Gardens connecting people and wildlife together

Hume City Council
gardens for wildlife

Gardens for Wildlife

A guide on attracting and supporting wildlife in your garden

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the **Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung**, which includes the Gunung Willam Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this land.

Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and to Elders past, present, and future.

For your information

This booklet was produced by Hume City Council.

Published: November 2025.

Cover photo: Australian Painted Lady on Everlasting Daisy by Andrew Haysom.

Photographer credits: All photographs attributed to Melissa Doherty unless otherwise stated. Special thanks to Andrew Haysom (AH), Anna Lanigan (AL), Clancy Lester (CL), Ian Smales (IS), and Peter Mollison (PM). Other photos sourced from Pinterest. Thanks also to Wendy Furniss at Calytrix Garden Designs.

Illustrations by Johanna Villani Designs.

Some of the plants may be toxic if ingested, prickly, or cause an allergic reaction in some people or affect your pets. Please refer to other resources to further address any safety issues or concerns.

Contact us

Email: gardensforwildlife@hume.vic.gov.au

Web: hume.vic.gov.au/gardensforwildlife

Phone: Customer Service 9205 2200

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Hume City Council is an affiliate of the Gardens for Wildlife Victoria network.

Happiness is seeing butterflies and bees on wildflowers you have planted.

“Since my involvement in Gardens for Wildlife, my life has changed quite substantially. My mental health has improved greatly. I’m outside and more active than before. I’m more confident speaking with other people. Best of all, I have started volunteering as a Garden Guide and have made good friends. I really enjoy going on garden visits to other people to share what I have learnt and feel that I belong to my broader community. It has given my life a purpose - applying for a garden visit is one of the best things I have ever done.” Eva

Contents

Introduction

The Gardens for Wildlife program helps people make their gardens welcoming for native animals. This booklet provides tips and ideas to create homes for local wildlife. Thanks for getting involved with wildlife-friendly gardening!

About Gardens for Wildlife

Gardens for Wildlife (G4W) began in 2006 as a partnership between the Knox Environment Society and Knox City Council. It involves visiting people's gardens, providing tailored reports, and offering free seedlings to encourage wildlife-friendly spaces.

Due to its positive social and environmental impacts, G4W successfully expanded across Melbourne and Victoria. In 2016, the Gardens for Wildlife Victoria network was established to strengthen and promote programs.

👉gardensforwildlifevictoria.com

Communities in more than 25 municipalities are either running, developing or exploring having an affiliated G4W program. This popular movement is also growing nationally, with G4W programs emerging in other states.

G4W officially started in Hume City in 2022. Over 125 garden visits have since occurred and more than 20,000 indigenous seedlings have been donated to community members.

In the last decade, through Council's Seedlings for Schools initiative, students have planted 60,000 seedlings to create wildlife habitat gardens too.

Hume City Council gratefully acknowledges the support of Gardens for Wildlife Victoria and the Knox Gardens for Wildlife founding program.

Blue-banded Bee
Superb Fairy-wren
Chocolate Lily

Organise a garden visit

Visit Council's G4W webpage to apply for a free, one-hour garden visit.

👉hume.vic.gov.au/gardensforwildlife

Our G4W program is open to residents, schools, pre-schools, businesses, and organsiations located in Hume City. There is a cap on the number of applicants accepted each year.

As garden visits and reports are completed by volunteer Garden Guides, people may wait for a few months for their garden visit to occur.

Become a volunteer Garden Guide

If you love gardening, native wildlife, plants, helping nature or connecting with community, then consider volunteering as a Garden Guide.

This formal volunteer role with Hume City involves arranging and doing garden visits, along with some pre-visit research, and preparing personalised reports.

There are volunteer screening, induction, and training processes.

With more Garden Guides, more garden visits can be undertaken by the volunteers, resulting in more wildlife habitat being created.

Email: gardensforwildlife@hume.vic.gov.au

Did you know?

Biodiversity is the variety of life. It includes all living things on Earth (e.g., plants, animals, fungi, and micro-organisms), the genetic diversity within each species, as well as all the different ecosystems that exist.

There are many different **ecosystems** like deserts, grasslands, woodlands, forests, or tropical reefs. These communities of living organisms interact with each other and with their physical environment, such as climate, water, and geology (soil), as a functioning, interconnected system.

Habitat is a home for a living thing; it is the natural environment where a plant, animal, or other organism lives and grows, providing the food, water, shelter, and conditions it needs to survive and reproduce.

A **food web** is a complex network of interconnected food chains that shows how energy and nutrients flow through an ecosystem, with multiple organisms depending on and feeding on each other at different levels.

Indigenous plants are plant species that naturally occur in a specific region or ecosystem, having evolved there over time and forming part of the local biodiversity and ecological balance.

Garden Guides at a garden visit

Wildlife Friendly Garden Recipe

Habitat includes sources of food, water, shelter, and nesting sites or materials for wildlife to rear their young. Choose from the G4W list of habitat ingredients to make your own wildlife friendly garden recipe, that best suits your space and wishes.

In our recipe:

- Plants, plants, and plenty more plants are the key ingredients.
- Habitat features are the herbs and spices.
- Water is the sauce or dressing to quench thirsty animals and plants.
- The chef's love are the considerate actions we can take to reduce harm to wildlife.
- Being sustainable in our homes and gardens is an important garnish.

Try to have as many of these wildlife habitat ingredients in your garden as you can include.

Use this checklist to determine what elements of the recipe you already have or the actions you do. Put a tick in the *Present* column.

Identify suitable habitat projects or actions to attract and support the wildlife you desire. Put a tick in the *Include* column.

Plan your garden design to include these extra ingredients in stages over time as your budget and capacity allows.

Make a commitment to help native wildlife thrive at your place!

Wildlife Habitat Ingredients	Present	Include
Plants		
A wide diversity of different species of plants	○	○
Mostly have indigenous plant species that evolved locally	○	○
Have native plants (evolved in Australia) and exotic plants (evolved overseas) that provide wildlife habitat	○	○
Plants in all garden layers, using different growth forms including trees, bushes, shrubs, climbers, grasses, wildflowers, and groundcovers	○	○
Various species of plants that provide nectar, fruits and/or seeds	○	○
Plant multiples of the same species to extend available resources	○	○
Reduce the amount of common garden weeds	○	○
Remove environmental weeds (invasive, noxious species)	○	○
Upper layer – above 5 metres tall		
Large mature tree or trees indigenous to the area	○	○
Keep old or dead trees with hollows (when it is safe to)	○	○
Artificial hollows or salvaged hollow-logs	○	○
Tree branches as perches for birds to hunt from and roost on at night	○	○

Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*)

Wildlife Habitat Ingredients	Present	Include
Mid layer – between 1 metre and 5 metres tall		
Prickly and/or dense shrubs as shelter for small birds	○	○
Nest-boxes for various birds	○	○
Nest-boxes for possums, gliders or phascogales	○	○
Nest-boxes for micro-bats	○	○
Hanging basket of bird nesting materials	○	○
Bee Hotels with different materials for various native bees	○	○
Branches hanging to the ground that young birds can jump back up to safety as they learn to fly	○	○
Ground layer – below 1 metre tall		
Flowering plants for adult butterflies, such as daisies	○	○
Host food plants for caterpillars, such as native grasses, peas or wattles	○	○
Blue-coloured flowering plants for native bees	○	○
Mulch to attract ground-dwelling insects, suppress weeds, retain soil moisture, and feed soils	○	○
Pile of rocks in a sunny spot as lizard shelter and basking sites for butterflies	○	○
Boulders, logs, and fallen timber as wildlife cover and shelter	○	○
Water		
Various sources of drinking and bathing water that are regularly cleaned and refreshed	○	○
Cat-safe bird baths up on a pedestal or as a hanging saucer	○	○
Bird bath placed in open where birds can see any predators approaching	○	○
Bird bath placed near shrubs so birds can take cover if need	○	○
Rock(s) placed into the bird bath so small birds feel comfortable bathing at the appropriate depth of water	○	○
Frog or fish pond with branches into deep water so wildlife can climb out	○	○
Saucer of water on the ground for lizards	○	○
Floating corks in the water as “bee boats” to save insects from drowning	○	○

Wildlife Habitat Ingredients	Present	Include
Living with wildlife		
Run a low sprinkler on very hot days or spray water into a bush to make a cool spot, saving wildlife from heat stress	○	○
Do not feed bread and other processed human food to wildlife	○	○
Responsible pet owner with cats registered, desexed, and contained indoors or in a outdoor cat run, for their own safety too	○	○
Responsible pet owner by walking dogs on a lead and stopping them from harassing or harming wildlife	○	○
Appropriate use of wildlife friendly fruit netting with a fine mesh	○	○
Use integrated pest control	○	○
Avoid using harmful pesticides (e.g., rat poisons, snail bait, sticky traps)	○	○
Collect litter and rubbish around your neighbourhood that could entangle or injure wildlife and put it in the bin	○	○
Get help for injured, sick, or orphaned wildlife	○	○
Sustainable homes and gardens		
Rain water tank or tanks to water the garden	○	○
Use greywater from laundry or bathroom on any lawn or fruit trees	○	○
Rain garden to divert and treat stormwater	○	○
Use compost bins and/or worm farms	○	○
Put unwanted food, lawn clippings, pruned branches, and other garden waste in your green-lidded bin to be collected and turned into compost	○	○
Grow your own food – vegetable garden, fruit trees, herbs	○	○
Grow your own food – chickens, bees, livestock	○	○
Use locally sourced, seasonal, and renewable products	○	○
Avoid using fake lawn or Astroturf	○	○
Solar panels and/or battery	○	○
Energy efficient and electrified home for cooking and heating	○	○

Grey Fantail

Our recipe for a wildlife friendly garden:

- Plenty of plants, using indigenous species as the best habitat for wildlife.
- Habitat features like bee hotels, lizard lounges, nest boxes or frog bogs.
- Fresh, clean water for animals to drink or bath in.
- Actions to help wildlife and avoid things that could harm them.
- Live sustainably to reduce the impact of climate change on biodiversity.

Habitat Projects and Actions

Our native wildlife is richly diverse and each species has their own unique habitat needs to survive and breed.

This section of Hume City's G4W booklet details the habitat requirements of birds, butterflies, bees, lizards, frogs, and mammals, with an abundance of projects and actions to attract wildlife. Animals are more likely to visit and stay in a garden that meets all their daily needs and makes them feel safe to be there.

Did you know?

Hume City is home to 40 species of hollow-dependent animals, including birds, possums, gliders, microbats, and even frogs and lizards.

Natural tree hollows can take over 100 years to form, with larger hollows taking even longer. Sadly, many old trees have been cut down, or hollows have been taken over by introduced species, leaving less habitat for native wildlife.

