



Designing out graffiti landscaping and planting

A graffiti offenders preferred surfaces on private property include brick walls, sheds and solid fences. These structures provide large flat surfaces to display tags and other markings.

Landscaping and planting can help prevent graffiti by making surfaces less susceptible to vandalism, defining ownership and boundaries of a property, and maximising natural surveillance of an area.

The following guide shows how you can landscape and plant to make the physical environment work to your advantage and not the offender's.

Landscaping to create naturally graffiti resistant surfaces

A primary motive for graffiti offenders is having their tag seen. Covering a surface with vegetation reduces its suitability for graffiti, as the colour and texture of the surface will reduce the visibility and readability of the tag.

When using vegetation on vertical surfaces, it is important to be aware that it may create a ladder for offenders to use, especially if lattice is present. Therefore, any vegetation that leads to a possible access point (windows, balconies, and rooves) should:

- Not be capable of supporting climbing.
- Avoid weight-bearing lattice supports.
- Have natural deterrents, such as thorns.

Alternatively, naturally fibrous materials such as bamboo and brushwood provide similar graffiti resistant properties and can be used to easily cover surfaces



Poor versus effective landscaping

effective



Vines, creepers and mosses can make a surface less prone to graffiti

effective



Fibrous surfaces can act as a shield against graffiti

poor

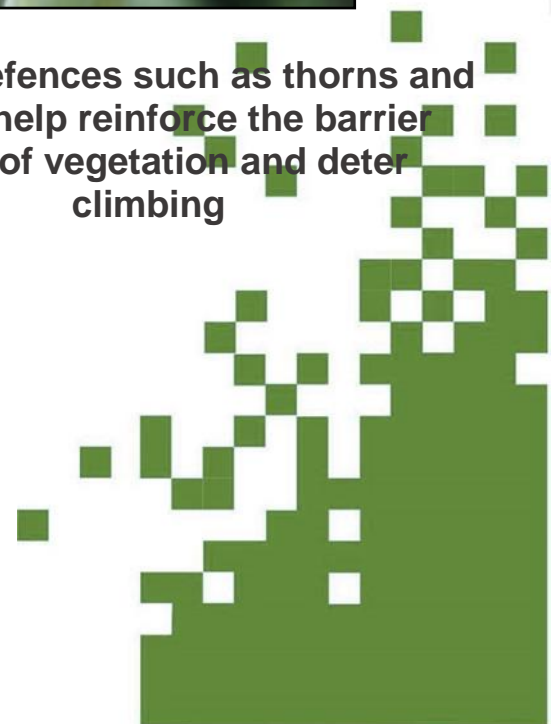


Lattice used to support or guide vegetation can be used as a ladder for offenders to gain access to premises

effective



Natural defences such as thorns and spikes help reinforce the barrier effect of vegetation and deter climbing



Landscaping to control access to surfaces

An alternative to covering a target area with vegetation is to use vegetation as a barrier to offenders reaching the surface.

Placing a hedge or other dense vegetation immediately in front of a wall can inhibit access, especially if the plant has natural deterrents such as thorns or spikes.

Placement is important, as gaps between the plant and the surface will provide cover for offenders and encourage acts of vandalism.

effective

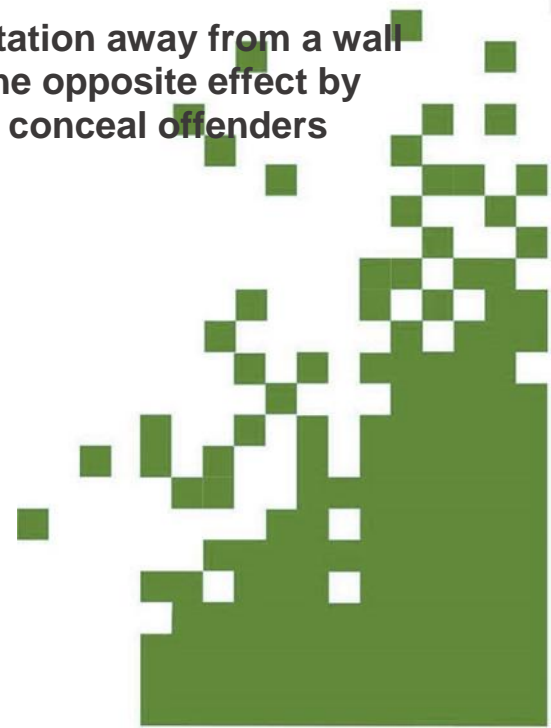


Placing a hedge against a wall reduces surface area available for graffiti and makes the surface harder to reach

poor



Placing vegetation away from a wall will have the opposite effect by aiding to conceal offenders



Landscaping to define ownership of space

Creating a clear sense of ownership of a space can be an effective deterrent to unauthorised entry.

