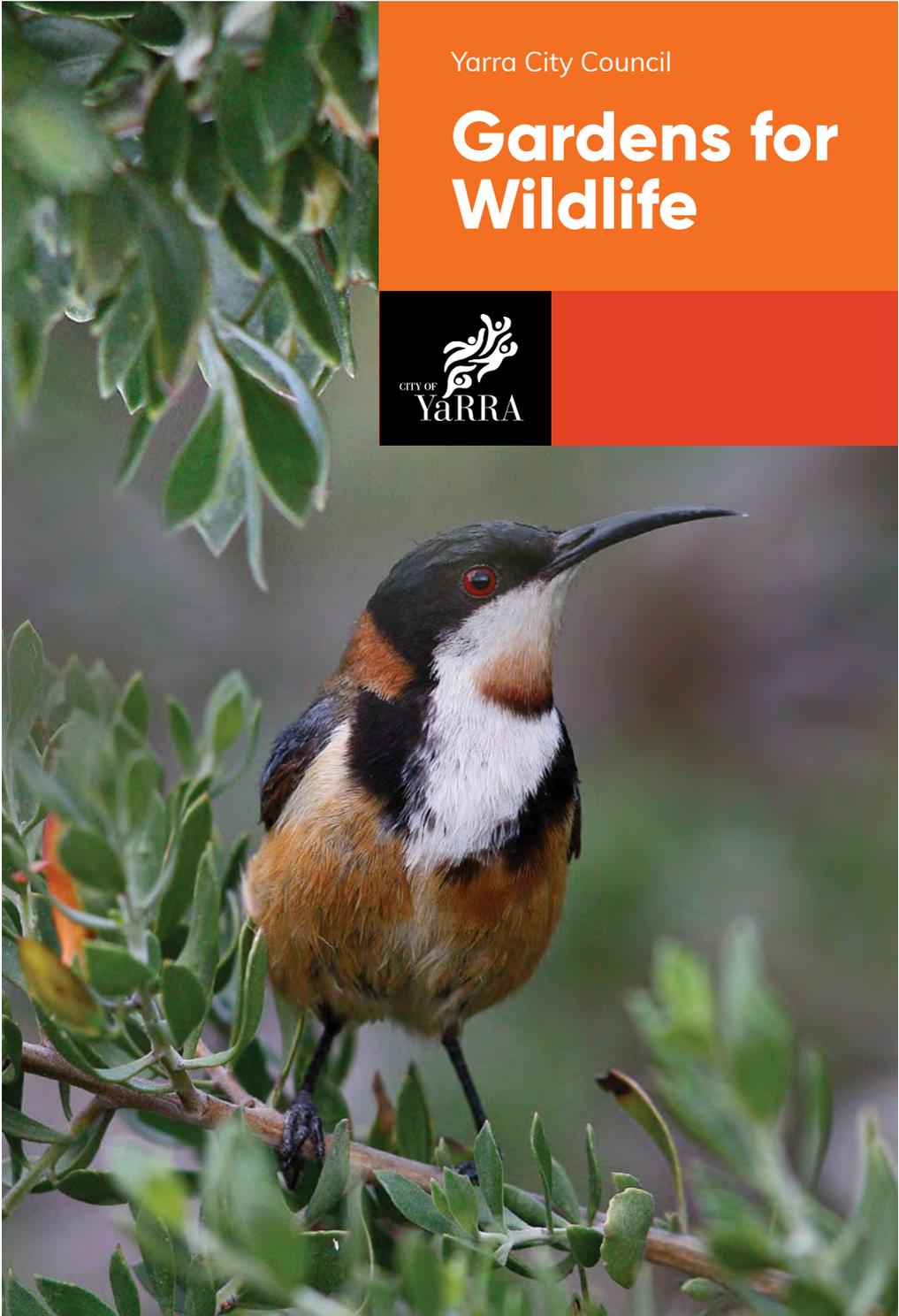


Yarra City Council

Gardens for Wildlife



Yarra is deeply proud of its connection to the Aboriginal community and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the true sovereigns, caretakers and custodians of the land now known as Yarra. Prior to the colonisation of Melbourne, the area known as Yarra held significant and cultural importance to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and this connection still exists today. The spiritual connection to places within Yarra’s municipal boundaries, like the Yarra River, and the confluence of the Yarra River and Merri Creek, extends back thousands of years to the Dreamtime. Since the early 1900s, Victoria’s Aboriginal community has flocked to Yarra, to find the sense of community that is the strength of Aboriginal people. The City of Yarra is committed to keeping this sense of connection alive, and over a number of years has forged an increasingly robust relationship with the local Aboriginal community.

Cover image: Eastern Spinebill
by Neville Bartlett

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Disclaimer: Although precautions have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information, the City of Yarra, its employees, consultants and contractors cannot accept responsibility for any claims, loss, damage or liability arising out of the use of the information in the booklet.

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Published 2023.

This publication is available in alternative accessible formats on request.

Electronic copy

PDF versions of this report can be downloaded from yarracity.vic.gov.au

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Gardens for Wildlife

Gardens for Wildlife is a partnership between City of Yarra and the community. The program aims to support residents to create habitat gardens for local wildlife, connect people with nature and each other, and increase the abundance and appreciation of biodiversity.



How does the program work?

Gardens for Wildlife is driven by a group of volunteer garden guides who share their passion and knowledge of habitat gardening with the community. They do this through visiting gardens of Yarra residents to provide guidance on how to create habitat for wildlife through gardening on private property. City of Yarra facilitates and administers Gardens for Wildlife, providing training and support for volunteers, free plants to participating households, and supporting materials. Gardens for Wildlife will assist the City of Yarra to achieve several goals in the Nature Strategy 2020-24, relating to habitat creation, plant and animal monitoring, community connectedness, wellbeing and health.

Yarra's gardens for wildlife goals:

Enhance Yarra's environment and create connections between bushland areas

Enable residents to connect with nature

Build knowledge and skills to empower the community to care for nature

Grow an inclusive and active network of environmental stewards and champions

Strengthen connections between residents, community and place

Improve wellbeing through experiencing and caring for nature

Collect and share stories and data about our impact

Learn from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people about cultural land practices to Care for Country.

Garden guide volunteers

Garden guides are volunteers who value nature, gardening and the conservation of our indigenous plants and animals. Garden guides are trained to assess and provide advice and recommendations to residents on habitat gardening.

Becoming a garden guide is a great way to actively protect native plants and wildlife, meet like-minded people, get involved in the community and learn new skills about conservation and indigenous gardening.

Household garden assessments

Are you dreaming of a native wildlife haven at your doorstep? Yarra residents can apply to receive a visit from volunteer garden guides who will come to your property to provide recommendations on how you can increase habitat to make your outdoor space wildlife friendly.



Yellow Admiral Butterfly

Whether you have a big backyard, small courtyard or some potted plants on your balcony, everyone can help enrich urban biodiversity!

Household participants will receive:

Written report with habitat gardening advice specific to your property

Free Indigenous plants from the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-op

Wildlife gardening booklet and information

Gardens for Wildlife mailbox sticker to promote the program to your neighbours

Access to the Gardens for Wildlife network to continue your journey.

For more information about Yarra's Gardens for Wildlife program, to register your interest in becoming a garden guide or receiving a garden visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/biodiversity

Introduction

Our environment is increasingly under pressure from the impacts of urban development. The threats of clearing native vegetation, climate change, population growth, introduced pests and predators, vehicles and waste all contribute to native species degradation and decline. This makes caring for Yarra's biodiversity even more important. We hope this guide helps you to bring a little nature to your neighbourhood.

Bushland areas such as Burnley Park, Merri Parklands, Rushall Recreation Reserve and Alphington Park Wetlands and surrounds are valuable sanctuaries for our local plants and animals. Maintaining and expanding these habitats is key to sustaining the biodiversity that we all enjoy in Yarra.

The Merri Creek, the Yarra River and the Park Street Linear Reserves provide critical wildlife corridors – safe spaces for our local wildlife to rest and move across our landscape. Urban parks such as Edinburgh Gardens and Darling Gardens provide 'stepping stones' across the Yarra landscape between bushland reserves.

Alphington Wetland



Eastern Yellow Robin



Whether your garden consists of a collection of pots on your balcony or a large backyard, the addition of some native plants, a dish of water or a rock in a sunny spot will all help our native wildlife to thrive.



Matted Bush-pea



Common Brown Butterfly



Chocolate Lily



Through our gardens, we have an exciting opportunity to support nature in our neighbourhood. We can create gardens that provide food and shelter for wildlife and act as additional stepping stones between larger areas of habitat. No garden is too small to be a wildlife garden, as each will play an important role in the habitat 'big picture'.

Establishing habitat that encourages wildlife to visit your garden can be infinitely rewarding. To watch a butterfly drinking nectar from a native daisy that you've planted, to listen to the chortle of magpies at a birdbath, or to spy microbats swooping for insects at twilight, brings joy and grows your connection to your natural environment.

Original vegetation communities

The City of Yarra has six main vegetation communities. These are referred to as Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs). The adjoining map reflects the distribution of these six EVCs as they were before European colonisation.

Prior to European colonisation much of Yarra was a thriving Plains Grassy Woodland. A rich diversity of native grass species and small herbaceous plants dominated the area, along with scattered River Red Gums and a variety of small shrub species.

Along the waterways, four main riparian EVCs were represented. These fluctuated with the seasons and water levels. River Red Gums likely dominated these zones, along with Swamp Gums, Acacia (wattle) species, and an understorey of shrubs, sedges, rushes, herbs, and grasses.

These vegetation communities and the vast array of wildlife they supported has largely been replaced by urban development, making caring for the nature that remains even more important.

For detail on EVCs visit environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/naturekit

Restoring biodiversity

Plains Grassy Woodland is now endangered, with less than 1% of its original area intact. City of Yarra is proud to contribute to the restoration of Plains Grassy Woodland and other local EVCs. Biodiversity works enhance and extend bushland areas, with a focus on increasing understorey species often missing from the landscape.

Yarra residents can help by growing species of the Plains Grassy Woodland or other local EVC in their gardens. These plants are adapted to local soil and climatic conditions so they should thrive in your garden. Many are small and well-suited to the spaces in urban gardens, and even to growing in pots. Native wildlife love them too!