Think of a large tree as being a high rise apartment block for a host of native wildlife!

Attracting birds

Importance of layering plants

Creating vertical structure in your garden with a diversity of plant species and growth forms is vital. This maximises the ecological niches available for all wildlife. A healthy food web can then support a much wider range of birds with different diets.

It is the combination of upper canopy trees, middle layer shrubs and climbers, and lower plants including grasses, wildflowers, and groundcovers that provides a mix of food, shelter, and nesting opportunities that appeal to more bird species.

Food sources

- Have a variety of nectar-producing plants, aiming for flowering in different seasons to ensure year-round food availability.
- Grow plants that also produce fruits, seeds or seed capsules.
- Attract a wide variety of insects by using lots of different plants, who themselves feed on nectar, leaves, seeds, fruits, roots, and wood.
- Put mulch on garden beds to support ground-dwelling insects.
- A diversity of native invertebrates (animals without a backbone) helps feed birds directly, and also support frogs and lizards who are then prey for predatory birds.

Shelter

- Large trees provide perches and nesting sites. In urban areas, this might also come from street trees or nearby parks.
- Dense or spiky shrubs offer shelter and protection for small birds. Placing food and water sources near shrubs gives birds cover to dart into and hide from predators.
- Choose shrubs that flower throughout the plant (not just at the tips), so small birds can feed more discreetly, avoiding aggressive "bully birds" who chase small birds away.
- After the main flush of flowering finishes, prune shrubs to maintain their compact shape and encourage more blooms.
- Leave some low-hanging branches for fledglings to climb back up into safety.

Nesting sites

- Retain old or dead trees (stags) with hollows whenever it is safe to do so. Natural hollows are rare and highly valuable nesting sites.
- Where natural hollows are missing, install nest boxes suited to specific native birds.
- To prevent nest boxes from being taken over by feral honey bees, staple shade cloth to the inside walls and ceiling/lid of the nest box. The bees won't be able to attach their waxy honeycombs.
- Arborists can carve artificial hollows into trees or install salvaged hollow limbs, but are expensive to install. Natural hollows are much better insulated than standard timber nest boxes.
- Provide nesting materials in a hanging basket, like straw, coconut fiber, fine twigs, and even clumps of pet fur or feathers. Avoid using materials like wool, plastics, or string, as these can entangle birds and their chicks.

Golden Whistler eating a caterpillar

Silvereye eating Kangaroo Apple fruit

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo in a hollow

Water

The simplest and most effective way to attract birds is to provide clean and safe sources of water for drinking and bathing.

- Install bird baths in front and back yards.
- Elevate the bird bath if possible. Get a pedestal bath or hang a shallow saucer of water from a tree branch or the fence. This helps protect birds by giving them a better view of approaching predators, such as cats.
- Choose an open location so birds can spot danger, but also position the bath near dense shrubs where birds can quickly retreat to if feeling threatened.
- Water in stone, ceramic or concrete baths stays cooler. Avoid metal baths as the water gets too hot and encourages algae to grow.
- Shallow, gently sloped basins are ideal, with the water level 2 – 5 centimetres deep.
- Add a wedge-shaped rock or several stones at the bottom of deep baths. This allows small birds to perch comfortably and bathe at a safe, shallow depth.
- Regularly clean the bath, as birds come to rely on your bird bath for their daily drink. Do not use detergents to clean bird baths.
- Refill, refresh and replace the water often to prevent the spread of disease.
- Birds will drink from a pond. Place branches into deep water that birds can stand on, and enable other wildlife to escape drowning.
- On very hot days or during heatwaves, run a low water sprinkler in the shade or spray bushes to create a cool, moist microclimate. A “wildlife heat haven” can literally save lives!

Red-browed Finch

G4W reference books in libraries

The Australian Bird Guide (2019) P. Monkhurst, et al. CSIRO Publishing.

Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (2010) 8th ed. Simpson & Day. Penguin Group.

Field Guide to the Birds of Australia (2012) 9th ed. Pizzey & Knight. Harper Collins Publisher.

Birds of Hume field guide

👉Digital version

Facebook groups

👉Australian Bird Identification

👉Australian Native Birds

👉Bird Photography Australia

Bird websites

Birdlife Australia

👉birdlife.org.au

Birds in Backyards

👉birdsinbackyards.net

Aussie Bird Count

👉aussiebirdcount.org.au

Bird Data

👉birdata.birdlife.org.au

Willy Wagtail

Spotted Pardalote

Plants to attract small birds

Small birds are becoming rarer in suburban areas as they do not find enough suitable habitat. Gardens and parks tend to be too open, so add some dense shrubs for shelter and nesting. Also include wildflowers, groundcovers, and grasses for small birds to feed on insects, berries, and seed.

- Gold Dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*)
- Prickly Moses (*Acacia verticillata*)
- Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*)
- Fragrant Saltbush (*Chenopodium parabolicum*)
- Woolly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*)
- Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum laciniatum*)
- Common Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)
- Native Flax (*Linum marginale*)
- Berry Saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*)
- Nodding Saltbush (*Einadia nutans*)
- Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*)
- Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardierei*)
- Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)
- Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*)
- Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)

Scarlet Robin

Brown Thornbill

New Holland Honeyeater

Eastern Spinebill

Plants to attract honeyeaters

As their collective name suggests, honeyeaters adore feeding on nectar, but they also eat insects. Include flowering plants that produce a lot of nectar, and flower throughout the bush. Larger honeyeaters like Noisy Miner or Red Wattlebirds will "resource guard", chasing off smaller birds.

- Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*)
- Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)
- Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*)
- Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*)
- Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*)
- Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*)
- River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*)
- Rock or Smooth Correa (*Correa glabra*)
- Rosemary Grevillea (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*)
- Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*)
- Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*)
- Golden Spray (*Viminaria juncea*)
- Inland Pigface (*Carpobrotus modestus*)
- Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*)
- Creeping Boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*)
- Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)
- Small-leaved Clematis, Old Man's Beard (*Clematis microphylla*)

White-plumed Honeyeater

Red Wattlebird

Crimson Rosella

Swift Parrot

Plants to attract parrots

Parrots, Lorikeets, Rosellas, Cockatoos, and Corellas are intelligent and long-lived birds. They feed on flowers, seeds, cones, fruits, lerp, and other insect grubs. Some will dig up underground tubers with their powerful beaks. All of these birds are reliant on tree hollows to breed, with the larger Cockatoos needing deeper nesting hollows. Retaining old trees is crucial to their survival.

- River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)
- Greybox (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*)
- Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*)
- Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*)
- Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*)
- Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*)
- Black Sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*)
- Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*)
- Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*)
- Bushy Needlewood (*Hakea decurrens*)
- Pin-cushion Hakea (*Hakea laurina*)
- Moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata*)
- Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale*)
- Tree Violet (*Melicytus dentatus*)
- Native lilies, orchids, and sedges for tubers

Rainbow Lorikeet

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo

Attracting butterflies and moths

Did you know?

- Butterflies and moths belong to the Lepidoptera order of insects. They are characterised by having scales on their wings, complete metamorphosis from egg → larva → pupa → adult, and often have a coiled proboscis or mouth to feed with.
- Victoria is home to 140 species of butterflies, while 420 butterfly species have been recorded in Australia. This diversity spans six families, including the Skippers (Hesperiidae), Blues and Coppers (Lycaenidae), Browns and Nymphs (Nymphalidae), Swallowtails (Papilionidae), and the Whites and Yellows (Pieridae).
- In comparison, there are an estimated 22,000 species of moths, but less than half of them have been formally described and named by scientists.
- Butterflies are colourful, mainly seen during the day, have clubbed antennae, rest with their wings closed above their body, and pupate in a chrysalis.
- Moths tend to have duller colours, are mainly active at night, have feathered or pointed antennae, rest with their wings open, and pupate in a cocoon.

Grass-dart on Golden Billy-buttons

Butterflies and moths are not only beautiful to watch, they are also extremely beneficial to your garden. As excellent pollinators, they help plants reproduce. They also serve as a vital food source for birds, microbats, and reptiles, and are eaten at all the stages of their lifecycle, as eggs, caterpillars, and adults.

Importance of plant species diversity

Different species of butterflies and moths fly at various heights. Some fly up in the canopy, others at ground layer, so a diversity of plant growth forms and sizes are required.

Butterfly and moth species can prefer certain nectar-producing plants as adults to feed on. They may also have specific host plants to lay their eggs on, that act as caterpillar food plants. Butterflies and moths fly long distances to find the variety of plants needed.

Food

- Lots of different flowering plants, with long-flowering periods or repeat flowering, to extend the availability of nectar.
- Although butterflies forage from a wide range of flower colours, they tend to favour blue, red, and yellow varieties.
- Adults are often associated with daisies, being easy to land on. Butterflies feed from the many small individual florets that make up the compound daisy flower-head.
- During periods with little or no flowering, put out a tray of cut-up moist fruit, like banana, orange, strawberry, or mango, that is replenished frequently.
- Fill a dripper bottle with a sugar water mix (1 part sugar to 10 parts water).

Shelter

- Adults seek protection from windy and cold weather in trees, shrubs, and tall grasses, resting on the underside of leaves, as well as in rock piles with cracks and crevices.
- Caterpillars need plants to hide from predators, and as safe places to pupate.
- Provide sunlit rocks or open patches for adult butterflies to bask, so they can warm up to fly, feed, and court mates.
- Some species of butterflies and moths use leaf litter or mulch as breeding habitat to lay their eggs.

Water

- Provide a shallow dish of water with rocks, or a tray with soaking wet pieces of sponge.
- A dish of damp sand, mud, or moist manure also gives adults essential salts and minerals.
- Butterflies love a drink of beer too!

G4W reference books in libraries

Butterflies: Identification and life history. (2013) R. Field. Museum Victoria Publishing.

A naturalist's guide to the butterflies of Australia (2020). Rowland & Whitlock. John Beaufoy Publishing.

Facebook groups

👉Entomology Australia "Invertebratology"

👉Australian Entomological Society

👉Australian butterflies and moths

Butterfly website

Moths and Butterflies Australasia

👉maba.org.au

Australian Painted Lady

Plants to attract butterflies

Daisies (Asteraceae) for adult butterflies:

- Basalt Swamp-daisy (*Brachyscome paludicola*)
- Cut-leaf Daisy (*Brachyscome multifida*)
- Beautyheads (*Calocephalus sp.*)
- Burr-daisies (*Calotis* sp.)
- Billy-buttons (*Craspedia* sp., *Pycnosorus* sp.)
- Sunrays (*Leucochrysum* sp., *Rhodanthe* sp.)
- Minnie Daisy (*Minuria leptophylla*)
- Basalt Podolepis (*Podolepis linearifolia*)
- Everlastings (*Chrysocephalum* sp., *Xerochrysum* sp., *Ozothamnus* sp.)
- Twiggy Daisybush (*Oleria ramulosa*)

Caterpillar host plants for Brown butterflies and Skippers are native grasses (Poaceae):

- Tussock Grasses (*Poa* sp.)
- Wallaby Grasses (*Rytidosperma* sp.)
- Weeping Grass (*Microleana stipoides*)
- Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)
- Sedges (*Carex* sp., *Gahnia* sp.)
- Mat-rushes (*Lomandra* sp.)