Creating a boundary between public and private space can be as simple as introducing a change of elevation or surface through materials like gravel, brickwork or plant borders.

The idea is not to depend on high fences that block surveillance, but to make it clear that the area belongs to the resident and members of the general public should not enter without permission.

effective

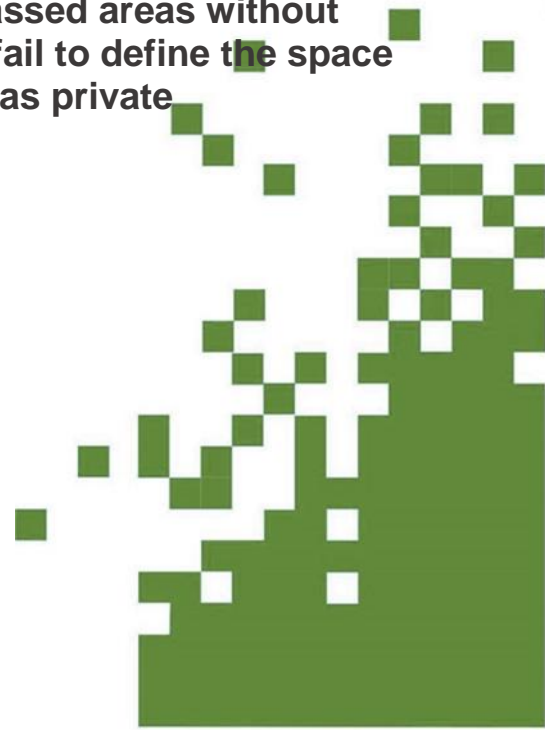


A simple garden border immediately defines the beginning of the owners' private space

poor



Large grassed areas without boundaries fail to define the space as private



Landscaping to maximise natural surveillance

Natural surveillance increases the likelihood of offenders being seen and also reduces the location being targeted as it is perceived as being more risky.

Solutions which combine graffiti resistance and boundary setting characteristics include low hedges (no more than 70cm high), and open rail fences, both which allow visual lines to remain clear.

effective

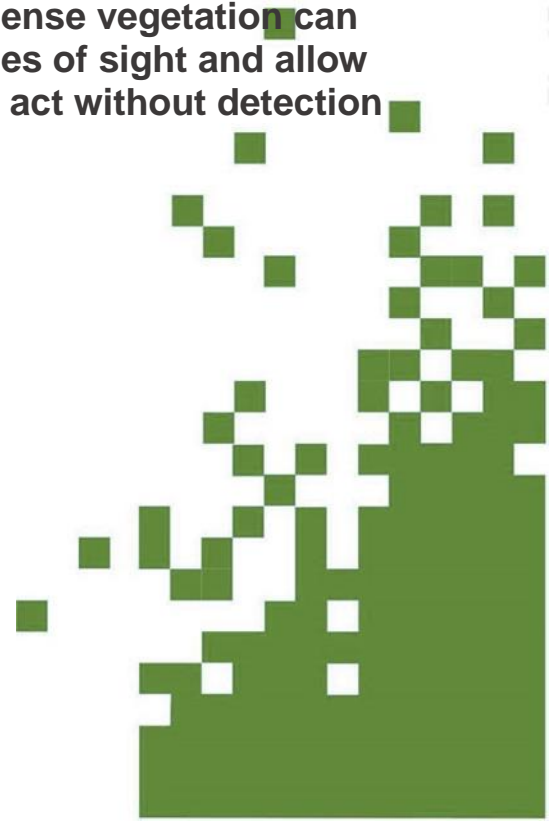


Rail fences create a barrier without blocking surveillance. When choosing rail fencing, it is important to avoid fencing with horizontal supports that can be used as footholds

poor



High and dense vegetation can obstruct lines of sight and allow offenders to act without detection



The location of trees and large shrubs should take into consideration their impact on visibility and opportunities for concealment. When landscaping to maximise surveillance, it is recommended:

- Dense shrubs be no more than 70cm high.
- Tree branches fall no less than 2.4 metres from the ground and should not block sources of light or the view from windows.
- Trees should not provide a natural ladder onto rooves or upper stores.

Not sure what to plant?

Below is a list of vines and hedges that may be suitable for your garden. Talk to your local nursery for plant suggestions specific to your location, and tips on creating and maintaining your graffiti resistant garden.

