Live Local
Plant Local
a guide to native plants
in North Sydney
Indigenous species that make ideal garden plants

We can preserve and recreate some of North Sydney’s unique native vegetation in our gardens by planting locally indigenous species. Many native species are becoming rare and our bushland is under threat from fragmentation, degradation, and the introduction of exotic species. Planting locally not only benefits the environment and native fauna, but is also beneficial to you, as these species require little watering, fertilising and maintenance.

The selection of 30 indigenous species over the next few pages make ideal garden plants because they are hardy, attractive, suitable for a variety of conditions and are easy to maintain.

Key for wildlife-attracting symbols

- Possum
- Birds
- Lizard
- Insect/Butterfly
- Frog
Ground Covers

Mat Rush
- *Lomandra longifolia*
- Flowers Sep-Nov
- Strappy grass to 1m tall
- Full Sun/Semi Shade

Native Geranium
- *Pelargonium australe*
- Flowers Dec-Feb
- Spreading herb to 40cm tall
- Full Sun

White Root
- *Pratia purpurascens*
- Flowers Sep-Jan
- Groundcover
- Semi Sun

Knobby Club Rush
- *Ficinia nodosa*
- Spikelets Oct-Feb
- Erect sedge to 70cm tall
- Full Sun/Semi Shade

Blue Flax Lily
- *Dianella caerulea*
- Flowers Sep-Nov
- Strappy flax-like plant to 80cm tall
- Full Sun/Semi Shade/Shade

Native Violet
- *Viola hederacea*
- Flowers all year
- Ground Cover
- Moist, Shade
Native Grasses

Kangaroo Grass
• *Themeda australis*  
  • Clumping grass to 1m tall  
  • Spikelets Sep-Mar  
  • Full Sun/Semi Shade

Native Tussock Grass/Poa
• *Poa affinis*  
  • Tussock-forming grass to 1m tall  
  • Spikelets Oct-Feb  
  • Full Sun/Semi Shade

Blady Grass
• *Imperata cylindrica*  
  • Spreading grass to 1m tall  
  • Spikelets Dec-Feb  
  • Full Sun  
  **NOTE:** spreads easily, root barrier may be used to contain growth.

Climbers and Vines

Golden Guinea Flower
• *Hibbertia scandens*  
  • Scrambling Vine  
  • Flowers Sep-Jan  
  • Full Sun/Semi Shade

False Sarsparilla/Hardenbergia
• *Hardenbergia violacea*  
  • Scrambler or Twiner  
  • Flowers Sep-Oct  
  • Full Sun

Old Mans Beard/Travellers Joy
• *Clematis aristata*  
  • Vigorous twiner  
  • Flowers Oct-Nov  
  • Semi Shade
Small Shrubs

Red Spider Flower
- *Grevillea speciosa*
- Flowers Aug-Nov
- To 2m tall
- Full Sun

White Spider Flower
- *Grevillea linearifolia*
- Flowers July-Oct
- To 2m tall
- Semi Shade

Narrow-leaved Bottlebrush
- *Callistemon linearis*
- Flowers Sep-Nov
- From 1.5 to 2m tall
- Full Sun

Handsome Flat-pea
- *Platylodium formosum*
- Flowers Sep-Nov
- To 1m tall
- Semi Shade

Prickly Moses
- *Acacia ulicifolia*
- Flowers Apr-Oct
- To 1m tall
- Full Sun/Semi Shade

Native Parsnip
- *Platysace lanceolata*
- Flowers Sep-Mar
- From 1 to 1.5m tall
- Semi Shade
Tall Shrubs

Grey Spider Flower
- *Grevillea buxifolia*
- To 1.5m tall
- Flowers Aug-Apr
- Full Sun

Coastal Rosemary
- *Westringia fruticosa*
- Up to 2m tall
- Flowers most of the year
- Full Sun

Pink Crowea
- *Crowea saligna*
- To 1m tall
- Flowers Jan-Jun
- Semi Shade

Heath Banksia
- *Banksia ericifolia*
- From 2 to 5m tall
- Flowers Apr-Aug
- Full Sun

Large-leaf Bush-pea
- *Pultenaea daphnoides*
- From 2 to 3m tall
- Flowers Aug-Nov
- Semi Shade

Bushy Needlebush
- *Hakea sericea*
- From 2 to 3m tall
- Flowers Jun-Sep
- Full Sun
Rusty Pomaderris
- *Pomaderris ferruginea*
- Flowers Sep-Oct
- Up to 4m tall
- Semi Shade

Old Man Banksia
- *Banksia serrata*
- Flowers Dec-Mar
- From 4 to 8m tall
- Full Sun

NSW Christmas Bush
- *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*
- Flowers Nov-Jan
- From 2 to 4m tall
- Full Sun/Semi Shade

Dwarf Apple
- *Angophora hispida*
- Flowers Nov-Jan
- From 2 to 4m tall
- Full Sun

Everlasting, Paper Daisy
- *Ozothamnus diosmifolius*
- Flowers Aug-Nov
- Up to 2m tall
- Full Sun/Part Shade

Black Wattle
- *Callicoma serratifolia*
- Flowers Oct-Nov
- From 4 to 5m tall
- Shade
Medium Trees

Coastal Banksia
- *Banksia integrifolia*
- From 6 to 16m tall
- Flowers Jan-Jun
- Full Sun

Lilly Pilly
- *Acmena smithii*
- To 20m tall
- Semi Shade/Shade

Scribbly Gum
- *Eucalyptus racemosa*
- To 15m tall
- Full Sun

Other suitable local species

This selection of native plants can also be found in the North Sydney region, please ask for locally sourced seed if possible. If you have any queries, please contact the Bushland Projects Officer on 9936 8100.