Caterpillar host plants for the Blue and Copper butterflies are native peas (Fabaceae):

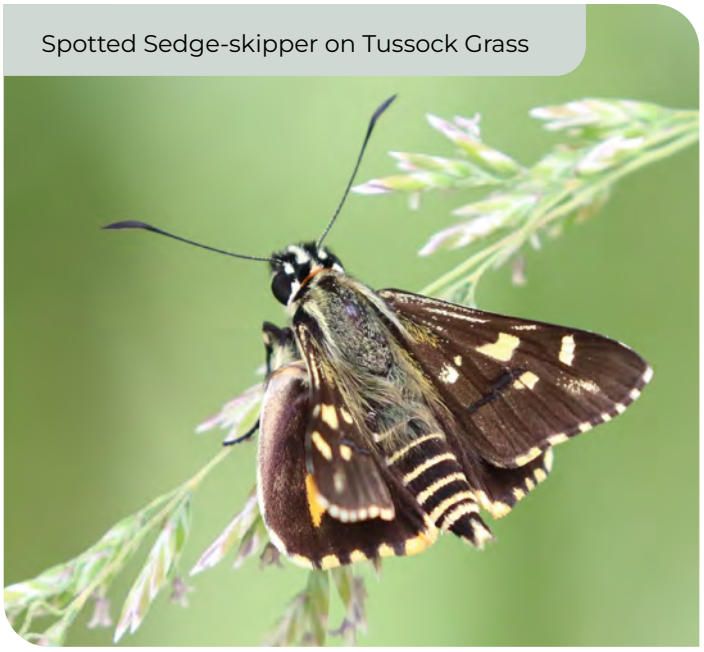
- Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*)
- Common Eutaxia (*Eutaxia microphylla*)
- Scurf-peas (*Cullen* sp.)
- Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)
- Silver Cassia (*Senna artemisioides*)
- Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*)
- Bitter-peas (*Daviesia* sp.)
- Parrot-peas (*Dillwynia* sp.)

Other butterfly and caterpillar favourites:

- Wattles (*Acacia* sp.)
- Mistletoes (*Amyema* sp., *Exocarpos* sp.)
- Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*)
- Austral Storksbill (*Pelargonium australe*)
- Riceflowers (*Pimelea* sp.)
- Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*)
- Goodenia (*Goodenia* sp.)
- Guinea-flowers (*Hibbertia* sp.)
- Saltbushes (*Chenopodium* sp.)

Common Grass-blue on Basalt Daisy

Spotted Sedge-skipper on Tussock Grass



Satin-green Forester on Milkmaids

Attracting native bees

Native bees are incredibly efficient pollinators, boosting harvest from food gardens and fruit trees. Bees are crucial to our food security. Many native plants can only be pollinated by native bees, making them essential to Australia's biodiversity.

Australia is home to around 2,000 species of native bees, ranging in size from just 2mm – 26mm. Some species only travel 80 – 350 metres in their entire lifetime. This means we need to maintain plenty of nearby habitat patches to support the survival of native bees.

Importance of mass planting

Bees and other wildlife will stay longer if they have ample food so planting multiples of the same species is key.

Food

- Diversity of plants providing nectar and pollen, with flowers from spring to autumn.
- Have flowers in a range of colours, but especially blue, purple, white, and yellow.

Water

- Many native bees get the moisture they need from the flowers they forage on.
- Have a shallow dish of water containing stones, marbles or floating corks so other insects and honeybees can safely drink.

Shelter

- Leave bare patches of soil for nesting bees.
- Have rocks as basking sites for native bees.
- Include grasses and reeds for groups of male bees to clamp their jaws on so they can rest.

Did you know?

- Unlike introduced European Honeybees, most native bees either do not have stingers or are unlikely to sting. Native bees do not form swarms and do not pose any risk to people or pets.
- 30 per cent of native bee species nest in natural cavities in plant materials such as hardwood timber, and hollow or pithy stems. The other 70 per cent are ground nesting bees who make tunnels in sandy to clay soils.
- The adults of many Victorian bees die in autumn. Species survive the cold winters in the larval stage of the bee lifecycle, hatching out in spring.
- Native bees are solitary or semi social, and do not have a queen to dominate reproduction. This means more breeding female bees are needed than males.
- Female bees lay eggs in a series of individual cells provisioned with nectar and pollen for each larva.
- The holes in bee hotels should be at least 12cm deep, so more female eggs are laid.

Blue-banded Bee resting in Kangaroo Grass

Bee hotels

Install bee hotels to support native bees to rear their brood young.

- Locate in a sheltered area, pointing north or northeast, so that it receives morning sun.
- Place near lots of flowering plants.
- Erect between 1 – 2 metres off the ground.
- Avoid treated timber, glues or paints that can be toxic. Imported commercial bee hotels may also kill the larvae if they've been fumigated. Make your own bee hotels, with the correct features, and renovate annually to remove any pests or pathogens.

Hardwood hotels

- Use hardwood blocks of natural timber like thick branches, logs or stumps. Avoid using softwoods that have too many splinters.
- Drill different diameter holes 3 – 9mm wide and aim for depths 12cm deep. Have only one entrance; do not drill all the way through.
- Drill the holes in a random pattern rather than regular rows, to help the bee relocate the tunnel she is laying her eggs in.
- Slightly angle the holes or orientate the bee hotel to naturally drain rainwater away.

Reed or hollow tube hotels

- Use hollow stems like bamboo. Cut the bamboo near a ridged ring node. Make the second cut beyond the next node, so that one end of the bamboo remains closed at the node. Sort the hollow bamboo cuttings with all the open ends together.
- Use pithy-centred plant stems like spent sunflower, Jerusalem artichoke, raspberry canes, celery, carrot, parsley, Kangaroo Apple, or even Agapanthus flower stalks.
- Cut into sections 12 – 15cm long.
- Tie the stems together, or jam them tightly into a length of PVC pipe, recycled tin can, glass jar, or old ceramic mug.

Mud or clay hotels

- Use loose sandy or loamy soil with good drainage (e.g., clay loam or tennis court loam) and pack it into a container like PVC pipe, tin cans or cavities in a bessa block.
- In a random pattern, add some starter holes a few centimetres deep that the bees will continue to excavate deeper.
- Blue-banded Bees are attracted to the pheromones or scents other bees leave behind at nesting sites, so it may take them a while to find new mud hotels.

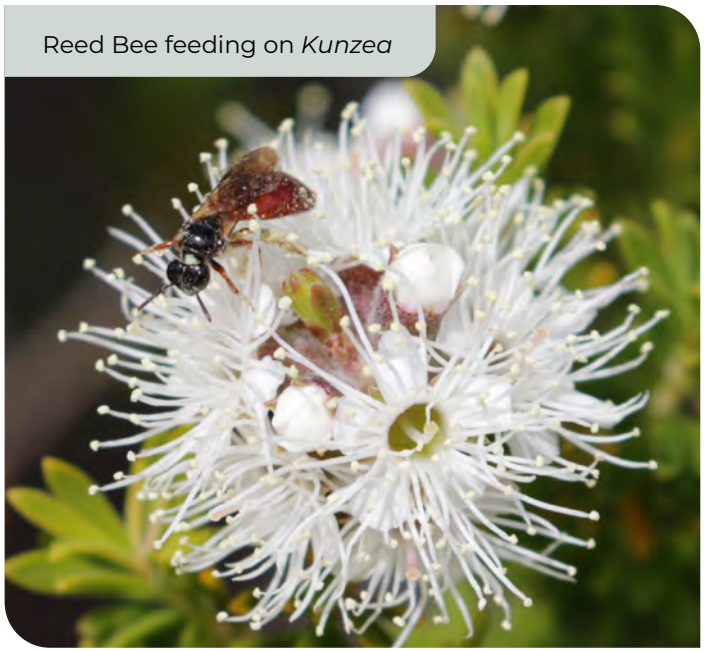
Combination bee hotel (Pinterest)

Megachile bee using a reed hotel (AL)

Mud and reed hotels (CL)

Megachile bee visiting Native Bluebells

Reed Bee feeding on *Kunzea*



Blue-banded Bee visiting *Salvia*

Plants to attract bees

Many of the same wildflowers and flowering groundcovers that attract butterflies, will also attract native bees, and other pollinating insects like flies and beetles.

- various Daisies (*Asteracea*) family
- Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*)
- Native Bluebells (*Wahlenberia* sp.)
- Blue Devils (*Eryngium ovinum*)
- Native Flax (*Linum marginale*)
- Blue Pincushion (*Brunonia australis*)
- Flax-lilies (*Dianella* sp.)
- Creeping Boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*)
- Leek Lilies (*Bulbine* sp.)

Numerous iconic Australian native species in Myrtaceae, Proteceae, Fabaceae, and Goodeniaceae families attract native bees:

- Tea-trees (*Leptospermum* sp.)
- Gum and Box trees (*Eucalyptus* sp.)
- Bottlebrushes (*Callistemon* sp.)
- Paperbarks (*Melaleuca* sp.)
- *Banksia* sp.
- *Grevillea* sp.
- *Hakea* sp.
- Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)
- Fan-flowers (*Scaevola* sp.)
- *Goodenia* sp.

Exotic blue-flowering plants also favoured:

- Lavender
- Salvia
- Sage
- Borage

G4W reference books in libraries

A guide to native bees of Australia (2018). T. Houston. CSIRO Publishing.

Facebook groups

👉Bee Aware of your Native Bees (Australia)

👉The Buzz on Wild Bees

Native bee websites

👉aussiebee.com.au

👉wheenbeefoundation.org.au

👉nativebeehotels.com

Attracting lizards

Importance of harbour

In addition to having various layers of plants, a diversity of plant species, mass plantings of the same species, and enticing a wide variety of insects, lizards will need other habitat structures or harbour to shelter in.

Please leave rocks and logs in the bush as this precious harbour will already be habitat for other wildlife.

Food

- Smaller skinks and geckos mainly eat insects such as crickets, beetles, spiders, worms, and caterpillars. They act as a biological control of pest insects.
- Larger lizards such as Blue-tongue Lizards tend to eat leaves and fruit but also love snails and slugs.