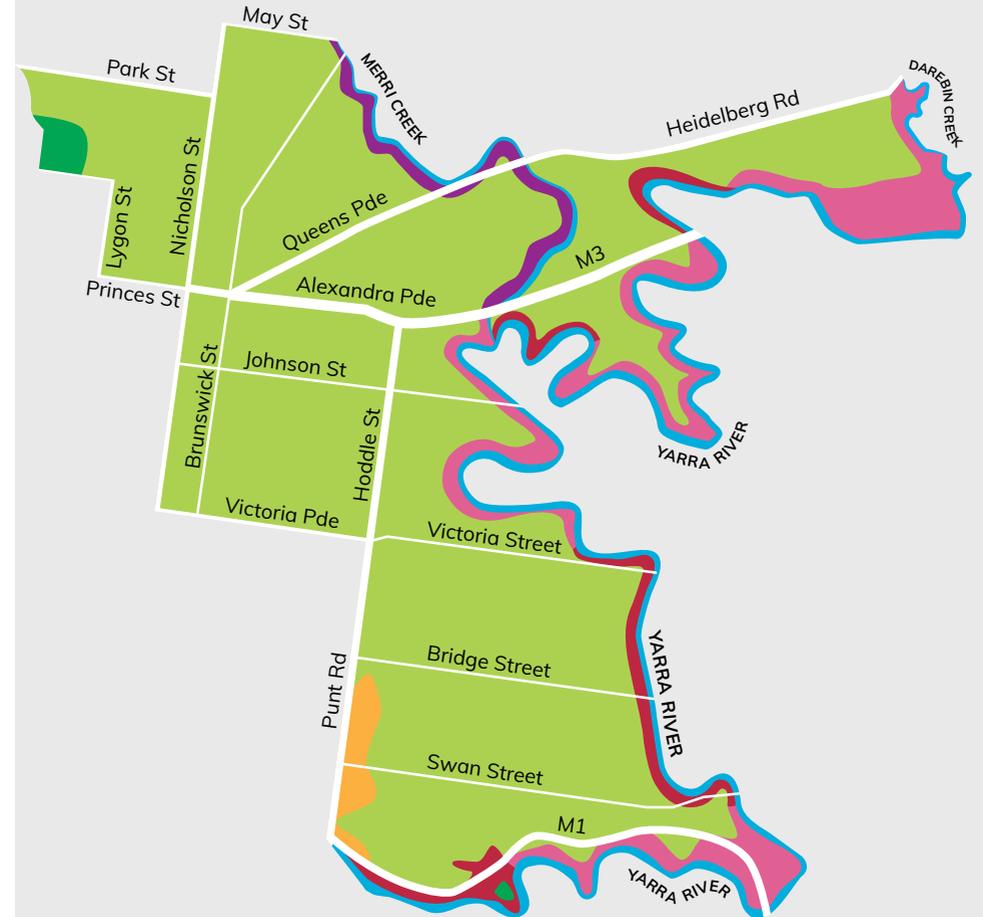


Plains Grassy Woodland



Floodplain Riparian Woodland

EVC map of original vegetation communities



EVC
KEY

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Plains Grassy Woodland |  Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland |
|  Grassy Woodland |  Riparian Woodland |
|  Floodplain Riparian Woodland |  Stream Bank Shrubland |

Biodiversity hotspots

One of the best ways to understand local plant communities, what certain native species look like and the conditions they thrive in, is to get out and observe them in their natural settings. The following are some examples of environmental reserves in the City of Yarra.

1. **Hardy Gallagher Reserve**
Solly Avenue, Princes Hill
2. **Linear Park Reserve**
Park Street, North Fitzroy to Princes Hill / Rushall Crescent North Fitzroy
3. **Rushall / Thomas Kidney Reserve**
Holden Street, North Fitzroy
4. **Merri Creek trail**
5. **Hall Reserve**
The Esplanade, Clifton Hill
6. **Alphington Park and Wetlands**
View Street, Fairfield
7. **Yarra Bend Park**
Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield
8. **Dights Falls**
Trenerry Crescent, Abbotsford
9. **Yarra River trail**
10. **Burnley Park**
Yarra Boulevard, Burnley
11. **Kevin Bartlett Reserve**
F.R.Smith Drive, Burnley
12. **Loys Paddock**
Gibdon Street, Richmond
13. **McConchie Wetland**
Mary Street, Richmond



Alphington Wetlands



Merri Creek



Hall Reserve



Dights Falls

City of Yarra biodiversity hotspots



For further details visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/facilities

Yarra's wildlife

Yarra's environment supports a range of native plants and animals. Across Yarra there are at least 603 different plant species, including seven threatened species. 275 of these plant species are indigenous (local) to the area.

More than 278 animal species (birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs and insects), including twenty-one threatened species, rely on local habitats for food and shelter. Birds found across Yarra include a number of parrot, honeyeater and owl species, as well as magpies, superb fairy-wrens, thornbills and pardalotes. Yarra is also home to other animals such as a variety of lizard, butterfly, moth, native bee, hoverfly and other insect species.

The waterways and wetlands provide important habitat to many animals including waterbirds, fish, frogs, Rakali, eels, turtles and invertebrates.

Habitat corridors

Native wildlife needs to be able to move around to find food, shelter and to breed. Habitat corridors or stepping stones are pathways of vegetation that connect larger habitat areas and enable animals to move safely across the landscape to find these resources.

There are several important corridors for wildlife movement within the City of Yarra. The Yarra River, Merri and Darebin Creeks are vital waterway corridors for many bird species, the Grey-headed Flying Fox, microbats and reptiles. These and other habitat corridors can be viewed on the map adjacent.

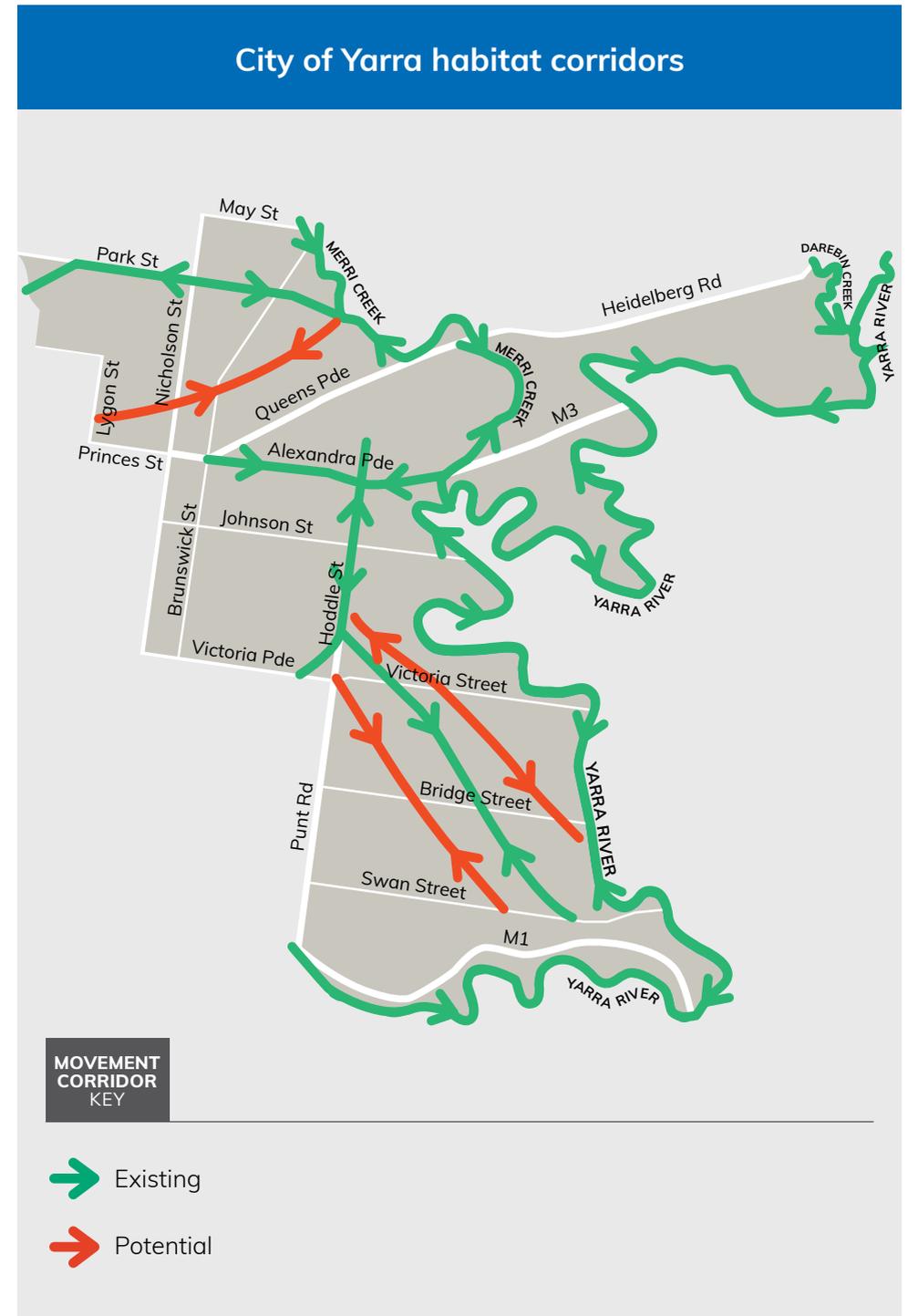
Yarra residents can help to increase and connect habitat by creating stepping stones through planting indigenous plants in their gardens. Even the smallest garden can help to grow nature in the neighbourhood!



2 Striped Marsh Frog



3 Gang-gang Cockatoos



Gardening for wildlife

These are the elements to include in your garden to attract wildlife. You don't have to have all of them, every garden is part of the habitat 'big picture', so choose the elements that best suit your space.

Consider how you use your garden and incorporate elements such as a shady seat where you can sit and watch birds and butterflies.

Include **feature elements** such as a striking tree, a swathe of tussock grasses or a frog pond to create interest as well as habitat.

Consider the **flowering times** of different plant species and aim to have a year round supply of food for wildlife.

Include **habitat elements** such as bird baths near prickly shrubs for protection, large flat rocks for lizards to warm up on, or a pond with refuge logs for frogs.

Consider the **growing requirements** of each species. Group together those with similar water and light needs.

Ensure you are aware of the **mature size of your plants** to avoid ending up with a 40 metre gum tree towering over your house!

If you are thinking of replacing lots of plants in your garden, a **staged approach** is important. Working on small patches of your garden at a time will ensure existing patches remain for temporary shelter while the new areas mature.

The following section sets out some key considerations for maximising the habitat value of your garden.

Layers

A key to creating a wildlife friendly garden is to create structural diversity – lots of plants and lots of different layers. Aim to create a mix of trees, shrubs of varying height, grasses and groundcovers.

Dead trees and shrubs also provide habitat for much of our native wildlife. Likewise, logs, rocks, sticks, mulch and leaves on the ground can provide habitat for many local insects and lizards.

Note that logs and rocks should not be sourced from local bushland where they are already providing habitat.

