

PLANTING AND VEGETATION GUIDANCE - SPORTS AND ACTIVE RECREATION ENVIRONMENTS

These environments provide for organised sporting and active recreation opportunities and are generally large, flat unobstructed sites with sports fields, hard courts, clubroom buildings and car parking areas.

These areas must be resilient to withstand the impact of heavy use. Vegetation in these environments often provides structuring qualities, such as shade and shelter from large trees planted along field edges, as well as a buffer for surrounding residential properties from noise and lighting.

Key outcomes:

connect to the surrounding context and contribute to the ecological value of the site

- provide storm water detainment for flood events
- provide shade, sheltered areas, and wind breaks for users and spectators
- provide buffers between different active uses within the park, and boundaries between roads and properties
- structure the overall layout of fields or distinguish different parts of the sports park, particularly if it is very large (e.g. field number eight is located by the grove of kowhai)
- the scale of trees is appropriate to the space

Typical issues:

- low maintenance of planted areas in these parks due to the large size of parks and limited maintenance budgets. Ensure planting species and specimens are robust, low-maintenance and a quality planting medium is used
- planting is completed without consideration of the time of year; causing plants to die from lack of water or establish shallow root systems which increases the risk of plants being damaged in strong winds
- placement and arrangement of tree rows and stands can provide overshadowing of sports turf
- lack of shade around the edges of sports grounds
- poor species selection and proximity of trees to sports field boundaries can cause tree roots to damage surfaces of hard courts.

Key considerations:

- **Connect.** Identify any ecological corridors or pedestrian greenways which exist around the site and ensure connections are made with these.
- **Structure and amenity.** Use specimen trees to define spaces or separate large fields and different areas of activity. Use or accentuate special features or heritage values on the site. Shade for spectators and players should be concentrated around the perimeter of sports fields, and should be integrated into every sports park.
- **Species selection.** Both native and exotic species have important qualities and attributes to offer sports and recreation environments. Both natives and exotics can provide robust specimens which produce food for native fauna, while exotic species also provide a huge selection of colourful and deciduous trees to choose from

including large shade trees with excellent form. Ensure the plant species selected are suited for the site and its specific conditions.

- **CPTED in parking areas.** Trees should be limbed up to 1.8m and shrubs should be retained at 600mm high to provide clear sightlines for vehicles and for people to safety use these areas.
- **Design sports turfs for performance.** Research and collaborate with sports field operators and managers to specify a suitable turf species which will meet the performance demands and requirements of the fields. Sand carpeting or artificial turfs are good solutions where budgets allow.

Other considerations:

- understand the root growth habit of specimen trees, particularly when planting in close proximity to hard courts and artificial surfaces, to prevent future surface damage and danger from falling limbs. Avoid short-lived brittle species near areas of pedestrian movement and congregation.



These colourful exotics provide separation between the children's playground, active sports field and walking paths, while clear views under the tree canopies offer safety.



Owairaka Park, Mt Albert. A native planting buffer has been used along this park boundary to give privacy to adjacent residential properties, and amenity to the park.



Starling Park, Massey. Swale planting behind car parking spaces and the simple use of wheel stops instead of kerbing allows stormwater to flow directly into these garden areas. Starling Park, Massey.