Tall trees – up to 20-30m
- Blackbutt: *Eucalyptus pilularis*
- Cabbage Palm: *Livistona australis*
- Coachwood: *Ceratopetalum apetalum*
- Grey Gum: *Eucalyptus punctata*
- Red Bloodwood: *Corymbia gummitfera*
- Red Mahogany: *Eucalyptus resinifera*
- Turpentine: *Syncarpia glomulifera*

Medium sized trees – up to 15m
- Black She-Oak: *Allocasuarina littoralis*
- Scribbly Gum: *Eucalyptus haemastoma*
- Sydney Peppermint: *Eucalyptus piperita*
- Sydney Red Gum: *Angophora costata*

Small trees – up to 6m
- Sydney Green Wattle: *Acacia parramattensis*
- Water Gum: *Tristaniopsis laurina*

Shrubs – up to 2-4m
- Broad-leaved Hakea: *Heke dactyloides*
- Flax-leaved Wattle: *Acacia linifolia*
- Hop Bush: *Dodonaea triquetra*
- Kunzea: *Kunzea ambigu*
- Paperbark Tea-tree: *Leptospermum trinervium*
- Pine-leaf Geebung: *Persoonia pinifolia*
- Pink Spider Flower: *Grevillea sericea*
- Pink Tea-tree: *Leptospermum squarrosum*
- Scrub She-Oak: *Allocasuarina distyla*
- Sydney Golden Wattle: *Acacia longifolia*
- Waratah: *Telopea speciosissima*
- Yellow Pittosporum: *Pittosporum revolutum*
The Shaded Garden

Many gardens and courtyards in North Sydney are shaded due to the surrounding buildings. The following native species have been selected as they tolerate shady conditions.

### Tall trees
- Cabbage Palm: Livistona australis
- Coachwood: Ceratopetalum apetalum
- Lilly Pilly: Acmena smithii
- Turpentine: Syncarpia glomulifera

### Small trees
- Black Wattle: Callicoma serratifolia
- NSW Christmas Bush: Ceratopetalum gummiferum
- Blueberry Ash: Elaeocarpus reticulatus
- Treefern: Cyathea australis
- Water Gum: Tristaniopsis laurina
- Magenta Lilly Pilly: Syzygium paniculatum

### Shrubs
- Breynia: Breynia oblongifolia
- Elderberry Panax: Polycias sambucifolia
- Sydney Golden Wattle: Acacia longifolia
- Golden Spray: Viminaria homeana
- Yellow Pittosporum: Pittosporum reticulatum
- Hickory Wattle: Acacia impexa
- White Spider Flower: Grevillea linearifolia

### Low shrubs
- Blue Flax Lily: Dianella caerulea
- River Rose: Bauera rubioides
- Mat Rush: Lomandra longifolia

### Ground covers
- Native Ferns: Pteridium; Hypolepis; Callophyllum etc
- Kidney Weed: Dichondra repens
- Commelina: Commelina cyanea
- Native Violet: Viola hederacea

### Vines and climbers
- Wonga Wonga Vine: Pandorea pandorana
Wildlife Habitat Gardens

Gardens provide important habitat for native fauna such as birds, lizards, possums, frogs and butterflies that continue to survive in the urban environment and in neighbouring bushland. Gardens can provide food, shelter, nesting sites and wildlife corridors for native fauna.

There are several layers of vegetation found in natural bushland which consist of:

- **Canopy trees** – habitat for birds, owls and possums.
- **A close mid-storey of small trees and shrubs** – important for shelter and protection for small birds (such as wrens and robins) and Ringtail Possums.
- **An understorey of small flowering shrubs** – habitat and food source for butterflies and small birds.
- **Ground covers of ferns, grasses, leaf litter, rocks, and logs** – habitat for geckoes, lizards, skinks (incl. Blue-tongue Lizards) and small native marsupials. A mulch layer of leaves and twigs provide habitat for insects and lizards, which in turn provides food for birds, and creates healthy soil.

Design your own garden ECOSYSTEM using layers of trees, shrubs, ground covers, rocks, logs and mulch.