Diversity

A wide variety of indigenous plants can help to provide a range of habitats, shelter and food sources for different wildlife.

A healthy balance of different predator and prey species means that no one type of creature will overpopulate and become a problem.

Aim to achieve a mixture of different plant heights, foliage densities (including open areas), plant surfaces (i.e. leaves and bark) and a range of species that flower throughout the year to provide a consistent supply of food.

Garden layers



Trees

Food and shelter for birds, possums, gliders, bats, small mammals and insects.

Small trees and large shrubs

Habitat for birds, possums, small mammals and insects.

Small shrubs

Food and shelter for birds and insects.

Grasses and groundcovers

Food and shelter for birds, lizards, frogs, small mammals and insects.

Logs, mulch and rocks

Habitat for lizards, frogs, small mammals and insects.



Superb Fairy-wren (male)

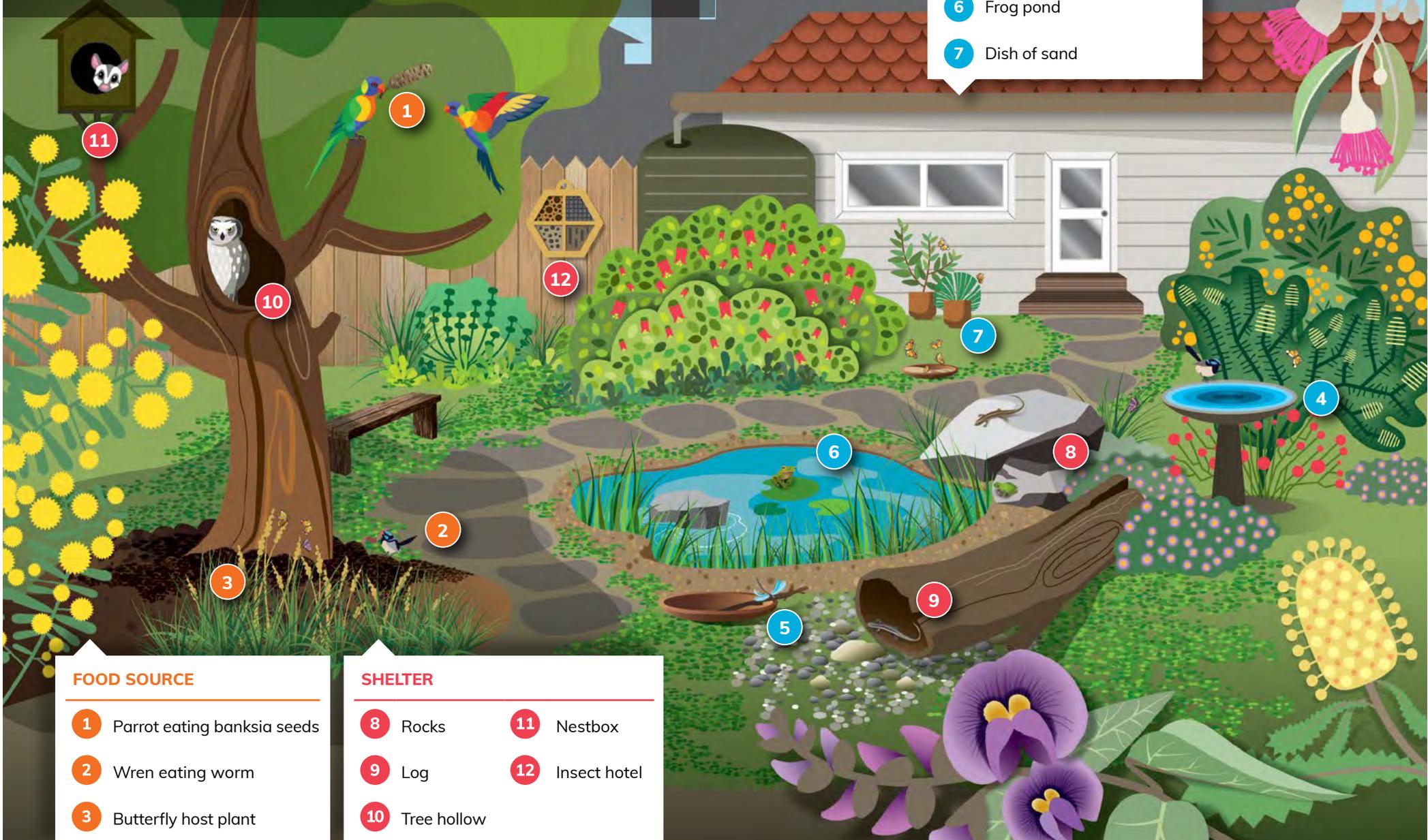


Rocks for a lizard lounge

Gardening with wildlife in mind

There are many elements you can include in your garden to attract wildlife. Every garden is part of the habitat 'big picture', so choose the elements that best suit your space.

- WATER**
- 4 Elevated birdbath
 - 5 Ground level dish of water
 - 6 Frog pond
 - 7 Dish of sand



- FOOD SOURCE**
- 1 Parrot eating banksia seeds
 - 2 Wren eating worm
 - 3 Butterfly host plant

- SHELTER**
- 8 Rocks
 - 9 Log
 - 10 Tree hollow
 - 11 Nestbox
 - 12 Insect hotel

Food source (See key elements image on pp 14-15)

1 Parts of a plant, such as nectar, pollen, fruit, seeds, leaves and roots provide food for many of our native animals. Dead plant material can also be a source of food for invertebrates.

2 Insects that live and feed on the plants, mulch and soil are an important food source for many of our birds, lizards, frogs and mammals.

Small lizards, frogs, small birds and mammals are a food source for reptiles and large carnivorous birds such as kookaburras, butcherbirds and owls.

Try to resist providing artificial food. Supplementary feeding can cause health issues and alter natural population balances.

Host plants

3 Some insects, such as butterflies, only lay their eggs on certain plants known as host plants.

To encourage butterflies to visit your garden, include host plants such as native grasses, legumes, sedges, wattles, daisies and herbs.

Water (See key elements image on pp 14-15)

A reliable water source, particularly in summer, will help attract wildlife to your garden. Regularly refresh the water to avoid disease or mosquitoes breeding.

4 A shallow birdbath on a pedestal next to a dense or prickly shrub will help protect birds from predators while they bathe and drink.

5 A shallow dish of water at ground level will provide a much-needed drink for echidnas and lizards on a hot day. Add some branches and rocks to enable safe access for invertebrates that cannot swim.

6 Frogs need a permanent or semi-permanent water source to keep their skin moist and provide opportunities to breed.

7 Butterflies love to gather on a wide dish of damp sand or a small puddle in the soil. They take in water, essential salts and minerals from the moist soil.



Red-rumped Parrots



Golden Whistler (male)



Garden Skink eating an insect



Hover Fly on Bulbine Lily



Echidna drinking from a shallow dish



New Holland Honeyeater at birdbath

Shelter (See key elements image on pp 14-15)

Native wildlife needs to find shelter from bad weather, predators and competitors. They need a refuge in which to build their homes and raise their young.

Grasses, climbers, dense and prickly shrubs and mature trees can provide protection for a large range of insect, reptile, frog, bird and mammal species.

Material such as leaf litter, sticks, bark, grasses and spider webs (for binding nests) are essential for birds to build their intricate nests to shelter their young. This material naturally builds up in a garden over time. Try to avoid 'cleaning up' so wildlife can use it.

Broad-leafed plants provide important protection from the sun, wind and rain for a multitude of insects such as butterflies and bees.

Small lizards, microbats and invertebrates shelter in crevices under bark.

Careful placement and partial burying of terracotta pots or ceramic pipes provides cool, damp shelter for frogs.

8 Logs on the ground provide shelter for small mammals, lizards, frogs and invertebrates.

Likewise, a small pile of rocks will provide shelter for lizards, frogs and invertebrates.

9 A rock or paver in a sunny spot will provide lizards and butterflies with a place to warm up in the morning.

The importance of tree hollows

10 Trees with hollows and the animals that depend on them are disappearing. Natural tree hollows are essential for the survival of many wildlife species. They provide refuge from the weather and predators, and safe sites for roosting and breeding. Destroying living or dead hollow-bearing trees displaces or kills wildlife dependant on those hollows.

Most species of eucalypts and other long-lived trees produce natural hollows, although it takes at least 80 years for these to develop. As old trees fall or are cleared, the loss of natural hollows has a critical impact on wildlife populations.

Try to avoid removing any established trees that contain hollows. They are essential for shelter and breeding

for many birds such as parrots, treecreepers, kingfishers and owls. Mammals such as microbats, gliders, antechinus and phascogales also need hollows to survive.

If you are concerned about the safety of a dead tree, consult an arborist to see if they can prune the tree for habitat or salvage any hollows. These hollows can then be relocated on your property.

11 An effective way of providing an alternative to a natural tree hollow is by installing a nest box. Be aware that different species of wildlife require different nest boxes to suit their needs. Seek advice on the type of nest box required, where to locate it and how to maintain your nest box.

Think about what native animals need to survive, and try to provide that in your garden.

Natural tree hollows are essential for the survival of many wildlife species



Striated Thornbill sheltering in a wattle



Common Ringtail Possum



Rainbow Lorikeet



Southern Boobook Owl

Build an insect hotel

Have fun with the kids and make an insect hotel!

12 You can use any untreated timber to make a frame. Add a simple roof overhang to keep the rain out. Avoid glues, paints and varnishes that may be toxic. Create interesting nooks and crannies with a variety of natural materials such as straw, hollow stems, pieces of wood, rolled up cardboard and drilled timber blocks.

If you are drilling holes in wood to create burrows, drill holes of varying size ranging from 3 to 10 mm wide and 70 to 150 mm deep. Make the holes smooth and blind (not right through the timber) and slope them slightly upward to help keep them dry.

Another idea is to fill a pipe with clay and add some holes, or simply bundle together untreated bamboo and see who moves in!

Locate your insect hotel somewhere sheltered from strong sun, rain and wind. Consider making a few insect hotels and placing them in different sections of your garden. For example, a high location with exposure to winter sun and a low, shady spot.

Create a sanctuary for insects



Timber insect hotel



Native Blue-banded Bee



Clay bee hotel

Garden design

Creating your indigenous garden

Whether you are designing a new garden or wanting to make an existing garden more enticing for wildlife, one of the best things you can do is observe your garden for a year. This will provide an accurate picture of light, shade and moisture variation through all the seasons.

Pay attention also to your local environment and what plants thrive under local climate and soil conditions.

Think about what wildlife you would like to attract and support in your garden. Refer to the key elements of a habitat garden on pages 12 to 20.