Vines:

- Black Coral Pea – (*Kennedia nigricans*).
- Coral Vine – (*Kennedia coccinea*).
- Native Wisteria – (*Hardenbergia comptoniana*).
- Snake Vine, Climbing Guinea Flower or Golden Guinea Vine - (*Hibbertia scandens*).
- Red Marianthus – (*Marianthus erubescens billardiera*).
- Holly-leaved Hovea – (*Hovea chorizemifolia*).

Hedges

- Golden Grevillea – (*Grevillea chrysophaea*).
- Olive Grevillea – (*Grevillea olivacea*).
- Dwarf Willow Myrtle – (*Agonis flexuosa nana*).
- Syzygium (*various species*).
- King's Park Special – (*Callistemon 'Kings Park Special'*).

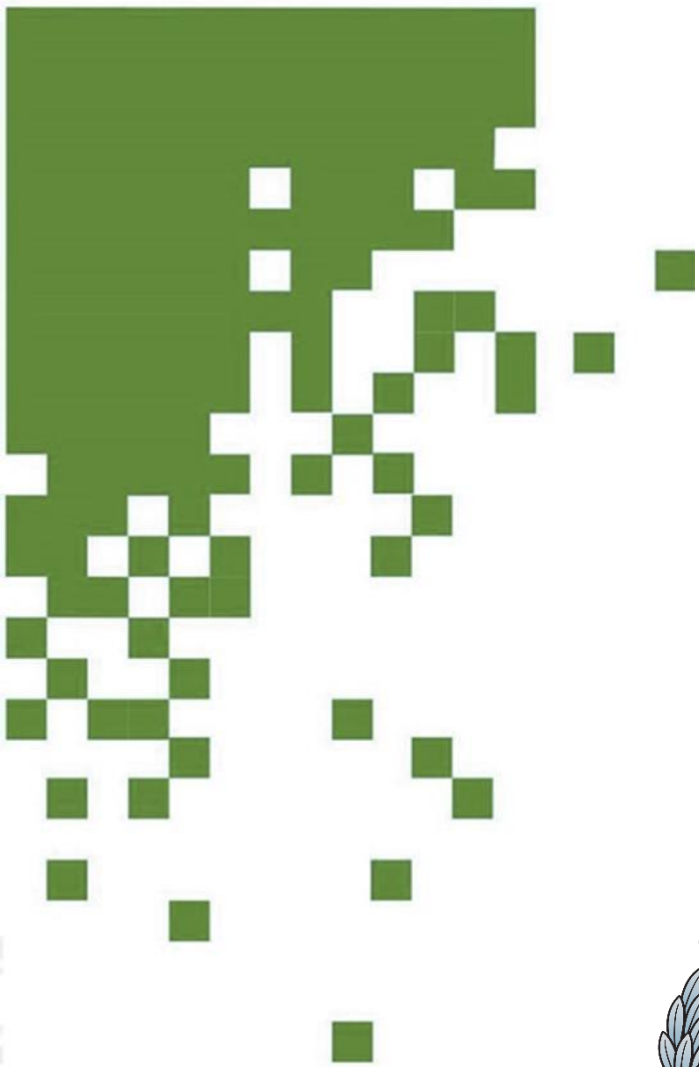


Other points to consider

- Movement activated or solar powered lighting can be incorporated into landscaping to provide relatively inexpensive improvements to night surveillance.
- Pebbles (too small to cause damage when thrown) or other noise producing ground coverings can increase an offender's fear of detection.
- A well maintained yard in itself can reduce vandalism by giving the residence a "cared for" appearance. Showing the property is looked after increases the sense of surveillance and reduces offender comfort.
- If a surface is unsuitable for natural forms of protection, anti-graffiti coatings can facilitate fast removal.
- Chain waste bins away from vulnerable structures to prevent them being used as natural ladders or as concealment.
- Remove any graffiti as quickly as possible, the longer graffiti remains on display the greater the reward for the vandal and the more likely it is that the location will continue to be targeted. For information on removal methods visit the [Goodbye Graffiti website](#), or contact your local council.
- Report graffiti. Graffiti can be reported online through the [Goodbye Graffiti website](#).

For further information, including more from the *Designing out Graffiti* series, visit www.goodbyegraffiti.wa.gov.au.





**Adapted from the Western Australia Police Force
Graffiti Team *Designing out Graffiti* series**

www.goodbyegraffiti.wa.gov.au

Contact us: graffiti@police.wa.gov.au