- **Handy hints for creating a wildlife habitat garden**
  - Design your garden around the fully-grown heights and shapes of your selected plants.
  - Draw your garden design on paper.
  - All fauna species have four basic requirements for survival: food, shelter, fresh water and nesting sites.
  - Use rocks, logs, bird baths, frog ponds and nesting boxes as feature items in your garden.
  - Build a bird bath (out of cats’ reach) or create a frog pond, contact the NSC Bushland Projects Officer on 9936 8100 for DIY factsheets.
  - Mulching your garden helps to suppress weed growth and retains water in the soil, reducing your need to water. Use either recycled woodchips (from lopped trees, available from your local nursery or landscape supply), or leaf litter. (Do not use pine or casuarina needles as they suppress other plant growth).
  - Minimise the use of pesticides. Birds and owls that eat poisoned insects build up toxicity in their system that kills them when their fat reserves are utilised. Cats and dogs can also become seriously ill if they eat poisoned insects or mice. Snail baits can kill Blue-tongue Lizards.
  - Keep a part of your garden ‘messy’ as it provides great habitat, especially shelter.
  - Identify what habitat elements already exist in your garden, for example: rock walls, log piles, hollow logs, tree hollows, bricks, dead trees, natural ponds, caves, old PVC/clay pipe pieces and natural sandstone crevices. All of these places provide shelter, protection or food sources for a variety of native species.
Use of indigenous plant species

Native plants have evolved with native fauna. Specific plant species will attract specific fauna, including:

- plants that produce pea flowers or pollen attract native butterflies
- nectar rich blossoms (i.e. Eucalypts, Banksias, Grevilleas and Correas) attract honeyeaters and Rainbow Lorikeets
- spikey mid-storey species (i.e. Hakeas, Heaths, Prickly Acacias) planted densely, attract small birds such as Superb Fairy-wrens
- low groundcovers, native grasses and rocks attract geckoes, lizards and skinks (e.g. Blue-tongue Lizards)
- Casuarinas and plants that produce seed attract parrots

Weeds

A weed is a plant out of place and a noxious weed is one that legally must be controlled. A weed is declared noxious if it poses a problem to human health or the environment. Not all exotic plants pose a threat to the bush, but there are a number that alter the natural ecosystem, smothering indigenous plants and feeding off excess nutrient levels in disturbed soils.

Remove any noxious weeds or invasive exotic plant species from your garden to prevent them from entering bushland areas (some weeds can be spread by birds).

Contact the NSC Bushland Projects Officer for weed brochures on 9936 8100 or www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au for a full list of Noxious Weeds and Weed Profile Sheets.

Nesting Boxes

The urban environment is lacking in both hollows (some take up to 200 years to develop) and dense mid-storey (from degradation and lack of fire) for bird and fauna nests. Microbats and possums have adapted to being able to live in roofs, which may be frustrating for some people.

Possum boxes

Install a possum box in your garden. Brushtail Possums require hollows to dwell in, while Ringtail Possums can create their own nest called a drey in dense mid-storey vegetation. Having a Brushtail Possum living in a possum box in your garden may deter other possums from living in your roof, as they are highly territorial.

Parrot nesting boxes

Install a nesting box for parrots and lorikeets to provide hollows to nest in and to rear their young.

Microbat nesting boxes

Install a nesting box for Microbats, they are insectivorous and will help to manage insects in your garden.

Native bee nests

Stingless native bees are great pollinators and attract foraging small birds.

Nesting boxes are available from the North Sydney Council Customer Service Centre at cost price. Alternatively, contact the NSC Bushland Projects Officer on 9936 8100 for “build your own” nest box or drey designs.
Fauna Nuisances

Possums and Brush Turkeys
For problems with possums or Brush Turkeys please contact Council for details of licensed Wildlife Services. It is illegal to trap and relocate native wildlife. Possums are highly territorial animals and the vast majority die when relocated. Frequently if animals are removed from the area, they will simply be replaced by other individuals, contact the NSC Bushland Projects Officer on 9936 8100 for alternate options.

Aggressive birds
A number of native birds such as Ravens, Kookaburras, Noisy Miners and Currawongs have adapted well to our urban environment and are aggressive to other birds. Planting dense, spikey endemic shrubs such as hakeas, heaths and prickly acacias help to provide shelter and protection for smaller birds.

Noisy Miners
Noisy Miners are especially problematic for smaller bird species such as small honeyeaters and wrens. Avoid planting hybrid grevilleas (such as Robyn Gordon Grevilleas) that provide copious amounts of nectar for Noisy Miners. Instead, plant Correa, Crowea and Native Fuschia, they are more useful to small birds than to Noisy Miners.

Currawongs
Currawongs eat the eggs and young of other bird species. Avoid planting too many berry producing plants. Plants such as Privet, Celtis (noxious weeds) and Cotoneaster provide a year-round food source for Currawongs. These plants should be removed.

Exotic animals
Domestic pets and feral animals can have a devastating effect on wildlife in gardens as well as bushland. For more information on domestic or feral cats, foxes, rabbits or Indian Mynas, please contact the NSC Bushland Projects Officer on 9936 8100.

Further information & recommended reading

For an extensive list of local native plants suitable for your garden, visit www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/biodiversity.


What can I do?

Join North Sydney Council’s Native Havens program

Open to all North Sydney Council residents where participants are provided free of charge with:

- advice from a qualified bushland regeneration trainer to develop a strategy for their garden
- on-site training
- FREE local native plants
- suitable landscaping materials where available
- on-going support and advice

Contact

North Sydney Council’s Bushland Project Officer

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