Local plants thrive in local conditions.

Site analysis

The starting point with garden design is to do a site analysis of your garden. Draw a rough mudmap of your site marking the areas exposed to the hot sun and northerly winds or heavily shaded sites. This will influence what plants are appropriate for different sections of your garden.

Step 1 - What exists?

Create a scale drawing of your property. Mark in the main structural and environmental features; fences, shed, outdoor taps, clothesline, patio or paved areas, rainwater tank, overhead powerlines, any views to be retained or areas to be screened.

Take note of the path of the sun and how it creates sunny and shady areas in summer and winter.

Some questions to ask, and challenges that can be addressed with good garden design, might be:

- Do paved areas near windows reflect the hot summer sun into your house?
- Are there areas that are in constant shade?
- Are there drainage issues causing the ground to be too wet or dry?



- Do you have an area where the wind funnels through?
- If you are unsure of the location of utility services on your property, visit Before You Dig Australia byda.com.au

Simple soil test

Time to get your hands dirty! This basic test will help you to determine if you have sandy, loam or clay soil. Be aware that your soil may vary across your garden, so it is a good idea to test from different areas.

1. Take enough soil to fit in the palm of your hand.
2. Wet the soil a little at a time until it is just damp.

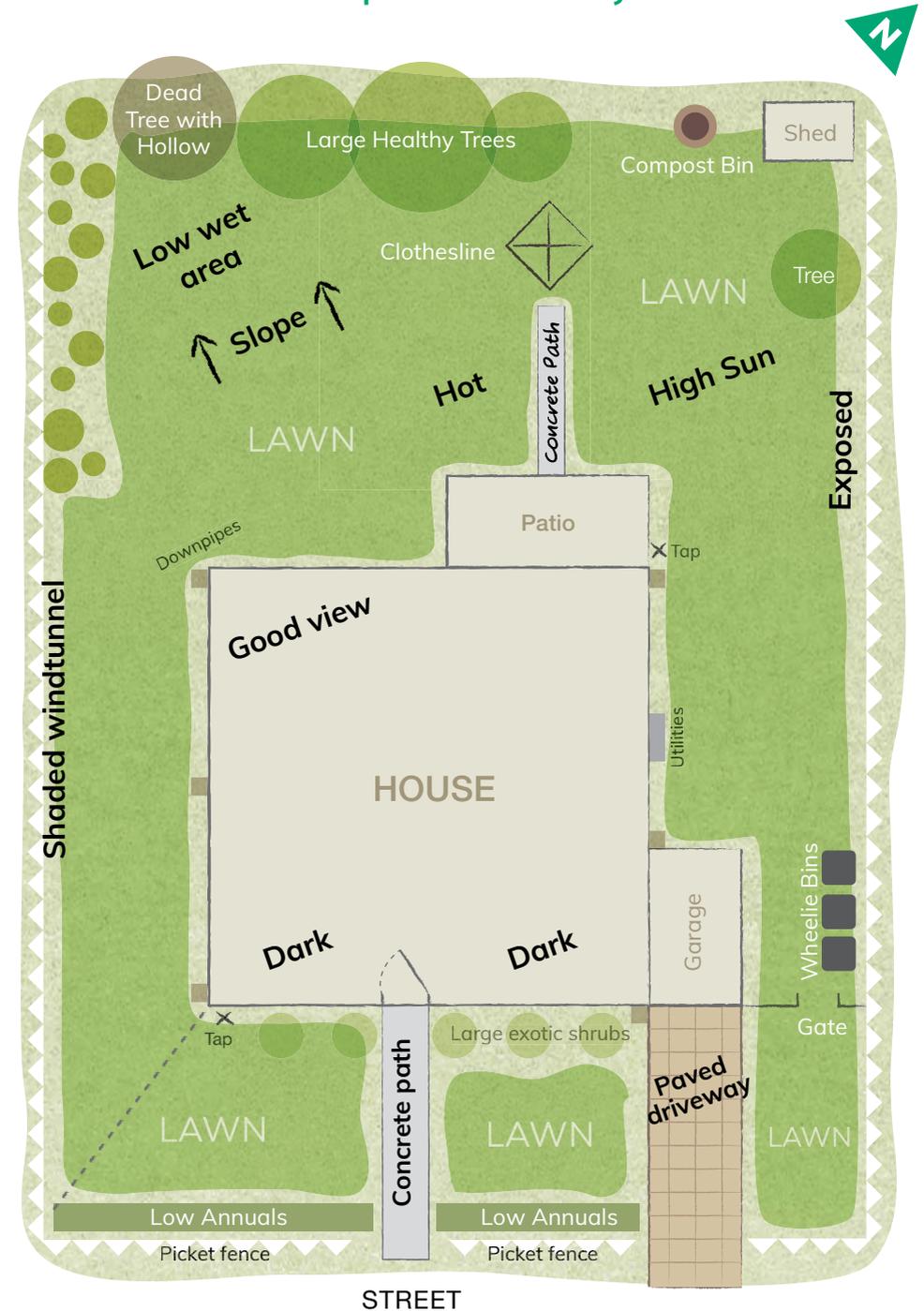
3. Knead it into a ball or sausage.

If your ball feels smooth and can be shaped like plasticine without breaking, your soil is clay.

If you can't mould your soil or it falls apart easily, you have sandy soil.

If your sample forms a spongy ball, but is a bit crumbly, then it is a loam soil.

Example of a site analysis



Step 2 - What are your needs?

Create a wish list and ask yourself what you need or want in your garden. Would you like:

- A kickabout space for the kids?
- An area for outdoor dining?
- A sunny spot close to the house for a herb garden?
- To attract certain wildlife or keep others coming back?
- A tree that provides shade in summer and lets the sun through in winter?
- A sunny spot for the compost bin?
- More screening for privacy?
- To reduce or remove lawn?
- A chicken run or pet enclosure?

Make a note of any initial work that would need to be done with each option e.g. garden bed edges curved out; relocate clothesline; break up concrete slab. Also note the structural elements of a habitat garden that you need e.g. a birdbath, log or rock in a sunny spot.

Step 3 - Look at your plants

It is important to work with your site. You don't need a complete garden makeover. Take stock of your garden as it is and ask:

- What are the existing plants in your garden?
- Are they indigenous, native or exotic?
- Are your plants grouped together according to their water and nutrient needs?
- Are there weed species that need to be replaced with a native alternative?
- What mature trees do you have in the upper layer?
- Are there any hollows?
- Is there room to nominate a space for a large tree that will have room to grow away from the house, any neighbouring properties or overhead powerlines?

Step 4 - What is your style?

Indigenous plants can be used to beautiful effect in almost any style of garden. Whether you prefer a formal, cottage, contemporary or bush garden, indigenous plants are suitable. Many can be hedged, grouped together in pots or grown as a beautiful feature such as a tree or sea of grasses or wildflowers.

Create a wish list

Cottage garden style

Attract birds and butterflies

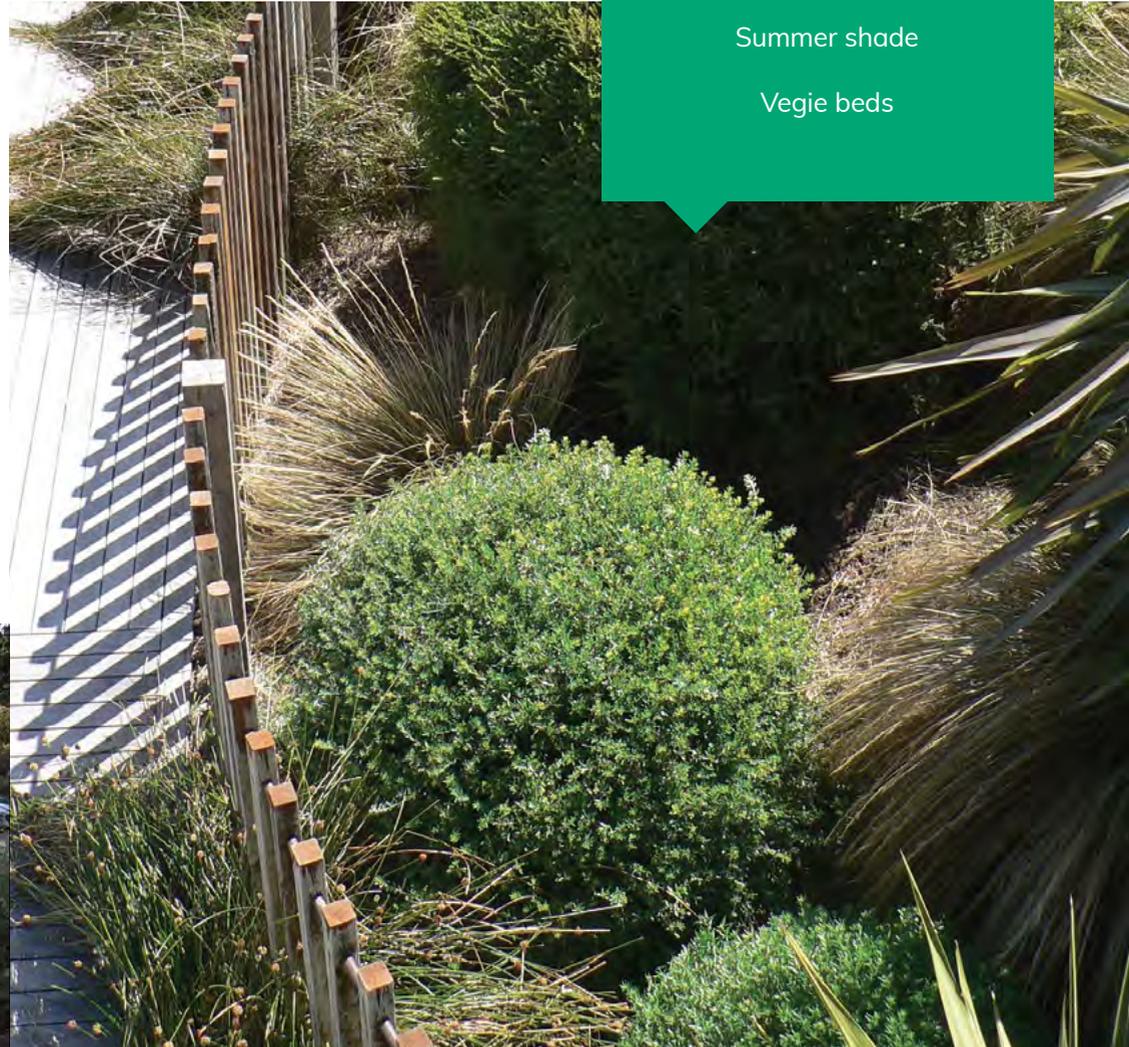
Space for kids

Privacy

Compost area

Summer shade

Vegie beds



Step 5 - The research

Find out what indigenous plants grow in your area and which ones you like the look of. There is a useful list on pages 31 to 40 of this booklet to get you started.

