



# Creating a bird friendly garden

## Help conserve our local species

In addition to the enjoyment of having native birds visit your home, there are many other benefits of having a bird friendly garden. Many bird species consume large numbers of insects which can restore the balance to a healthy garden with natural pest control. Birds are also important for pollination of native flowers.

Increasing the available habitat for local birds supports more effective wildlife corridors and allows our important natives to persist in a fragmented landscape.



### Elements of a bird friendly garden

- **Use locally native plants** – building a garden of local indigenous species ensures that you are catering for birds in the local region and supporting local plant genetics. Locally native plants are also easier to grow as the climate and soil conditions best support these species.
- **Supply a source of water** – birds require a regular source of water. A bowl is sufficient for small birds. It is important to keep the water topped up as the birds will rely on it.
- **Provide leaf litter** – rake leaves under trees and shrubs as this encourages insects and worms. It also provides an excellent source of nutrients for your plants.
- **Avoid harsh chemicals and pesticides** – these can be harmful to birds and will lead to reduced diversity of insects which are a primary source of protein for birds.
- **Hollowed logs and fallen branches** – loose timber provides shelter for small lizards and native mammals. Logs also provide birds with cover from predators and places to search for food.
- **Cats** – keep your cat inside or consider an outdoor cat enclosure, particularly after dark. It is also advised to have a bell on your cat's collar which can alert birds of their presence.

### Not just for food!

Native birds and animals are attracted to plants for many reasons. Plants can provide a food source with seeds, nectar and leaves. Insects attracted to the plants also make up a large part of the protein for many smaller birds such as Superb Fairy Wrens during the breeding season. Native plants can also provide native birds with protection from predators and a place to create a nest.



## A few locally native species to consider:

### **Silver Banksia**

*Banksia marginata*

Available in both a tree and a shrub form. The flower spikes provide a resource of nectar for local birds such as Eastern Spinebills. The seed cases are a favourite food of Black Cockatoos.



### **Prickly Tea-tree**

*Leptospermum continentale*

A prickly-leaved 2 metre shrub. It has attractive 10mm wide white flowers and seed pods. It attracts nectar and seed eating insects. It is also an excellent habitat tree for smaller birds.



### **Prickly Moses**

*Acacia pulchella*

A medium shrub to around 2m. It has green needle-like leaves and bright yellow flowers. It provides excellent cover for small birds and looks stunning during flowering times in late winter.



### **Purple Coral-pea**

*Hardenbergia violacea*

A low native creeper with vibrant purple flowers. The flowers attract insects, providing a source of food for a range of insect eating birds.



### **Snow Gum**

*Eucalyptus pauciflora*

A short eucalyptus perfectly suited to garden settings. It has creamy white fluffy flower clusters and smooth bark. This tree provides local birds with nectar and habitat.



### **Stick Everlasting**

*Xerochrysum viscosum*

Sticky Everlasting is a multi-branched flowering daisy that is around 20-80cm high with bright yellow flowers. The dry-to-touch flowers attract native bees and insects.







### **Bushy Needlewood**

*Hakea decurrens*

A shrub to 4 metres with a mass of white or pink flowers in winter. The needle-like leaves provide excellent cover for small birds which like to nest in amongst the leaves.



### **Spiny-headed Mat-rush**

*Lomandra longifolia*

This grass-like plant makes excellent ground cover in a garden and looks terrific when accompanying snow gums. This plant grows to approximately 1 metre and has small yellow flowers.



### **Grey Tussock-grass**

*Poa sieberiana*

Native Poa grasses are a simple way to provide habitat to a garden. As well as the excellent ground cover, these grasses provide many birds with a source of seeds and insects.



### **Grey Parrot-pea**

*Dillwynia cinerascens*

A small shrub to approximately 50 centimetres. The brightly coloured clusters of flowers attract native bees and other nectar seeking insects.



## **Sourcing locally native plants**

Many nurseries will not stock locally native plants due to limited demand. Most, however, can order in these plants. The following organisations focus entirely on growing and supplying locally native plants.

### **Western Plains Flora, Wildwood (near Sunbury)**

628 Wildwood Road, Wildwood, Victoria.

Ph: 9740 3178

Email: [ian@wpflora.com.au](mailto:ian@wpflora.com.au)

## **Landcare**

Your local Landcare group can also assist with choosing the correct plant species and where to source locally native plants in your area.