Shelter

- A “lizard lounge” can be an informal pile of stones, rocks, boulders, old earthenware pipes, broken terracotta pots, or stacks of roof tiles, pavers or bricks in a sunny spot. These materials provide a thermal mass and radiate warmth, sheltering cracks and crevices for lizards to hide in, as well as more places to hunt insects.
- Small lizards live in formal drystone fences and rock retaining walls. A gabion, which is a wire mesh or steel grid container filled with rocks, will also provide shelter.
- For larger lizards, insert sections of PVC pipe into the sides of retaining walls, gabions, or raised garden beds as artifical burrows.
- Old tin sheets or roof tiles laid on the ground are also great lizard harbour, along with hollow logs, slabs of bark, or piles of branches.
- Locate lizard harbour in a safe area away from dogs and cats and where it receives morning or full sun.

Marbled Gecko

Did you know?

- Australia is a global hotspot for reptile diversity, home to an astounding 1,145 native species, and 93 per cent of those species are only found in Australia.
- In Victoria, 117 reptile species have been recorded.
- In Hume City, there are six snake species, at least 14 species of lizard, and two types of turtle.
- Reptiles are called “cold-blooded,” but after basking in the sun, their body temperature can actually rise higher than that of mammals. As ectothermic animals, they rely on the environment to regulate their body heat. They warm up by absorbing heat from the sun or warm surfaces like rocks, and stay cool by seeking shade or shelter to avoid overheating.
- All snakes found in the Melbourne area are venomous. However, they rarely bite unless provoked, usually when someone tries to catch or harm them. If you encounter a snake, stay calm, and keep pets and children at a safe distance. Simply allow the snake plenty of room to move away. Snakes are protected wildlife and it is illegal to disturb or kill them. Contact a licensed snake catcher if one needs to be relocated from your garden.
- It is illegal to take lizards from the wild to bring to your garden. Instead, build a habitat garden that local lizards will eventually find and want to stay living in.

- Surround the lizard lounge with leaf or bark mulch, to enable them to thermo-regulate, lay their eggs in, and attract insect prey.
- Include rough elements, such as a stump or tussock grasses, that lizards can rub against and help shed their old scales.
- Groundcovers and low-growing dense plants give protection and food, yet still allow plenty of sunshine in for basking.

Water

- Have a shallow dish of water on the ground.
- Place rocks as a ramp or put branches into ponds to enable access to water sources, and make it easy to get out if they fall in.

G4W reference books in libraries

Reptiles of Victoria: A guide to identification and ecology (2019). Robertson & Coventry. CSIRO Publishing.

Fauna of Hume field guide

👉Digital version

Facebook groups

👉Australian Reptile/Amphibian Identification

Eastern Three-lined Skink

Lowland Copperhead

Informal lizard lounge

Gabion lizard lounge (Pinterest)

Plants to attract lizards

- Plant a variety of native grasses, strappy leaved clumping plants, and small, dense shrubs for shelter.
- Attract insects using the plants suggested for other wildlife.
- Include creepers to cover fences or walls, as some lizards will climb up into them.
- Plant strawberries as a special treat for Blue-tongues and Shinglebacks.

These groundcovers and shrubs produce fruits, or "lizard lollies," that are eaten and dispersed by lizards (and birds):

- Berry Saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*)
- Nodding Saltbush (*Einadia nutans*)
- Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*)
- Tree Violet (*Melicytus dentatus*)
- Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum laciniatum*)

Caution - Snakes

A word of caution: by attracting birds, frogs and lizards as prey items, and by creating reptile harbour, this could then also attract snakes. To keep pets and young children safe, do consider if a lizard lounge or a frog bog is suitable for your garden.

Attracting frogs

Importance of plant selection

Plants are adapted to live in certain conditions and have different tolerances. Select plants to grow in particular locations based on what they can tolerate, in terms of light and water availability, or soil type.

Frogs need plants suited to growing in wet soils, around the edge of ponds or the riparian zone along waterways. Tadpoles rely on semi-aquatic and aquatic plants that grow in the submerged zone.

Native frogs and tadpoles are protected wildlife, and it is illegal to take them from the wild. There is a risk of spreading serious and fatal diseases, like the Chytrid Fungus, when frogs are translocated. Build them a habitat garden at your place and let them move in on their own.

Food

- Frogs are opportunistic feeders and will consume any small, moving prey they can fit in their mouth. Adult frogs are carnivores, mainly eating flies, caterpillars, beetles, ants, crickets, and spiders. Some species feed on small reptiles, tadpoles, and small fish.
- Avoid using pesticides in your garden, to instead attract insects as food for frogs.
- Tadpoles are mostly vegetarian, eating algae and decaying vegetation. They will also eat insect larvae, including mosquito wrigglers.

Did you know?

- Australia has 250 frog species, and 93 per cent of them only live in Australia. This high level of endemism reflects the continent's long geographic isolation and diverse habitats.
- Around 30 per cent of Australia's frog species are listed as being threatened; four species have gone extinct.
- All Australian species are frogs, even if they look toad-like. The only true toad in Australia is the introduced Cane Toad.
- In Victoria, there are around 36 native frog species, and 13 species have been recorded in Hume City.
- Male frogs sing to attract mates and each species has its own unique call. Female frogs typically do not call to avoid attracting predators.
- Frogs call due to rainfall and changes in humidity, barometric pressure or temperature, as cues for breeding.
- Our native frogs spend much of their time out of water and only seek water bodies to lay their eggs.
- Frogs and tadpoles are excellent pest controllers, eating lots of insects.
- Frog populations are important indicators of environmental health – if frogs are thriving, so is your garden!

Growling Grass Frog (AL)

Water

- Frogs don't drink water through their mouths – they absorb it through their skin (which they also use to breathe)! That's why they need moist, damp places to shelter.
- Frogs and tadpoles are sensitive to the chlorine added to our tap water. To fill or top up a frog pond, use rain water from a tank. Or leave tap water sitting in buckets or tubs for several days for the chlorine to evaporate, before adding to the pond. Alternatively, purchase some water conditioner or chlorine neutraliser from the fish section of a the pet store.

Shelter

- Place rocks and logs in moist places, to give frogs cool, damp hiding spots.
- Burrowing frogs like soft friable soils with surrounding vegetation and mulch.
- Tadpoles need pools of permanent water with submerged rocks, logs, and plants in the shallows and overhanging vegetation.

Frog hotel

Frog hotels attract tree frogs with their rounded toe pads, who climb trees like the Southern Brown Tree Frog or use tree hollows, such Peron's Tree Frog.

- Get recycled or new PVC pipes in 3 – 4 different widths (diameters) and cut them into various lengths, 50 – 75 cm long. Smaller pipes can go inside larger diameter pipes to accommodate frogs of all sizes.
- Drill a drainage hole into each length of pipe.
- Sand the cut edges so they are smooth.
- Optional to add some 90 degree elbow joints to the top of the PVC pipes as extra hiding spots for tree frogs.
- Use a suitably sized bowl, bucket or tub that holds water. Seal any drainage holes with silicone. Place your base container in its final location, and then build it.
- Arrange the PVC pipes in the container. Hold them in place by backfilling the tub and the bottom of the pipes with gravel or pebbles.
- Add some potted water plants that cope with permanently wet soil.
- Fill the container and pipes with rainwater or dechlorinated tap water.
- Flush out the frog hotel tub with a bucket of dechlorinated water every 3 – 4 days, to freshen the water and reduce mosquitoes.
- Add a solar light to attract moths and other insects at night for the frogs to eat.

Southern Brown Tree Frog

Peron's Tree Frog (IS)

Frog hotel (Pinterest)

Frog bog

Establish a frog bog to allow frogs to breed, with permanent water for tadpoles to develop. Depending on the species, tadpoles can take a few weeks to metamorphose into frogs or several months in colder weather.

Location

- Position a pond so it receives sunlight in the morning and shade in the afternoon; aim for 30 per cent light and 70 per cent shade. Want enough light for algae to grow to feed tadpoles and warmth for frogs to breed, but not too much light to overheat the pond or for too much algae to grow. And not too shady for mosquitoes to breed.
- Avoid placing the pond underneath deciduous trees to reduce root invasion and clogging with too many dropped leaves.
- Locate the pond in a lower part of your garden where water naturally collects, or near a downpipe from the roof with a rainwater pipe diverter installed.
- Build a pond away from any bedrooms if frogs calling noisily at night will bother people trying to sleep, including neighbours.

Shape and structure

- Various materials can be used to make a frog bog, for a wide range of prices, including pre-formed pond moulds or shells, kid's wading pool, or recycled bath tubs. Ponds dug into the ground can be concrete lined, clay-lined, or with a plastic pond liner laid over a bed of sand.
- Make the pond as wide as possible, with damp zones for adult frogs, shallow water areas for laying eggs, and deep water zones to around 30cm deep for tadpoles.
- Create gentle slopes so frogs can easily enter and exit. Or add branches or rocks as ramps into the pond's edge.
- Consider overflow areas in heavy rain.

Other tips

- Do not put goldfish in the pond as they'll eat the tadpoles. Instead use native fish like Southern Pygmy Perch to control mosquito.
- Mosquitos prefer still water to lay their eggs, so create water ripples with a small solar pump or fountain. But ensure there's a filter over the inlet of fountain pumps so that tadpoles and eggs aren't sucked up.
- Avoid using garden chemicals (pesticides, fertilisers, detergents) around the pond.
- Consider pond safety with children and the need for pool fencing. Always supervise children near the pond. Install a sturdy grate over the pond using 100mm by 100mm mesh.

