leafy suburbs, large trees well-maintained by local councils create a cool, green landscape that contribute significantly to property values. Other suburbs are dominated by broken shopping trolleys,

derelict real estate signs alleviated by the occasional patch of well-tended flowers.

We can find ways to maximise the opportunity to green our environment with food plants and dramatic shows of colour, and create shade and a pleasant micro-climate at the same time.

Here's a plan

Identify a plant that is doing well in your garden that you are happy to see more of. Pick a corner of your nature strip that is not driven or walked over regularly and get the shovel. The dirt might be hard, so dig deep and add a lot of organic matter into



the hole before you plant. Dig up one of the plants from your garden and move it to your new spot. Water well and watch.

The point of using an existing plant like that is you know it will actually grow and it costs you nothing in case someone protests, rips it out or calls the style police to discuss your taste in tubers.

If you want to plant trees, dial before you dig so you know you are not planting on a gas pipeline. Check out where the powerlines are and the height of your planned street tree. Find a food tree that does well in your area and does not need a lot of care. Source a seedling and plant it.

Look up <Miyawaki forest> forest and plant a mini forest outside your front fence.

A personal story

Inner-city Brisbane has a number of major roads lined with Tamarind trees. Every summer, Indian families work the street, picking the tamarind pods to make the paste used in so many chutneys and curries.

Reality check

Check that the food plant you are about to install is not a noxious weed or the sworn enemy of your local Landcare group. Coffee and Brazilian cherry are great street trees that provide food but spread quickly and are often unwelcome.

Council may want you to register what you are planting. Talk to the neighbours. Councils generally respond to complaints. Avoid grumpy neighbours and stay under the radar.

Look it up

Nature strip planting
Regulations planting
Miyawaki forest



Now try this!

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