Head down to the local native nursery for further advice on which of these plants are suited to your site conditions and space, and what is available.

Use your research to make a list of the plants you want to create your garden.

Estimate the number of plants and the cost of purchase. Also estimate the cost of materials such as pavers, rainwater tanks and raised veggie beds if you need them.

Consider if you will need to hire help such as a plumber to install a rainwater tank, or a landscaper to build a

retaining wall. Due to cost and time you may need to investigate alternatives or complete your project in stages.

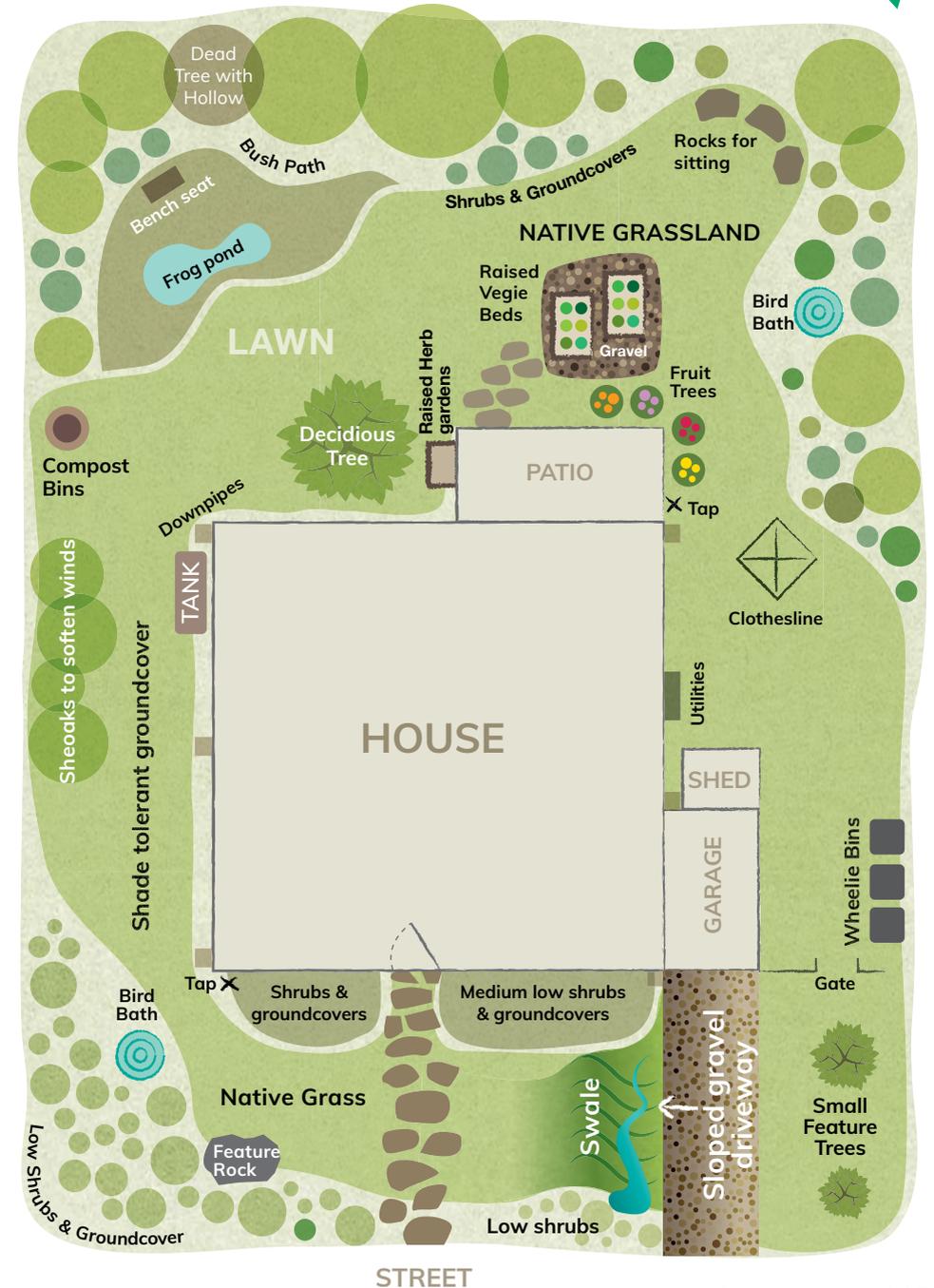
Step 6 - Develop a plan

Once you have decided what you want and what you can realistically manage, you can play with your garden plan, exploring different options. Tracing paper overlays can work well at this stage.

Decide what needs to be done first i.e. the big jobs such as removing weed trees or installing a rainwater tank. Then allocate the remainder of your plan to stages.

Focus on one area at a time so you are not overwhelmed. Remember, it doesn't all have to be done immediately. In fact it can be beneficial to complete changes over time, to avoid displacing any existing wildlife.

Example of a garden plan



Courtyard gardening

A courtyard garden can be a wonderful private retreat to relax or entertain. They are generally small spaces, and the following issues need to be considered when developing your courtyard garden.

- Courtyards often have limited access to sunlight. If this is the case, select shade tolerant plants or place pots on caddies (pot bases with wheels) that can be moved about easily.
- Courtyards tend to be paved and enclosed potentially creating quite hot conditions especially in summer. While plants will help to cool the area, make sure you include an efficient watering system as their water requirements will be high.
- Poor drainage and flooding can be problems with courtyards that are mainly paved surfaces. If this is the case, use container pots with saucers and don't overwater.
- Courtyard space can be quite limited. You can create an illusion of a larger space by using mirrors and layering plants. Think about using your vertical spaces by espaliering trees on a wall, install tiered shelving, vertical gardens, hanging baskets or window boxes.
- Courtyard gardens often contain a lot of pots. Containers look great when they are grouped together. To create a sense of space and depth select pots of different sizes and group them from smallest pot size at the front to larger pot size at the back.

Balcony gardening

Balconies offer a great space to relax and flex the green thumb. Typically, balcony gardens consist of pots or small, free-standing raised beds. Consider the following issues when designing your balcony garden.

- If you live in a flat or unit check to see if your body corporation has any specific rules relating to what you can put on your balcony.
- Avoid putting too many large pots on your balcony. Remember containers get even heavier when you water them. Secured hanging baskets, tiered shelving and window boxes are other options to include.
- Balconies can be quite exposed to high wind potentially resulting in pots toppling over or plants dehydrating. Select wind tolerant plants that don't grow too tall and avoid light plastic pots. You can also attach a screen to your balcony railing to reduce wind exposure.
- Select plants that will grow in the conditions of your balcony. If you have a south facing balcony you will need shade tolerant plants. North facing balconies will require sun tolerant plants. Most plant labels will indicate the sun/shade preference of a plant.
- Potted plants can dry out very quickly so consider self-watering pots or check regularly.
- Make sure excess water runoff is collected in pot saucers. Neighbours will not appreciate water cascading down from your balcony every time you water.
- Ensure pots cannot fall and cause safety issues or damage by securing them to your balcony.



Indigenous plants work just as well as exotic plants

Plants

Plants can be divided into three broad groups based on their origin.

Indigenous plants

Indigenous plants are the plants that occur naturally in a given location. These species are suited to the conditions within the local environment and are well-adapted to the soils, topography and climate of the local area.

Indigenous plants have also evolved alongside native wildlife, therefore providing the best possible food and shelter for native animals. A greater variety of indigenous plant species means more food and more diverse habitats for native wildlife.

Indigenous plants:

- are perfectly suited to our local soils and climate
- have greater resistance to disease
- require little maintenance to keep them looking healthy
- attract and provide food and shelter for local wildlife
- strengthen local wildlife corridors helping wildlife cope with climate change
- contribute to the preservation of Yarra's natural biodiversity
- reflect Yarra's natural character, preserving and enhancing a sense of local identity and place.

Native plants

Many nurseries sell 'native' plants. This refers to any Australian plant. Many native plants, such as grevilleas, correas and bottlebrushes, are excellent additions to a wildlife garden. Many native plants have similar growing requirements to indigenous plants and support local wildlife.



Native garden

Exotic plants

Plants such as lavenders, poppies and many more come from countries other than Australia. Provided they are not invasive, they can also support our local wildlife to some extent.



Exotic garden

Indigenous plant guide

This section features plants that are locally native in the City of Yarra. By planting these in your garden you will be supporting local biodiversity.

The icons below are matched with each plant to indicate the types of wildlife they may attract and the conditions they require.

Wildlife



Small birds such as wrens, finches, wagtails, pardalotes and thornbills



Honeyeaters such as spinebills, friarbirds, wattlebirds and honeyeaters



Parrots such as rosellas, lorikeets and cockatoos



Insect pollinators such as native bees, hover flies and native wasps



Butterflies such as swordtails and skippers, and moths such as loopers



Reptiles such as skinks, geckos and lizards



Mammals such as microbats, Grey-headed Flying-fox, possums, gliders and echidnas.

Plant conditions

Sun requirements



FULL SUN



PART SUN/
SHADE



SHADE

Water requirements



LOW



MEDIUM



HEAVY

Suitable for a pot



Please note: all plant sizes mentioned in this publication are approximate. Environmental conditions will influence the mature height and width of a plant.

Kidney Plant | *Dichondra repens*



10



- A creeping groundcover that forms a dense mat of leaves.
- Prefers moist, well-drained soil.
- An excellent lawn substitute in low traffic areas.

Purple Coral Pea | *Hardenbergia violacea*



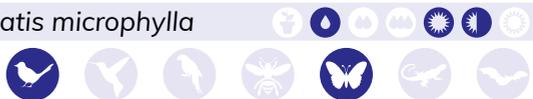
- An attractive fast-growing creeper that provides excellent protection for small birds.
- Can be trained on a trellis or over a retaining wall.
- Showy purple flowers from July to November.

Running Postman | *Kennedia prostrata*



- An attractive, trailing groundcover.
- Grows well in containers or hanging baskets.
- Showy flowers from August to November.
- Prefers dry, well-drained, gravelly soils.
- Provides shelter and food in the form of nectar, pollen, leaves and seed.

Small-leaved Clematis | *Clematis microphylla*



- A vigorous climber that provides excellent protection for small birds.
- Grows over shrubs and small trees to a height of 5m.
- Can be trained to cover a fence or trellis.
- Produces masses of fragrant, starry flowers from July to December.
- Attractive feathery seedheads after flowering.