Facebook groups

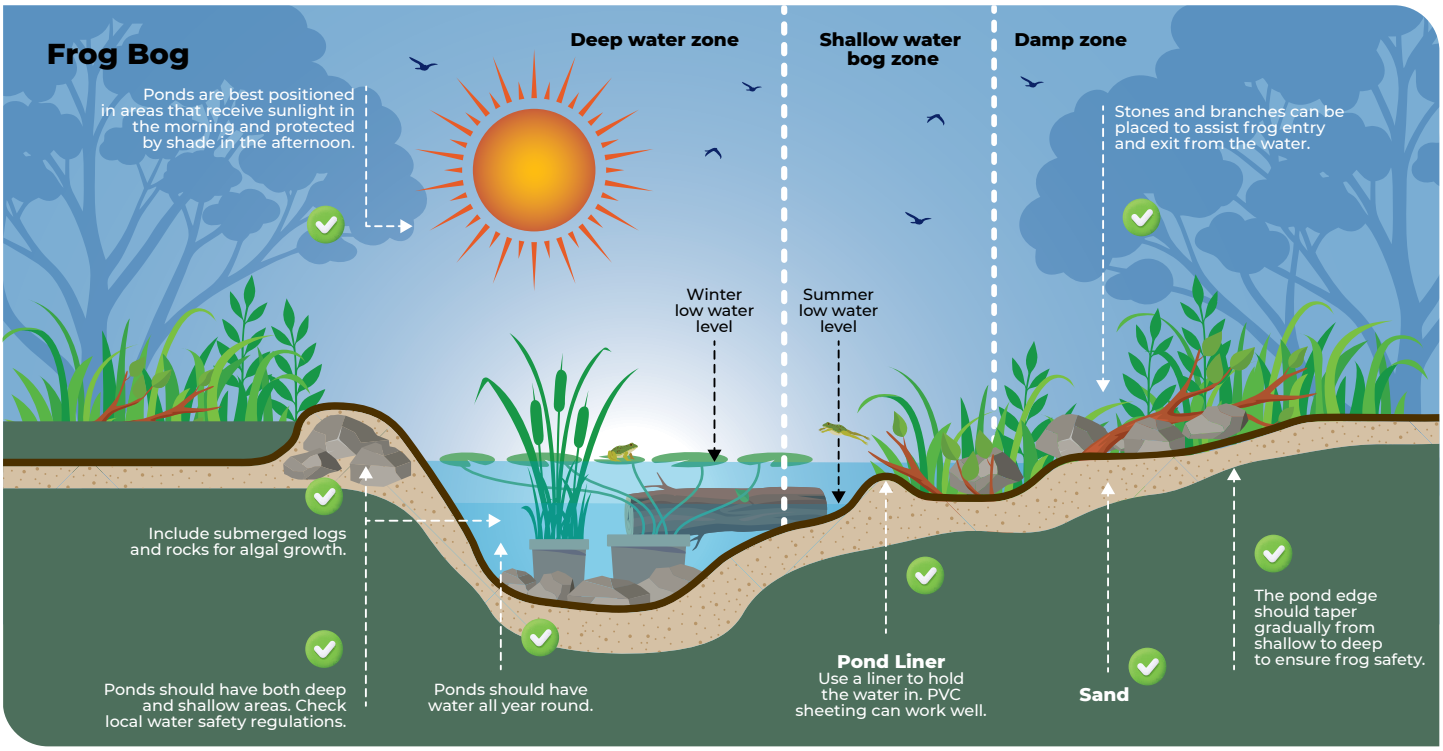
👉 Frogs of Australia

Frog websites

👉 frogs.org.au

👉 frogsvic.org

👉 Melbourne Water Frogs



Plants to attract frogs

- Use indigenous plants to attract insects as prey for the adult frogs.
- Dense tussock grasses and groundcovers will provide shelter for frogs .
- Plant water plants in pots to better control their growth in ponds and make them easier to maintain.
- Make sure the vegetation does not cover the whole pond, leaving open areas of at least 20 per cent to help oxygenate the water and not shade out the tadpoles.
- Avoid floating aquatic plants like Azolla and Duckweed (*Lemna, Spirodela, Landolita* sp.) as they can take over.

Submerged/ Floating/ Oxygenators

- Water-milfoils (*Myriophyllum* sp.)
- Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*)
- Eel Grass (*Vallisneria australis*)
- Marshworts (*Nymphoides* sp.)
- Floating Pondweed (*Potamogeton tricarinatus*)

Emergent/ Marginal (shallow waters edge)

- Common Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*)
- Loosestrifes (*Lythrum salicaria, L. hyssopifolia*)
- Water Ribbons (*Triglochin procera),* Streaked Arrowgrass *(T. striata*)
- Slender Knotweed (*Persicaria decipiens)*
- Sedges (*Carex appressa, C. bichenoviana, C. fascicularis, , C. tasmanica, C. tereticaulis*)
- Bog-sedge (*Schoenus apogon*)
- Twig-rushes (*Baumea articulata, B. arthrophylla)*)
- Spike-rushes (*Eleocharis acuta, E. sphacelata*)
- Rushes (*Juncus amabilis, J. australis, J. flavidus, J. holoschoenus, J. pallidus, J. subsecundus, J. usitatus*)

Moist margin/ Damp zone (periodically wet)

- Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*)
- Soft Water Fern (*Blechnum minus*)
- Trailing Pratia (*Lobelia pedunculata*, *L. pratiodies, L. alata)*
- Water Buttons (*Cotula coronopifolia*)
- River Buttercups (*Rananuculus inundatus, R. amphitrichus, R. lapaceus*)
- Swamp Club-rush (*Isolepis inundata*)

Dense tussocks and clumps

- Saw-sedges (*Gahnia filum, G.radula, G. sieberiana*)
- Knobby Club-rush (*Ficina nodosa*),
- Grassy Mat-rush (*Lomandra confertifolia*)
- Tassel Cord Rush (*Baloskion tertraphyllum*)
- Tussock Grasses (*Poa* sp.)
- Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)

Groundcovers and flowering covers

- Kidneyweed (*Dichondra repens*)
- Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*)
- Bidgee Widgee (*Acaena novae-zelandiae*)
- Prickfoot (*Eryngium vesiculosum*)
- Slender Speedwell (*Veronica gracilis*)
- River Mint (*Mentha australis)*
- Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergis violacea*)
- Cut-leaf Daisy (*Brachyscome multifida*)
- Basalt Swamp-daisy (*B. paludicola*)
- Milky Beautyheads (*Calocephalus lacteus*)
- Swamp Billy-buttons (*Craspedia paludicola*)
- Golden Billy-buttons (*Pycnosorus chrysanthes*), Drumsticks (*P. globosus*)
- Swamp Everlasting (*Xerochrysum palustre*)

Shrubs for taller layers

- River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*)
- Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*)
- Hemp Bush (*Gynatrix pulchella*)
- Woolly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*)
- Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*)
- Golden Spray (*Viminaria juncea*)

Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*)

Attracting mammals

Importance of luck

With most native mammals, you have to be in the right place at the right time to see them; let alone have them living in your garden.

There is a diversity of different mammals found in Hume City, each with unique diets and habitat requirements. In general, follow the wildlife friendly garden recipe, with plenty of plants and a healthy food web, to increase the chances of attracting mammals to your place.

Food

- Plant a diversity of indigenous plants to provide nectar, seeds, and insects.
- Have mulched areas to support insect and fungi-based food chains.

Water

- Possums and fruit bats are particularly susceptible to heat stress. Create a cool spot or heat haven by spraying water into the bushes or trees where they rest.
- Have a pond or saucer on the ground for ground-dwelling mammals. Echnidas may even come in for a swim or a bath, using their snout as a snorkel to breath.
- Wallabies and kangaroos will drink from ponds, dams or large tubs of water.

Shelter

- Leave hollow limbs on the ground for small ground-dwelling mammals.
- Install wooden nest-boxes for Brush-tailed Possums, Krefft's Gliders or Brush-tailed Phascogales.

Ring-tailed Possum drey nest

A drey is a spherical nest made by Ring-tailed Possums, using branches and leaves. They usually have a few of them across their territory to sleep in during the day.

- Join together two half-round wire hanging plant baskets into a sphere, with wire fastenings, or plastic zip-lock or cable ties.
- Keep the coconut fibre basket liner inside the bottom half, and outside the top half. Cut a small entrance hole in the top liner.
- Add some extra nesting like soft leaf litter or straw, inside the sphere.
- Attach some slabs of paperbark or layers of shade cloth at the top of the sphere to make it more waterproof.
- Hang the drey ball up in a tree or shrub.

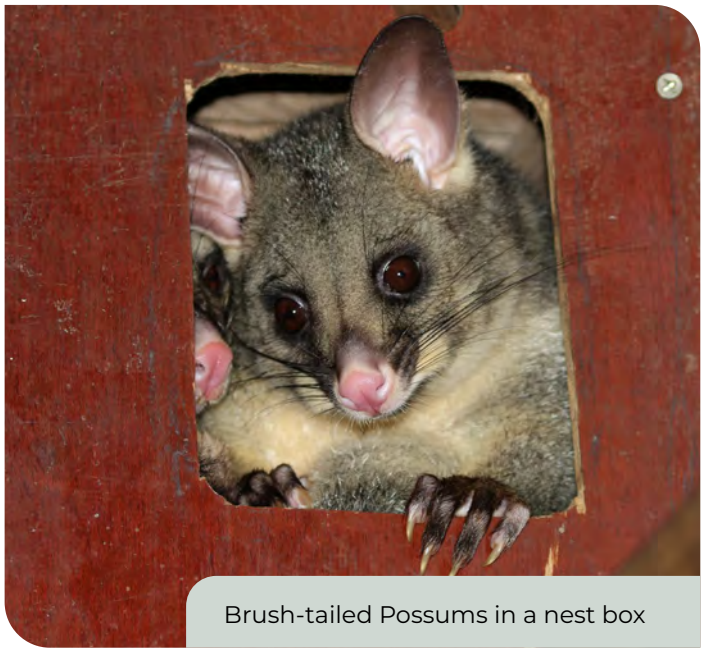
Did you know?

- Echidna and Platypus are the only two egg laying mammals, or monotremes in the world.
- Female Eastern Grey Kangaroos and Swamp Wallabies can suspend the development of embyros in the womb, called diapause, while waiting for the joey in the pouch to mature and become a joey at foot.
- Wombats and Koalas are closely related, sharing a common marsupial ancestor. They both have similar shaped skulls and backwards facing pouches.
- Brush-tailed Possums live on their own unless they have joeys. They are about the size of a cat and have a thick brushy tail. Ring-tailed Possums are much smaller, live socially in family units, and have a white tip on the end of their thin tail. These possums are among the few native marsupials that has been able to readily adapt to suburban living.
- Krefft's Glider (formerly called Sugar Glider) and Brush-tailed Phascogale are much rarer marsupials, only found in rural areas with lots of mature trees providing food and nesting hollows.
- Craigieburn and Mickleham are a hotspot in Melbourne for microbat diversity with 12 different species recorded. Microbats are great to have in your garden as they feed on insects, capturing up to a third of their body weight in insects every night.
- The Grey-headed Flying-fox, otherwise known as fruit bats, do indeed love eating fruit. They camp in large, noisy communal groups, hanging from trees during the day, and fly out across large areas to find food at night time.

Drey nest (WIRES)

Microbat nest boxes

Bare-nosed Wombat (PM)



Brush-tailed Possums in a nest box

Microbat nest boxes

Gould's Wattle Bat will use specially designed microbat nest boxes. Other species of microbat prefer roosting in large, dead or living Eucalyptus, either in hollow limbs, under slabs of bark, or fissures split into the trunk.

- Install the nest box 4 – 6 m high, in a sunny place, with plenty of open space underneath so the bats can fly in and out easily.
- Ensure there are no nearby ledges that a cat could use to access the nest box.
- Never handle injured or sick microbats – always contact a specialist wildlife rescuer.

