



Have a Garden Native to Your Area

Backyards for Wildlife Garden Design Fact Sheet

Why Local Natives?

Native plants are becoming increasingly popular in private gardens these days as they:

- Reduce water and fertiliser use
- Require low maintenance
- Provide habitat for wildlife
- Reduce backyard weeds
- Produce some bush food
- Look great!

In a word, native plants are right for our environment. They can thrive in our climate, as well as being visually attractive. However, native gardens can contribute much more.

Whether your garden plants are exotic or indigenous, their interactions with wildlife and the physical environment will have an effect on the ecosystem far beyond your garden fence. This is why some exotic garden plants can become troublesome weeds if they are not carefully managed.

Alternatively, indigenous plants in your garden may connect genetically with distant populations via pollinating birds and insects. These and other fauna may also disperse the seed of your indigenous plants into the broader landscape. You can use this natural partnership to put back some of our native plants where they belong!

For this reason, it is important that you choose the plants that are not just native to Australia, but native to your local area – the original vegetation association that used to be in your backyard before European settlement. By planting these species, and with the help of your garden visitors, you can actually help to restore the entire unique vegetation heritage of your neighbourhood!

How to Design a Local Native Garden

No matter what size your garden or budget is, there are many ways that you can create a garden native to your area that will support a your local wildlife. Here are some steps you can follow to design a native garden to suit your individual need:

1. Discover what you want and decide on a garden style. Ask yourself some questions like these: What style do I like? What gardening skills do I have? How much time would I like to spend on gardening? Would I like my kids play in the garden?



Generally speaking, a bushgarden needs the least maintenance, while a formal garden requires more frequent pruning. If you'd like to spend time with your kids in the garden, a native lawn is a great idea, while safety issues should be considered if you are planning a pond. These considerations will help you to determine which kind of garden design will suit your needs. Draw up a checklist if necessary!

2. Measure your property accurately and make a basic scale drawing with everything that may affect your new garden. This includes all water and gas pipes, power and phone cables, external hot water systems, air conditioning units, heaters, changes in level, existing trees with a north pointer and the location of damp or rocky areas. Also make a note of the prevailing wind direction and soil type.

3. Now you can start drawing your garden layout based on your style preference and the notes you have made. You can refer to our **BFW Garden Design Factsheets** for some ideas about each style.

Make sure you can see and enjoy your garden from inside your home, either through a window or down the hallway. This is an important consideration if you want to create an environment in which children can play safely in view of the house.

4. Select local native plants for your garden. Always use plant species that are native to your area. If you are not sure about which plants to choose, please visit the **BFW website** to find your species list (see address below).