Common Tussock-grass | *Poa labillardieri*



- A fast growing tussock that grows to 0.5–1m high and wide.
- Delicate flowerheads from October to February.
- Requires cutting back every few years to dethatch old growth.
- Prefers moist to slightly dry soils.

Common Wallaby-grass | *Rytidosperma caespitosa*



- Especially attractive when mass planted.
- Tussock grass that grows to 0.4–1m high and 40cm wide.
- Green to purplish leaves drying to straw coloured.
- Open flowerheads peak from September to December.

Kangaroo Grass | *Themeda triandra*



- An attractive plant, particularly when mass planted.
- Grows to 30cm–1m high and 20–60cm wide.
- Decorative flowerheads held above foliage from September to March.
- Will tolerate most soils but performs best in well-drained soils.

Silky Blue-grass | *Dichanthium sericeum*



- An attractive grass that grows to 80cm high and 20cm wide.
- Silky flowerheads from November to April.
- Self-seeds readily.
- Ideal for well-drained, heavy clay soils.
- Responds well to extra water in summer and a hard prune after flowering.

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Windmill Grass | *Chloris truncate*

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- An attractive grass with decorative seedheads.
- Grows to 15–45cm high.
- Umbrella-like purplish black spikes from November to June.
- Grows well in heavy clay soils.

Black-anther Flax-lily | *Dianella revoluta*

- Grows to 1m high and 2m wide.
- Blue star-shaped flowers from September to January.
- Flowers attract native Blue-banded Bees.
- Shiny blue berries follow flowering.
- Prefers well-drained sand and loam soil.

Blue Devil | *Eryngium ovinum*

- A very unusual and decorative plant.
- Grows to 10–60cm high and 30–50cm wide.
- Round flowerheads with rigid, sharply pointed blue to purple flowers.
- Flowers from November to February.
- Dies back to rootstock in autumn.

Bulbine Lily | *Bulbine bulbosa*

- An attractive plant, particularly when mass planted.
- Grows to 30cm high and wide.
- Masses of bright yellow flowers from September to January.
- Dies back to tuber during dormant periods.

Chocolate Lily | *Arthropium stictum*

- A rosette of grassy leaves 30–40cm high and wide.
- Chocolate-scented flowers from October to December.
- Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Dies back after flowering until the following autumn.

Common Everlasting | *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*

- Grows to 30cm high and 1–2m wide.
- Dense clusters of bright yellow flowerheads from September to February.
- Responds well to a hard prune after flowering.
- Well-drained sand and loam soils.

Cut-leaf Daisy | *Bracyschome mutlifida*

- Fast-growing plant with a long flowering period.
- Grows to 10–40cm high and 0.2–1m wide.
- Variable flower colour from mauve, pink or white.
- Flowers most of the year peaking in spring and summer.

Lemon Beauty-heads | *Calocephalus citreus*

- Grows to 20–50cm high and 0.3–1m wide.
- Silver-grey narrow leaves contrast with the flowers.
- Bright-yellow oblong flowerheads from October to February.
- Grows in well-drained clay soils.

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Native Violet | *Viola hederacea*



- A fast-growing groundcover with creeping stems.
- Ideal for moist, shady positions.
- Fragrant purple and white flowers most of the year, especially from June to March.
- Shelter for small lizards such as skinks.

Pale Flax-lily | *Dianella longifolia*



- Grows to 30–80cm high and 30–50cm wide.
- Fragrant, pale blue flowers from August to January.
- Flowers attract native Blue-banded Bees.
- Grows in well-drained soils.

Spiny-headed Mat-rush | *Lomandra longifolia*



- A fast-growing plant for difficult areas.
- Grows to 0.5–1m high and 0.5–1.2m wide.
- Clusters of yellow-purple flowers from September to December.
- Well-drained soils.
- An important food plant for the larvae of numerous butterflies.

Sticky Everlasting | *Xerochrysum viscosum*



- Grows to 20–90cm high and 30cm–1m wide.
- Showy, bright-yellow flowers from August to March.
- Well-drained soils.
- Pruning after flowering encourages bushiness.

Tufted Bluebell | *Wahlenbergia capillaris*



- Grows to 20–90cm high and 30cm–1m wide.
- Showy, bright-yellow flowers from August to March.
- Well-drained soils.
- Pruning after flowering encourages bushiness.

Austral Indigo | *Indigofera australis*



- An attractive, fast-growing shrub.
- Grows to 1–2m high and wide.
- Beautiful mauve flowers from September to December.
- Adaptable, but prefers a sheltered position in dry, well-drained soils.
- Suitable for sandy soils.

Gold Dust Wattle | *Acacia acinacea*



- A fine-leaved wattle with gently arching stems.
- Grows to 0.5–2.5m high and 2–4m wide.
- Profusion of flowers from August to November.
- Well-drained soils.

Hop Goodenia | *Goodenia ovata*



- A fast-growing shrub.
- Responds well to pruning to maintain a compact form.
- Grows to 2m high and wide.
- Attractive yellow flowers from August to February.

Rock correa | *Correa glabra*



- A hardy shrub that grows to 1–3m high and wide.
- Bell-like flowers appearing from February to September.
- Grows in dry, well-drained soils.
- Responds well to hard pruning after flowering.

Rosemary Grevillea | *Grevillea rosmarinifolia*



- Dense growth habit and stiff foliage provides excellent bird habitat.
- Grows to 30cm–2m high and wide.
- Prolific red and white flowers peaking from June to September.
- Well-drained soils.

Sweet Bursaria | *Bursaria spinosa*



- Slow-growing tree to 2–6m high and 2–3m wide.
- Masses of fragrant flowers from October to February.
- Prefers dry, well-drained soils.
- Can be pruned for hedging.

Tree Violet | *Melicytus dentata*



- Grows to 2–4m high and 1–2.5m wide.
- Covered in scented, bell-shaped flowers from September to November.
- Followed by violet-coloured berries.
- Requires well-drained soils and responds to extra watering.

Drizzling Sheoak | *Allocasuarina verticillata*



- Fast-growing and graceful tree.
- Grows to 4–11m high and 3–6m wide.
- Male flowers from March to December produce a golden effect.
- Drought tolerant once established.

Lightwood | *Acacia implexa*



- Grows to 5–15m high and 4–7m wide.
- Cream flowers from October to November.
- Thrives in dry, sunny spots with shallow soil.
- Will also tolerate moist, well-drained soil types.

Silver Banksia | *Banksia marginata*



- Striking feature tree or screening plant.
- Grows to 1–6m high and 1–4m wide.
- Yellow flower cones from February to June.
- Prefers well-drained soils but tolerates wet conditions.

Yellow Box | *Eucalyptus melliodora*



- An attractive long-lived tree that supports multiple wildlife.
- Grows to 10–30m high and 8–25m wide.
- Perfumed, cream flowers from September-February.
- Well-drained, deep soils.

Aquatic plants

Aquatic and semi-aquatic indigenous plants have evolved to survive in the fluctuating conditions of our wetlands and waterways.

Aquatic plants require their roots to be fully submerged in water, while semi-aquatic plants typically grow in both shallow water and moist soil.

Aquatic and semi-aquatic plants can be utilized to great effect in a wildlife garden to support insects such as dragonflies, birds and frogs.

They can be grown in ceramic pots of water and located in a courtyard, balcony or garden bed.

Alternatively, a small pond in your garden creates a delightful place to relax and watch the damselflies darting over the surface. You can buy ready-made ponds or dig your own and line it with heavy-duty pond lining.

Semi-aquatic plants such as Knobby Club-rush and Common Sedge are also ideal to plant in a section of your garden with damp soil.

Indigenous aquatic and semi-aquatic plants

Common Sedge	<i>Carex tereticaulis</i>	Semi-aquatic
Knobby Club-rush	<i>Ficinia nodosa</i>	Semi-aquatic
Marsh Club-rush	<i>Bolboschoenus medianus</i>	Semi-aquatic
River Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus inundates</i>	Semi-aquatic
River Club-rush	<i>Schoenoplectus validus</i>	Aquatic
Slender Knotweed	<i>Persecaria decipiens</i>	Aquatic & Semi-aquatic
Swamp Crassula	<i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Aquatic & Semi-aquatic
Tall Spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis sphacelate</i>	Aquatic
Water Milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum crispatum</i>	Aquatic
Water Plantain	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	Aquatic
Water-ribbon	<i>Triglochin procera</i>	Aquatic



Water-ribbon



Slender Knotweed



River Buttercup

Planting and maintenance

Garden maintenance keeps your garden looking fresh and healthy. It is an opportunity to check your plant health and spot any pest infestations before they become a major issue. Prune back leggy foliage or remove any branches that may become a safety hazard. Garden maintenance is a healthy family activity and a perfect opportunity to spy on garden critters.



Cut back grasses and flowers after flowering to promote growth.

Plant selection

Success in the garden starts with choosing the right plant for the right spot.

To find a plant to suit a certain location, observe the conditions of the site including soil, moisture and sunlight, and match these with the requirements of the plant.

Consider the potential size of the plant when fully grown. Plant labels and nursery staff can assist you with selecting suitable plants.

Also consider how plants may interact with each other, especially the influence large trees may have on your garden.

For example, if large trees aren't carefully selected and positioned, they may shade out sun-loving plants or block views. Vigorous roots may also impact nearby buildings or plumbing, and falling leaves can block gutters.



Tubestock

When selecting plants from a nursery check that the plant is healthy.

- Start with the foliage and ensure the plant has plenty of new green growth. Avoid plants with pale, yellowing or wilting leaves as these can be a sign of poor health.
- Check the undersides of leaves as well as the stem joints for insect pests and signs of disease such as pale or dark spots, webs, chewed leaves or lesions on the stem.
- Select plants that have compact, bushy growth. Long leggy growth often indicates a plant grown in less than ideal conditions.
- Plants that have roots growing out of the drainage holes or on top of the potting soil can be root bound and may be too stressed to thrive in your garden. Conversely, if a plant doesn't have many roots or is too small, it may need more time to grow to become garden-worthy.
- Remember that plants in larger pots will not necessarily give you better results. Tubestock (plants in 12cm tall plastic tubes) will generally catch up with and outgrow larger, more mature stock within a few years. They are easier to establish in difficult sites and more cost effective.

Site preparation

The success of your planting will be enhanced if your site is well prepared.

Weeds

Weeds should be controlled prior to planting to reduce competition and post-planting maintenance.

Hand weed any pest plants from the site. Avoid spraying the weeds with chemicals as they can build up in the soil and be harmful to soil organisms and all wildlife within the food chain.

When weeding, try to minimise disturbance to the soil as much as possible. Tilling or excessive digging can destroy the important fungi in the soil which are crucial to the overall health of your garden and plants.