Plants to attract mammals

- Tall trees with hollows.
- Flowering and fruiting plants.
- Retain dense shrubs, grasses, and low groundcovers to provide shelter.
- Krefft's Gliders are closely associated with wattles, often gnawing on their trunks to drink the sweet sap that flows:
  - Black Wattle *(Acacia mearnsii)*
  - Silver Wattle *(Acacia dealbata)*
  - Myrtle Wattle *(Acacia myrtifolia)*.
- The best Gum trees to plant for Koala's to feed on, that are indigenous to Melbourne:
  - Manna Gum *(Eucalyptus viminalis)*
  - Swamp Gum *(Eucalyptus ovata)*
  - River Red Gum *(Eucalyptus camaldulensis)*
  - Yellow Gum *(Eucalyptus leucoxylon)*
  - Red Box *(Eucalyptus polyanthemos)*
- Kangaroos typically graze on native grasses but can develop the Staggers, which is a fatal neurological toxicity, after eating introduced Phalaris grass.
- Swamp Wallabies tend to browse on shrubs, ferns, bark, fungi, and young tree seedlings.

Facebook groups

👉Australian Mammal Identification

Living with Wildlife

Australia is home to an extraordinary array of wildlife and many unique species exist nowhere else on Earth. Unfortunately, this rich biodiversity is under great threat. Habitat loss, invasive species, and the growing pressures of climate change are pushing many plants and animals toward decline, and ultimately, to extinction.

Human activity remains the greatest challenge to nature's survival, yet it also holds the most potential for positive change. We can all play a vital role in protecting Australia's natural heritage – by living more harmoniously with wildlife, reducing the risks they face, getting them help when they need it, and creating safe habitat.

Responsible pet ownership

We love our pets as part of our family, but pets can unintentionally harm or kill wildlife. Reducing their contact with wildlife protects both your pets and native animals from injury, stress, and disease.

👉Responsible pet ownership - Hume City Council

How to be a wildlife-friendly pet owner:

Microchip and register your pet

- Ensures that lost pets are returned quickly to their owners and reduces the amount of time they could be disturbing wildlife.
- Registration is due annually by 10 April.

👉Register your pet - Hume City Council

Desex your pets

- Prevent unwanted litters, and help reduce stray and feral cat populations.
- Desexed pets have much better behaviour, are less likely to roam, and are healthier.

Control your dog

Walk your dog on a leash, unless in designated off-leash parks. This helps protect wildlife from being harassed and also keeps your dog safer.

👉Dogs in parks - Hume City Council

- Confine your dog to your property when unsupervised.
- Exercise your dog daily, and properly train your dog to respond to your commands.

Keep cats indoors

Roaming cats hunt wildlife regardless of how well-fed they are. Indoor cats live longer, safer lives as they do not get into fights with other animals, contract diseases or parasites, or get hit by cars.

👉Cat safe at home - Agriculture Victoria

- Build an outdoor cat enclosure or have cat-proof fencing.
- Collars that are wide, brightly coloured, and have a bell attached are the most effective at alerting wildlife.

👉Appropriate cat collars - Birds Be Safe

Never leave unwanted pets in the bush

Contact your local animal shelter to surrender unwanted pets. Besides the impact they could have on native animals, unwanted pets may not survive and will suffer needlessly.

Cat up a tree

Avoid feeding wildlife

Feeding wildlife causes serious health issues, disrupts natural behaviours, and attracts pests. Some food is poisonous to native animals.

Council has a Local Law that bans the feeding of native wildlife and may issue fines where it impacts people's property, wildlife, or the natural environment.

👉Local Laws - Hume City Council

Why feeding wildlife does more harm than good:

- Human food (e.g., bread, pasta, mince meat, etc) lacks the nutrients wildlife needs and can lead to fatal diseases and deformities.
- Feeding changes animal behaviour, increases aggression, alters wildlife populations, and draws in pest birds.
- Food scraps attract rats, foxes, and stray cats, who then kill more native wildlife.
- Feeding on roadsides or nature strips increases the risk of wildlife being hit by cars.

What you can do instead:

- Place unwanted food in your food and garden waste bin (green lid).
- Create a habitat garden with native plants, mulch, and water sources to naturally support wildlife.

Leading Australian agencies and experts advise people not to feed wildlife, including Wildlife Victoria, Zoos Victoria, WIRES, RSPCA, and state government authorities.

👉A guide to feeding wild birds in Australia - BirdLife Australia

If you still choose to feed wildlife, only give small amounts of natural and raw food (e.g., vegetables, seeds, or fruit), clean feeding stations regularly, and avoid creating dependency.

King Parrots eating seed

Deter pest birds

Invasive, introduced birds compete with native birds for food and shelter. Aggressive birds like the Common Myna take over nest hollows, killing the chicks and the eggs of other birds. They can spread disease, and may build large nests inside roof cavities that are a fire risk.

How you can deter pest birds:

- Remove outdoor food sources. Only feed pets indoors, have lids securely on compost bins, and do not leave out food for any birds.
- Seal roof cavities and block nest entry points.
- Replace exotic trees that introduced birds prefer to nest and roost in with native plants.
- Densely plant gardens to attract native birds and reduce open spaces that pest birds like.

Council does not offer a trapping program but can provide guidance on how to trap and humanely dispatch the Common Myna. As an introduced species, it is not protected under Victoria's *Wildlife Act* (1975).

Note: The native Noisy Miner is also aggressive and can be mistaken for the Common Myna. However, like all native wildlife, Noisy Miner are a protected species.

Common Myna versus Noisy Miner

Common Myna:

Black head

Bright yellow beak and eye patch

Chocolate brown body

White wing patches (visible in flight)

Long yellow legs

Noisy Miner:

Black mask around eyes and white forehead

Yellow beak and eye patch

Olive upper body, grey breast, and white belly

Olive edge to wings

Pale yellow legs

Wildlife safe fruit netting

Fruit tree netting can trap and kill flying-foxes, birds, possums, and reptiles.

It is illegal to use netting with mesh larger than 5mm by 5mm; where you can poke your finger through the holes. Fines of up to $3,000 can apply in the domestic use of illegal netting.

👉Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulations (2019)

Choose netting with a mesh size of less than two millimetres, or use shade cloth, to further reduce the risk of wildlife entanglement.

Legal versus illegal fruit netting

👉Harvest without Harm - Agriculture Victoria

How you can reduce the risk of fruit netting to wildlife:

- Use white-coloured netting with a cross-weave design to help nocturnal animals see and avoid it at night.
- Secure netting tightly to frames, tree trunks, and the ground to prevent access underneath.
- Use fruit protection bags or sleeves instead of netting the entire tree.
- Check nets daily. Remove when not in use.
- Safely dispose of old netting by placing it into a garbage bag, then into your garbage bin (red lid).

If you find entangled wildlife in netting:

For your own safety, do try to handle or rescue the animal. Contact Wildlife Victoria for an experienced rescuer to help injured wildlife. Call (03) 8400 7300 or report online.

👉wildlifevictoria.org.au

Tawny Frogmouth

Integrated pest management

Reducing our use of pesticides supports a much healthier garden ecosystem, with insects being essential food for many native animals.

What to avoid using:

Rat and mouse poisons (SGAR)

- Harmful rat and mice baits also poison owls, Tawny Frogmouths, Kookaburras, other birds, and pets that eat the dying rodents.
- Second-generation Anticoagulants Rodenticides (SGAR), with brodifacoum, bromadiolone, and similar toxins as active ingredients, should not be used.

👉Rat Poison — Act for Birds, Birdlife Australia

See this website for better ways to control rodents, that keep wildlife and pets safe.

Snail and slug bait (Metaldehyde-based)

- Dangerous to Blue-tongue Lizards, birds, and pets who eat poisoned snails and slugs.

Bug zappers and sticky glue paper traps

- Zappers disrupt insect-predator food webs.
- Birds, lizards, and frogs that are drawn in by the trapped insects also get stuck and die.

Wildlife safe pest control:

Rats and mice: Only use FGAR baits, seal holes, secure food, clean up around your property, use humane or snap traps, and encourage natural predators like owls.

Snails and slugs: Use beer traps, copper tape, crushed eggshells, night-time hand removal, or have chickens and ducks to eat them.

Insects: Attract natural predators like spiders, praying mantis, hover flies, lace wings, frogs, lizards, micro-bats, and birds.

Injured wildlife

If you come across injured, sick, or orphaned wildlife, act quickly but carefully to give the animal the best chance of survival. Keep your own safety in mind too.

1. Observe from a distance: Some animals (especially young birds or marsupials) may appear abandoned but are still being cared for by their parents.
2. Do not touch unless necessary: Wildlife can be easily stressed or may lash out when frightened. Only handle the animal if it is in immediate danger (e.g., on a road, being attacked by a pet).
3. Contact a wildlife rescue organisation:

- Wildlife Victoria: call (03) 8400 7300 or make a report online.

👉wildlifevictoria.org.au

- Help for Injured Wildlife: Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) have an online tool to locate local wildlife carers for specific animals.

👉Help for Injured Wildlife - DEECA

- Local vet clinics: Many are trained to treat or assess native wildlife. There is no cost charged by vets to assist native animals.
- Wildlife Emergency App: Make reports of injured animals to DEECA during natural emergencies such as fires or floods.

👉Wildlife Emergencies - DEECA

4. Gently contain the animal: If safe to do so, wear gloves or use a towel to gently place the animal in a well-ventilated box lined with a soft cloth. Keep it warm, quiet, and dark to reduce stress.
5. Do not offer food or water: Feeding or watering injured wildlife can do more harm than good. Wait until a licensed wildlife carer advises you on next steps.

Your actions could save a life. By taking the right steps and seeking expert help, you are giving injured wildlife the best chance of recovery and return to the wild.

Wildlife – vehicle collisions

As Hume City continues to grow, the mix of urban expansion and rural landscapes has led to a rise in wildlife-vehicle collisions, particularly on roads with speed limits of 80 km/h or more.

Eastern Grey Kangaroos are especially vulnerable. Collisions often result in serious injury or death for animals, vehicle damage, and distress for drivers and wildlife rescuers.

1. To help reduce the risk of collisions:

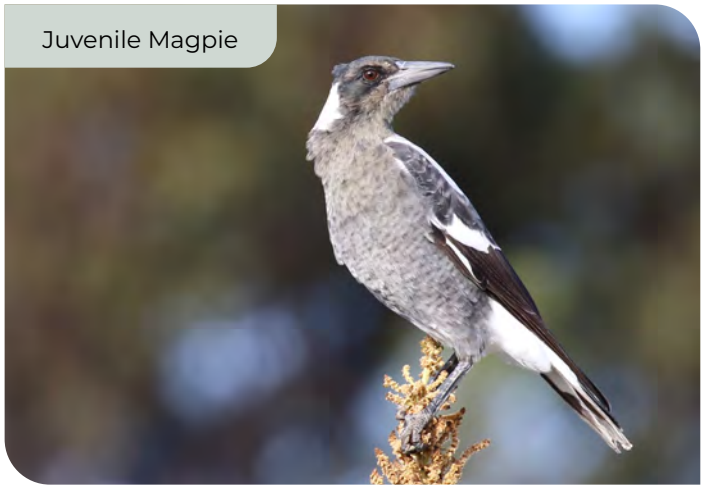
- Slow down when driving at dawn, dusk, and night as these are peak times for wildlife activity. Slower speeds give you and animals more time to react.
- Use hazard lights and warn other drivers if animals are on or near the road.
- Dip your headlights and beep your horn. If an animal is frozen in your headlights, switch to low beam and use short beeps to encourage it to move, if safe to do so. Bright lights can disorient wildlife and cause panic.

2. If you encounter injured or dead wildlife:

- Report it to Wildlife Victoria. This is especially important for marsupials (e.g., kangaroos, wallabies, possums, and wombats) whose pouches may carry live young. Reports also contribute vital data to improve road safety.
- Call 000 for the Police if the animal is a traffic hazard. Police can assist with traffic control, removal, or humane euthanasia.

Many incidents go unreported, meaning data and rescue opportunities are lost. A few simple actions can avoid incidents and save lives.

Eastern Grey Kangaroo



Juvenile Magpie

Young birds

Finding a young bird on the ground can be worrying, but not all baby birds need rescuing. Many are still under the care of their parents, even if they're no longer in the nest.

1. Assess the situation:

Is it a nestling or a fledgling?

- Nestlings are featherless or have only down. They can't walk or perch and do need help.
- Fledglings are mostly feathered, can hop or flutter, and don't usually need help, as their parents are likely nearby.

2. Take action:

If it is a nestling:

- Return it to the nest if possible.
- Or place the nestling in a small, shallow container with drainage holes and lined with soft nesting material. Secure it up in a nearby tree and observe from a distance to see if the parents return.

If it is a fledgling:

- Leave it alone unless it's in danger.
- Keep pets and children away and watch to see if the parents come back.
- If it is in a hazardous spot, like a road, gently move it to nearby shrubs or a shaded area.

3. When to seek help:

- The bird is visibly injured or bleeding.
- No parent returns after an hour (watch from a distance).
- The bird is being stalked by predators or is in immediate risk.
- You are unsure what to do.

Contact a licensed wildlife rescue organisation, like Wildlife Victoria, for advice or assistance.

Living with native animals

We share our suburbs, parks, and backyards with many native animals. Living with wildlife means sharing these spaces, sometimes with challenges, but also with great rewards and enrichment. Understanding wildlife behaviour and their needs can help us live alongside animals safely, respectfully, and peacefully.

Native animals are protected under Victorian law (*Wildlife Act* 1975). It is illegal to harm, harass, capture, or relocate wildlife without the appropriate permits or authorisation.

👉Wildlife - DEECA

Swooping Magpies

In spring, some male Magpies swoop to protect their nests and young from perceived threats. This is a learnt behaviour to drive certain people out of their territory. They rarely make contact or injure people. Magpies stop swooping once their chicks have fledged.

Tips for living with Magpies:

- Avoid known nesting areas during breeding season. Move 100m away from their nests.
- Maintain eye contact and point your hand at the bird as you move through his territory, as Magpies tend to swoop from behind you.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, or carry an umbrella for protection.
- Stay calm – don't wave your arms or throw objects, as this can escalate aggression.
- Leave fledglings alone; interfering is seen by parents as a threat and makes them swoop.

Snakes

Snakes are most active from spring through autumn. Common species include Eastern Brown Snakes, Tiger Snakes, and Lowland Copperheads; all are venomous but quite shy. Snakes play a very important role in the ecosystem as predators of rodents and frogs.

Tips for living with snakes:

- Keep grass short and gardens tidy to reduce shelter and food sources.
- Don't attempt to handle or approach snakes.
- If you see a snake, calmly back away, stand still, and give it plenty of space to escape.
- Safely restrain children and contain pets until the snake leaves the area.
- Contact a licensed snake catcher, or call Council on (03) 9205 2200 if the snake is causing concern in a public area.

Kangaroos and Wallabies

Kangaroos and wallabies are frequently seen in grasslands and rural parts of Hume City, especially at dawn and dusk. While usually shy, male kangaroos can become aggressive if they feel threatened or are used to being fed. Feeding kangaroos and wallabies can alter their behaviour and increase the risk of injury to people and animals.

Tips for living with kangaroos:

- Do not feed kangaroos as bread causes a painful and fatal disease called Lumpy Jaw.
- Do not approach. Keep a respectful distance, especially from large, protective males and mothers with joeys.
- Take care when driving through kangaroo habitat, especially during low light hours.
- Always walk dogs on a lead in areas where kangaroos live.

Swamp Wallaby

Possums

Common Brush-tail and Ring-tail Possums are active at night and often use roofs, sheds, or dense trees for shelter. Possums are protected native wildlife and any relocation must be carried out by a licensed wildlife handler.

Tips for living with possums:

- Block roof access if possums are living in your ceiling, but only after confirming they have left.
- Provide a nest box in a nearby tree to encourage relocation.
- Use garden-safe deterrents (like strong-smelling substances or motion lights) to discourage foraging in certain areas.

Ring-tailed Possum

Cockatoos and Corellas

Cockatoos and corellas are intelligent and social birds. Their curiosity can lead to damage, such as chewing on window frames, timber decks, or outdoor furniture. Feeding cockatoos disrupts natural behaviours and creates long-term problems for both people and birds.

Tips for living with cockatoos and corellas:

- Avoid feeding cockatoos, as it attracts large flocks and reinforces destructive behaviour.
- Use visual deterrents (e.g., shiny objects or predator silhouettes) to protect valued areas.
- Rotate deterrents regularly, as cockatoos quickly adapt.

Little Corella

Indigenous Plants

Using indigenous plants creates gardens and landscapes that are both beautiful and ecologically sustainable. These species evolved to thrive in our local soil and climatic conditions. Indigenous plants are the best habitat for native wildlife. Your garden can also reflect the unique character and cultural heritage of the area. Preserve rare and threatened flora, while building climate resilience in urban and natural spaces.

Importance of indigenous species

Several reasons why we should use indigenous (locally native) plant species include:

1. Ecological Compatibility: Indigenous plants are naturally adapted to local soil, climate, and rainfall conditions, making them more resilient. They often require less water, fertiliser, and maintenance. Indigenous plants also benefit from the ecological services native animals provide, such as pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, soil aeration, and nutrient cycling.
2. Conserving Biodiversity: Local provenance plants (e.g., seed was collected in the same region where plants will be grown) provide essential food and shelter for local wildlife, who don't thrive with introduced exotic species of plants. Many indigenous plants have become increasingly rare in the wild, and we can save them from extinction by growing them in our gardens.
3. Cultural and Environmental Value: Indigenous plants are part of the unique landscape character and cultural heritage of an area. It enhances connections to Country, as well as to Aboriginal and Torres Stait Islander peoples' ecological knowledge, land management practices, and utilisation of plants for food, fibre, medicines, and tools.
4. Weed Risk Reduction: Locally native species are less likely to become invasive compared to non-native plants, helping prevent ecological imbalances and reduce costs of weed control.
5. Climate Change Resilience: Plants already adapted to local conditions are more likely to cope with changing weather patterns, lowering reliance on irrigation and chemical inputs.
6. Soil Health and Erosion Control: Indigenous species support healthy soil ecosystems and can stabilise soils more effectively in their natural environment, helping to minimise erosion.
7. Aesthetic and Educational Value: Using indigenous plants helps people connect with nature, encouraging environmental stewardship and learning about local flora.

Evans Street Native Grassland, Sunbury

Bioregions

Across Australia, large areas with similar geological, climatic, and ecological characteristics are called bioregions.

Two bioregions occur in Hume City:

- Victorian Volcanic Plain (VVP) with the greatest extent (in light blue above), and
- Central Victorian Uplands (CVU) with the lesser extent (purple shaded area).

The plants recommended in this booklet are indigenous to the VVP, also known as the Western Basalt Plains.

Around one million years ago, a series of volcanic eruptions occurred in and around what is now Hume City.

👉Map of Victoria's volcanoes

Lava flows created stony knolls and shaped natural watercourses into creeks, which carved valleys and deep, rocky escarpments over time.

As the lava cooled, it formed the basalt rock commonly known as bluestone, which remains a defining feature of the region. Surface basalt rocks eroded into fine particles that make clay soils, the dominant soil type in Hume City.

These clay soils crack wide open in our hot, dry summers, and become sticky and waterlogged during cold, wet winters.

With a low annual rainfall (less than 550mm per year), fires regularly burnt across the landscape, started by lightning strikes and Aboriginal people.

Tree seedlings struggled to survive frequent fires, and the extreme seasonal changes in the clay soils. As a result, much of the VVP and Hume City was historically covered by native grasslands and open grassy Eucalypt woodlands.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC)

The Victorian system of classifying different plant communities is called Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC).

The following maps show the former extent of these EVC prior to European settlement (pre-1750s) and then in 2005.

Today, only a tiny fraction of the native vegetation that once covered the landscape remains. Much of it was cleared historically for agriculture, and more recently, has been lost to expanding urban development.

All the EVC within Hume City are now classified as endangered or vulnerable.

Nature Conservation Reserves

Over 100 Nature Conservation Reserves (NCR) exist in Hume City to protect some waterways, and the small pockets of native grasslands and grassy woodlands that survive.

Over 200 plant species have populations only in one or a few NCR, placing those species at significant risk of regional extinction.

This loss of habitat, combined with the pressures of introduced species, has had devastating effects on Australia's unique biodiversity, leading to sharp declines in many populations of plants and animals.

In the face of climate change, creating and maintaining wildlife-friendly gardens has become more vital than ever, offering much-needed refuge.

By growing rare indigenous plants, including beautiful wildflowers in our private gardens, we can help conserve local species and support the pollinators that depend on them.