For information on the identification and control of weeds in the City of Yarra download the booklet *Removing Weeds in Yarra and Planting Indigenous Alternatives* from yarracity.vic.gov.au and search 'weeds'.

Pre-planting mulch

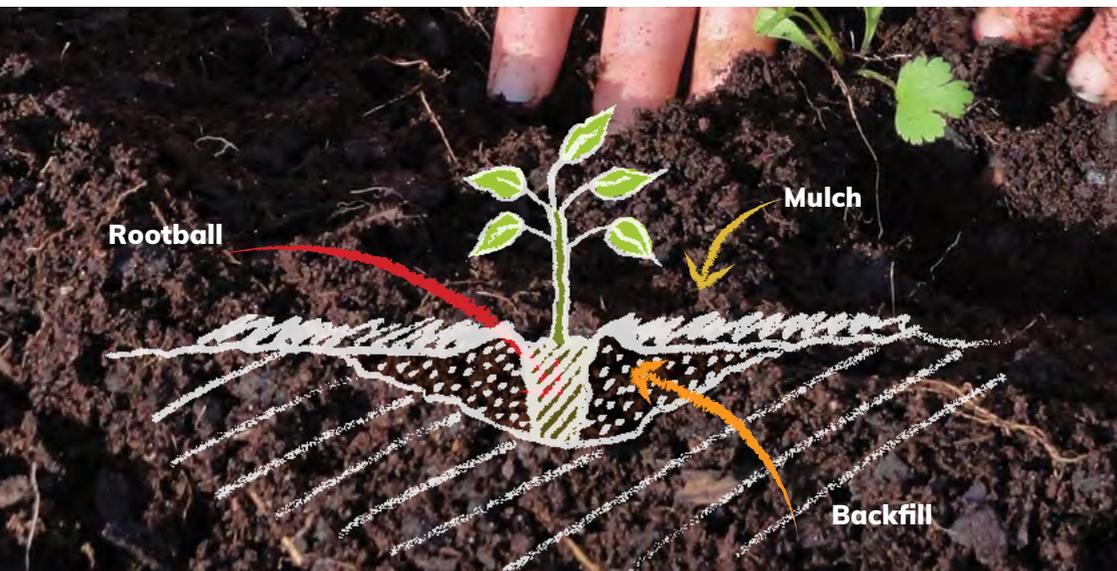
Mulch is an important part of the garden because it reduces weed growth, adds nutrients to the soil and helps hold water in the soil. Over time it will improve soil structure and encourage beneficial soil organisms such as earthworms.

Bush mulch is ideal for an indigenous garden. When spread on your garden it will create a natural leaf litter look and provide habitat for insects and lizards to shelter and feed.

Water your soil before laying mulch. Spread your mulch to a depth of around 10cm.



Planting out



1. Give your potted plant a good soak in a bucket of water prior to planting.
2. Pull back the mulch from where you want to plant.
3. Dig a sloping, shallow hole 2 to 3 times the width of the root ball and as deep as the root ball.
4. Fill the hole with water and allow it to drain before planting.
5. Upend your pot. Any roots protruding through the bottom can be pruned before removing from the pot. To remove the plant from the pot, hold it upside down and gently tap it out of the pot. Note, there is generally no need to tease or separate the root ball unless the plant is severely root bound. It is better not to disturb the root system.
6. Place the plant in the hole so that the top of the root ball is flush with the surface level or even slightly lower.
7. Backfill loose soil around the plant and press down firmly.
8. Build a circle of raised soil around the edge of the planting hole to form a basin to catch and hold water.
9. Water thoroughly to settle the soil around the plant.
10. Mulch up to the edge of the root ball. Do not mulch against the stem as this may cause collar rot.

Ongoing maintenance

Gardens planted with indigenous plants generally require less maintenance than gardens planted with introduced plants.

Mulch

Top up your mulch as it breaks down. Remember not to mulch right up to the stem of your plants as this can cause diseases such as collar rot.

Watering

Indigenous plants generally need less water than introduced plants once they are established, but will need regular watering while they are young.

Water in the evening or early morning to prevent water evaporating before it reaches your plant roots.

Give your plants a slow, deep water at a rate that the soil can absorb the water.

Tree Guards

Protect young plants as they grow if they are at risk of being eaten or trodden on. Remove the tree guard and stakes once the plant has become established.

Pruning

Tip pruning involves pinching out the growing shoots forcing the plant to make new growth further back along the branch. This increases the number of flowers, makes the plant bushy and prevents it from becoming straggly. Tip pruning is best done after flowering and can be started when the plant is young.

If you don't have the patience for tip pruning, plants can also be cut back by about a third of their new growth in order to shape them.

Check with your local nursery for the recommended pruning of the plants you buy.

Always ensure your cutting tools are sharp to prevent tearing the bark.

Clean your tool blades by wiping them with eucalyptus oil before moving between plants to prevent potentially spreading disease.



Tree guard



Pruned Dusty Miller

Natural pest control

Gardening with indigenous plants is a great reason to reduce your use of herbicides, pesticides and rodenticides. By growing a good diversity of plants and using non-chemical pest control you can usually control outbreaks of pests in your garden, and create healthier habitat.

To avoid issues

- Check your garden regularly for pests.
- Make sure plants are not planted too close together so there is good ventilation to prevent fungal diseases.
- Hand remove weeds when they are small.
- Attract natural predators to your garden. Create the right habitat and your garden will be jumping with ladybeetles and small birds feasting on garden pests.
- Attracting owls is a great natural way to manage pest rodents.



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Common Spotted Ladybird eating aphids

Some home remedies

To deter **snails and slugs** there are a number of techniques to try.

- Place a ring of crushed eggshell, sawdust or coffee grounds around your plants.
- Provide safe accommodation for hungry blue-tongued lizards.
- After dark, don your gloves and a torch and handpick them off your plants.
- Snails and slugs, especially after rain, will also tend to gather under an upturned pot for easy collection.

If **grasshoppers** are a problem, consider making a casuarina tea. Simmer 60 grams of dried casuarina needles for 20 minutes in water. Cool, strain and dilute 1 part concentrate to 40 parts of water. Spray directly onto foliage.

Garlic spray has broad application as an antifungal agent and as a repellent of **soft-bodied insects**. To make a garlic spray, add 2 tablespoons of crushed garlic to 1 litre of water. Let it stand overnight, strain and spray.

A tablespoon of molasses dissolved in 1 litre of warm water with a teaspoon of pure liquid soap is an effective spray for **caterpillars and other chewing pests**. Apply regularly to the leaves.

Sustainable products

Buying furniture, pots, timber and pebbles for the garden can have an impact on the natural environment. For example, River Red Gum trees grow in woodlands which are part of an intricate ecosystem that supports a wealth of native wildlife. They are a slow-growing tree that lives for more than 500 years. Avoiding Red Gum products, such as sleepers, tomato stakes and posts will help preserve our valuable River Red Gum. Consider the following choices when sourcing product for your garden.

Use natural products

- Collect seeds and cuttings from your garden to propagate new plants.
- Use fallen branches and trees on your property as garden borders or seats.

Reuse materials

- Reuse pavers, bricks, pots, garden stakes and guards.
- Repurpose materials to create bird baths and garden art.

Source recycled and second hand materials

- Buy second hand garden furniture, pots and art.
- Consider decking, posts, sleepers and stakes made from waste timber or recycled plastic.

Buy sustainably sourced new products

- If you cannot source recycled timber buy Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified timbers.
- Use small amounts of quarried rocks that have been tumbled rather than river stones.
- Buy locally produced gas-fired ceramic pots that have a lower environmental impact compared to imported pots that have been wood or coal fired.
- Consider solar pumps for garden water features.

Never take material from the bush, beach or natural environment

- Removing natural material from the environment alters the habitat for numerous animals.



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Birdbath made from recycled metal



Repurposed cake tin and wood

Unwanted plants

While introduced or 'exotic' plants can be useful for shade, structure, colour and interest in the garden, they also make up the vast majority of Australia's invasive weeds, including many aquatic and semi aquatic plants used in ponds and aquariums.

Some Australian plants are also environmental weeds and should be avoided. For example Bluebell Creeper (*Billardiera heterophylla*) from Western Australia was sold as a popular native plant that is now aggressively invading bushland around Victoria.

Weeds are a problem because they out-compete indigenous plants for light, water and nutrients. In a short period of time they can change local ecosystems so that the habitat no longer supports native wildlife. Weed seeds and cuttings can be

carried many kilometres by water, wind, birds, other animals, vehicles and on clothing. Weeds also spread from dumped garden waste in bushland and waterways.

To the right are examples of a few garden plants that have become weeds in the City of Yarra.

For information on the identification and control of weeds in the City of Yarra download the booklet **Removing Weeds in Yarra and Planting Indigenous Alternatives** from yarracity.vic.gov.au and search 'weeds'.

Disposal of weeds

When removing weeds be sure to target their removal BEFORE they set seed. This is particularly important with grass species. Seek advice on how to best remove problem weeds.

Once you have removed a weed from your garden the question then becomes, how do you safely dispose of the plant material so that it does not spread into natural areas?

There are a number of options from using your kerbside green waste bin to recycling your weed material at home.

Compost: you can add non-seed bearing plant material to your compost bin. In many situations compost is simply not hot enough to destroy weed seeds.

Weed Tea: collect weeds in a mesh bag before they set seed and submerge them in a bucket of water. Leave your 'tea' to brew for 5 to 6 weeks or until your weeds have turned into a brown sledge. Remove your 'teabag' and compost. Dilute one part tea to ten parts water to create an excellent fertiliser for your plants.

Solarisation: pile weeds up in a sunny spot and cover them with secured black plastic, then dispose in your green waste bin or compost.

Weed: characteristics, dispersal and removal

African Lily | *Agapanthus* spp.



- Spread by seed and dumped garden waste.
- Hand-weed small plants.
- Cut off flower heads before they set seed.
- Dig out large plants including root mass.

Blue and Lesser Periwinkle | *Vinca* spp.



- Spread by plant parts taking root.
- All parts of the plant must be removed including leaves, stems and roots.

English Ivy | *Hedera helix*



- Seeds spread by birds and foxes.
- Root fragments reshoot.
- Hand-weed small plants including roots.
- Slash/brush-cut larger plants before they seed.

Fountain Grass | *Cenchrus setaceus*



- Forms dense stands in the understorey that can exclude all other plants.
- This species reproduces by seed.
- Small infestations can be dug out.

Madeira Vine | *Anredera cordifolia*



- Spread by plant parts taking root.
- All parts of the plant must be removed including leaves, stems and roots.

Replacement

Black-anther Flax-lily *Dianella revoluta*



Nodding Saltbush *Einadia nutans*



Kidney Plant *Dichondra repens*



Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra*



Mountain Clematis *Clematis aristata*



Weed: characteristics, dispersal and removal

Mother of Millions | *Bryophyllum* spp.



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- A new emerging weed in Yarra.
- It is poisonous to people and household pets, with dogs being particularly susceptible.
- Spread by seed or fragments.
- Hand remove and bag.

Moth Plant | *Araujia sericifera*



- Seed spread by wildlife, machinery and on clothing.
- Hand remove small plants.
- Cut larger vines and dig out the roots.

Pittosporum | *Pittosporum* spp.



- Seed spread by birds and animals.
- Hand remove small plants.
- Dig out larger plants.

Purple Morning Glory | *Ipomoea indica*



- Spread by plant parts taking root.
- Hand remove small infestation.
- Slash/brush-cut large plants before they seed.

Wandering Trad | *Tradescantia* spp.



- Spread by plant parts taking root and seed dispersal.
- Remove whole plant including roots.

Replacement

Sticky Everlasting
Xerochrysum viscosum



Purple Coral Pea
Hardenbergia violacea



Lightwood
Acacia implexa



Small-leaved Clematis
Clematis microphylla



Running Postman
Kennedia prostrata



Living with wildlife

Creating a wildlife-friendly garden supports a multitude of native wildlife that is often under pressure to survive. Occasionally we encounter a few challenges with wildlife in our gardens that can usually be managed.

Avoid supplementary feeding

Tempting as it may be to put out seed for parrots, meat for magpies or nectar for honeyeaters, you may be causing them more harm than good.

Feeding wildlife can:

- Cause dependency, health problems and malnutrition
- increase the spread of diseases from unclean feeding stations and close contact amongst populations
- attract predators like snakes, cats and other carnivores
- disrupt natural population balances.

Rather than artificially feeding wildlife, plant lots of food-producing native plants and provide a good supply of clean, fresh water.

Deter pest birds

Introduced pest birds such as Common Myna are a threat to native birds due to their aggressive territorial behaviour. This includes competing for food, evicting native birds from nesting sites and killing chicks and eggs. They are also known to carry parasites and diseases that can spread to native birds.

Common Myna love nothing more than an easy feed. You can discourage them if you:

- Feed pets indoors or don't leave food in their bowl
- ensure compost bins and rubbish bins are covered
- block holes in roofs and eaves once you've ensured they aren't already occupied.



Rainbow Lorikeet



Common Myna

Netting

Tree netting is a popular way to protect fruit from wildlife, particularly in urban areas, but the wrong type of netting can be deadly. Hungry animals are easily caught in 'bird netting'.

Consider protecting your individual fruit with commercial fruit protection bags or plastic garden pots rather than netting the whole tree.

Choose fruit tree varieties that are easy to protect, prune and harvest.

If you use tree netting:

- choose a mesh size less than 5mm x 5mm. As a rough guide, if you can insert your finger through the netting it is capable of trapping wildlife
- ensure your netting is securely fixed to the ground or tied around the base of your tree above ground level
- remove nets when they are not required e.g. after fruiting.

Net disposal

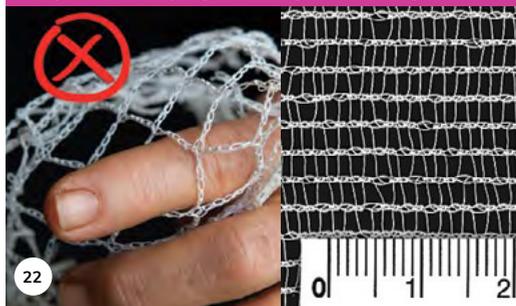
Like ghostnets in the ocean, unwanted netting can continue to maim and kill. Ensure that discarded netting cannot become a hazard to wildlife.

For more information visit wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/netting



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Grey-headed Flying-fox caught in netting



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Finger test



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Securely netted fruit tree

Rodent management

Rats and mice are common wherever humans live. Often our response is to lay rodent bait and hope they disappear. Unfortunately this releases a very toxic poison into the local ecosystem that potentially impacts wildlife.

There are two main types of rodent poison. Most commonly used are Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs). These are so poisonous that a single feed is lethal, but it can take days to affect the rodent. Before the poison takes effect the rodent can still be active and ingest more bait. This means the rodent can be eaten by native wildlife like owls, magpies, eagles and even family pets, and be highly poisonous to that animal. This causes secondary poisoning and can result in death.

The other type, First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs), are effective and break down quicker, posing less risk to pets and native wildlife. Read the labels on any poisons you buy and make the change to FGARs by looking for active constituents like Warfarin and Coumatetralyl, leaving SGARs on the shelf.

You can help our native wildlife

Prevention is a safe, effective rodent control option that can help our native wildlife. If you think about why rodents are attracted to your garden, they are usually seeking food, water or shelter, so reducing your property's capacity to support these needs is the best way to discourage them.

- Pick-up fallen fruit in the garden.
- Remove access to pet food by using containers and cleaning feed areas.
- Reduce shelter opportunities by sealing cavity access and rodent proofing outdoor structures.
- Cut and trim vegetation around buildings to prevent access.

Be careful - rodents are not all bad.

Are your rodents actually the bad ones? We have 60 native species of rodents in Australia, like the water rat and bush rat, that are commonly mistaken for pest rodents.

Native species are protected under the Commonwealth and State legislation including the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, *Wildlife Act 1975* and *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, so always try to identify your rodent.

Try to use trapping techniques, like cage traps or electric traps, that are unlikely to harm these native animals.



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Barn Owl eating a mouse

Pet management

Domestic cats and dogs are a significant threat to native wildlife. To protect wildlife pets should be confined to their property and under effective control at all times.

In addition to this you can further safeguard native wildlife and your pets by bringing them inside at night which allows wildlife to move safely through suburban areas.

Even the best-fed cats are a threat to wildlife. Hunting is instinctive and allowing your cat unsupervised access outside poses a risk to wildlife and to their own safety.

Indoor cats live much longer than those allowed to roam as they are protected from fights with other cats or dogs, car accidents, getting lost or catching diseases. You can care for your cat by keeping them inside your home, providing enrichment like toys and games, and creating a cat run to allow safe time outside.

Dogs need a good walk every day. Always ensure your dog is on a leash and only let them run at an off-leash park in the City of Yarra. For details visit yarracity.vic.gov.au/dogparks



Fence-top rollers to stop dogs climbing



Cat enclosure attached to the house

A number of wildlife friendly management options exist including:

- dog (and cat) proof fencing - modifying existing fencing to make it pet proof, giving your animal access to either part or all of your backyard
- cat enclosures, either free standing or attached to another structure (house or shed).

Vehicle collisions

Wildlife vehicle collisions cause the death and injury of many native animals.

Reducing your driving speed at dawn, dusk and night time will give you more time to spot wildlife and allow them to move off the road.

Sick or injured wildlife

If you find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, follow these steps to ensure the animal gets the correct care.

1. Put your own safety first – remove yourself from any danger and be aware of your surroundings. Be particularly careful on busy roads.
2. Call the **Wildlife Victoria on (03) 8400 7300** for advice. Sometimes wildlife doesn't need help, fledgling birds in particular can appear hurt but this stage is natural.
3. If possible and safe to do so, approach with care and remove threats to the animal.
4. Pick the animal up using a towel or blanket, put it in a ventilated box, then secure the box and keep it in a warm, dark and quiet place.
5. If you aren't confident or it is unsafe to complete a rescue, wherever possible, monitor the animal and wait for an experienced/qualified person to arrive.
6. If the animal has died, and it is safe to do so, move the body well away from the road and check its pouch for live young.

Lighting

Many of our native wildlife from possums, owls, moths, bats and invertebrates are nocturnal. While artificial light helps humans move and travel safely at night, inappropriate, excessive or poorly designed light can disrupt animal behaviour and affect their health.

Light pollution can mimic, mask or confuse natural light signals. This can result in wildlife experiencing:

- disrupted activity and breeding
- disturbed sleep and wake rhythms
- disorientation and poor navigation
- attraction to artificial lights
- encounters with new predators
- reduced survival and reproduction.

To reduce light pollution in your garden:

- light only the area needed
- use low-intensity lighting and keep it close to the ground
- use non-reflective, dark-coloured surfaces near light fixtures
- Use amber lights rather than white light
- install sensor lights
- close curtains when using lights inside.



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Powerful Owl

Other resources

Websites

Backyard Buddies
backyardbuddies.org.au

Birds in Backyards
birdsinboxyards.net

BirdLife Australia
birdlife.org.au

Gardens for Wildlife Victoria
gardensforwildlifelifevictoria.com

Melbourne Water
melbournewater.com.au

Sustainable Gardening Australia
sgaonline.org.au

Australian Association
of Bush Regenerators
www.aabr.org.au

Australian Plant Society, Victoria
apsvic.org.au

Weeds Australia
weeds.org.au

Wildlife Victoria
wildlifelifevictoria.org.au

Nurseries

Nangak Tamboree
Wildlife Sanctuary
latrobe.edu.au/wildlife

VINC
Yarra Bend Park
vinc.net.au

CERES
Cnr. Roberts and Stewart Streets
Brunswick East
ceres.org.au

APPS

Aussie Bird Count

iNaturalist

Smart Bird ID

Frog Census melbourne

Frog ID

Get involved

For further information on Yarra's
community environmental groups
visit: yarracity.com/biodiversity

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1. Neville Bartlett,
Eastern Yellow Robin
2. Ian Moodie, Striped Marsh Frog
3. Ian Moodie, Gang-gang Cockatoos
4. Neville Bartlett,
Red-rumped Parrot
5. Minx97, Garden Skink eating
an insect, inaturalist.ala.org.au
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6. jib-tassie, Echidna drinking from
a shallow dish,
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Honeyeaters at birdbath,
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17. Elaine Shallue, Common Spotted
Ladybird eating aphids
18. Lisette Salmon, Birdbath made
from recycled metal
19. Craig Peter, Fountain Grass,
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inaturalist.ala.org.au
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21. Wildlife Friendly Fencing, Grey
headed Flying-fox caught in
netting
22. Wildlife Friendly Fencing,
Finger test
23. Wildlife Friendly Fencing,
Securely netted fruit tree
24. Robert957, Barn Owl eating a
mouse, inaturalist.ala.org.au
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25. Nick Bradsworth, Powerful Owl

Gardens for Wildlife



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National relay Service

TTY 133 677 then (03) 9205 5055

Languages

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العربية	9280 1930	Ελληνικά	9280 1934	Español	9280 1935
		Other	9280 1940		