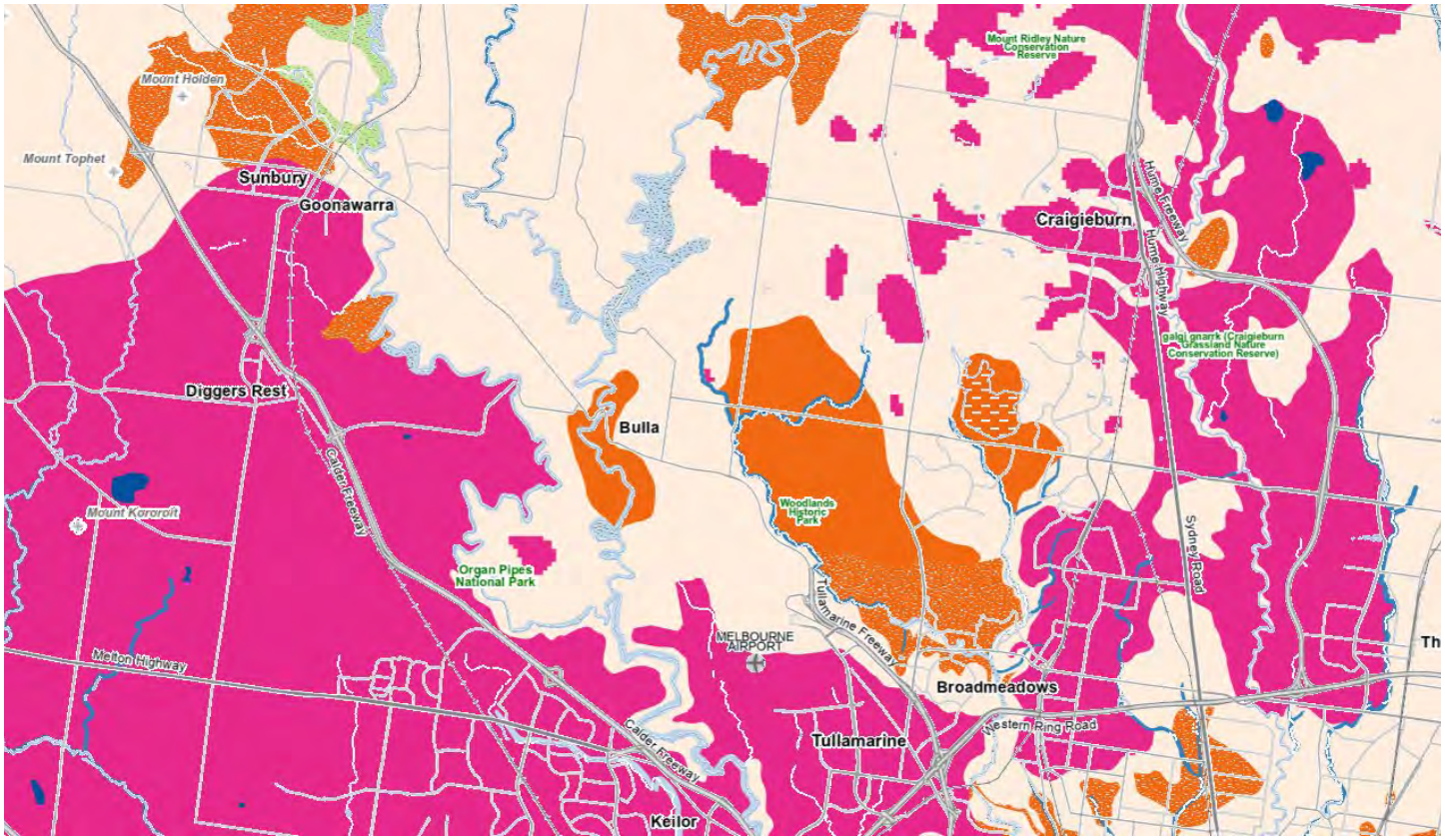
Every additional patch of wildlife habitat also strengthens ecological connectivity, turning gardens into vital stepping stones that link parks, nature reserves, and waterways, enabling wildlife to move through the landscape.

Conserving natural heritage, also protects cultural heritage as many of these plants are used by First Nations people too, for food, fibre, medicine, and to make tools.

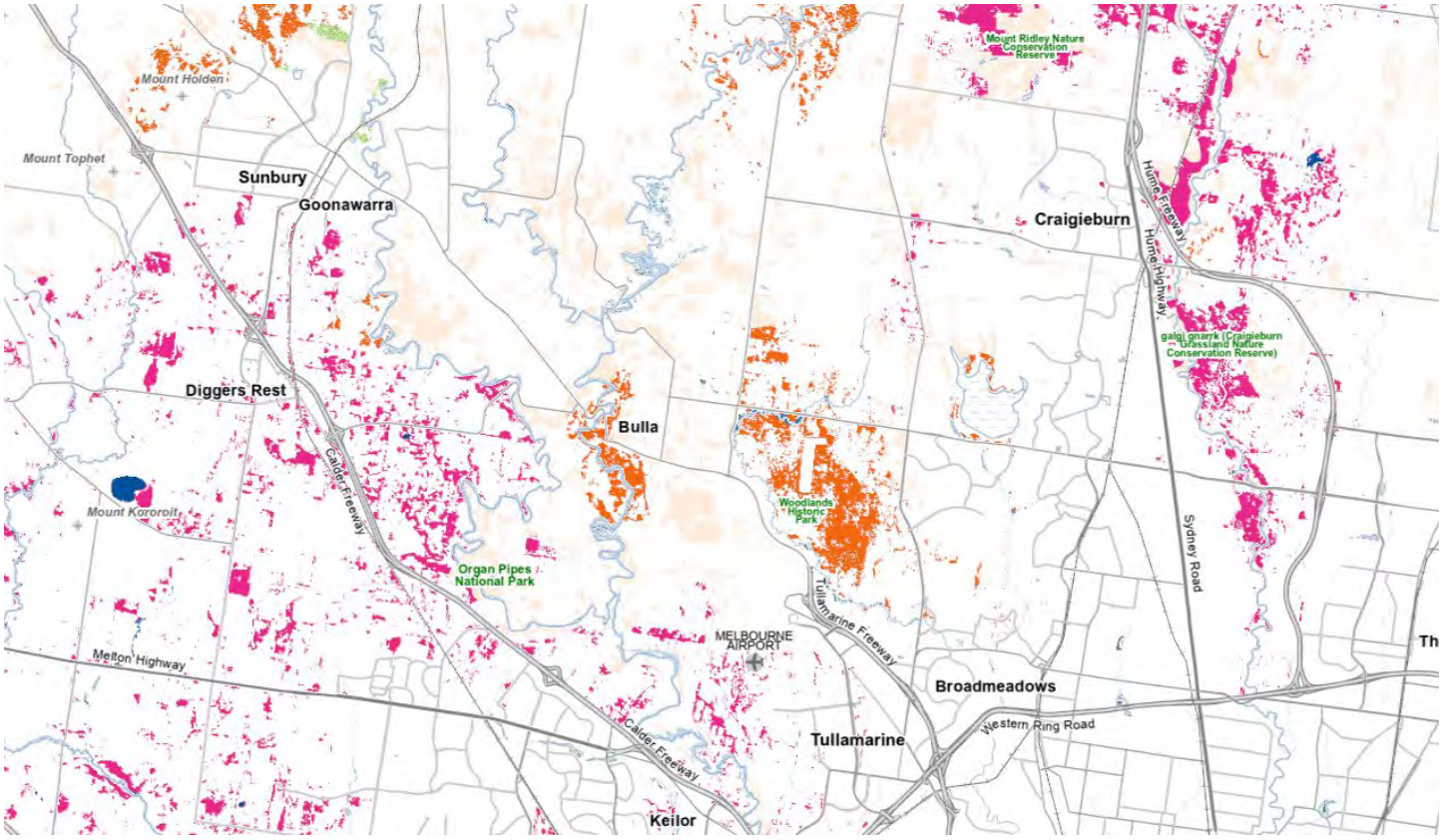
Through G4W, we can increase numbers of native plants and animals, expand their populations, and make local biodiversity healthier and more resilient to threats.

Our key message: Plant plenty of indigenous plants – and then plant some more!

Map of modelled Ecological Vegetation Classes prior to 1750 (Source: NatureKit)



Map of Ecological Vegetation Classes remaining in 2005 (Source: NatureKit)



Plains Grassland

Plains Grassy Woodland

Hills Herb-rich Woodland

This key is for the three main EVC. There are more EVC found in Hume City, viewed at finer map scales.

Note: Much of the EVCs mapped in 2005 have been further cleared or degraded since then.

Selecting plants

Plant selection is a personal choice. Consider what is required to look after them and the available space you have got to fill.

When choosing plants:

- Group plants with similar requirements or tolerances together. Ensure they are suitable for the conditions, topography, or micro-climates in your garden. Most importantly consider the amount of light they will get over the year, and the level of soil moisture available, as well as soil type, soil pH, frosts, winds, etc.
- Space plants to account for their full size expected at maturity (i.e., height and width) so not planting too close to buildings, fences, or paths. Otherwise, be prepared to prune back, or remove.
- When layering plants, consider scale with shorter plants in the foreground, and large plants to the back.
- Mass plant with multiples of the same species in swathes, clusters, or clumps.

Remember we need diverse plant species to support a diversity of wildlife.

The importance of layering plants

Plants come in different sizes, shapes and forms. Their growth habits include trees, shrubs, bushes, climbers, grasses, wildflowers, and groundcovers. It is the provision of the various plant forms and layers together, that is most effective in attracting wildlife:

Upper layer

The upper layer, which includes street and neighbouring trees, acts as a corridor for wildlife to move through the landscape. Trees are especially important in providing nesting or roosting sites for larger birds, possums, and micro-bats.

Mid layer

The middle layer of shrubs, bushes and climbers adds plenty of food. This mid-storey also provides nesting sites for the smaller birds and shelter from larger bully birds.

Ground layer

The ground layer, when planted with various grasses, wildflowers, and groundcovers, is like a supermarket for birds, butterflies, bees, frogs, lizards, and other insects. It provides protection for wildlife, acts as living green mulch, and help builds up the microbiota in healthy soils.

Large trees
Provide food and shelter for birds, possums, koalas, gliders, bats, and insects

Small trees and large shrubs
Habitat for birds, possums, tree frogs, reptiles, and insects

Small shrubs and climbers
Habitat for birds, wallabies, reptiles, frogs, and insects

Grasses, wildflowers and groundcovers
Habitat for birds, kangaroos, reptiles, frogs, and insects

Logs, mulch and rocks
Habitat for lizards, frogs, insects, and microbiota

Flora for your garden

The following pages of 50 indigenous plants are grouped by their growth form or habit. The height (H) and width (W) ranges indicate the plant's size at maturity.

Note that the size ranges in this booklet are approximate, based on several references. The mature size will be dependent on the environmental conditions they grow under.

Ensure you plant them with appropriate spacing and sufficient room to grow.

These icons represent the conditions required, the wildlife the plants attract or support, and how they could be used in your garden.

Grey-shaded icons are not applicable to that species.

Each plant's botanical name links to its species profile on the Flora of Victoria website, from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Here you will find detailed descriptions, distribution maps, seasonal information, and more images.

👉Flora of Victoria

Light requirements

Grows best in full sun conditions.

Grows fine in part sun to part shade conditions. Prefers at least four to six hours of sunlight per day.

Grows okay in full shade conditions.

Note: As Hume City's indigenous plants evolved in native grasslands and open grassy woodlands, we do not have many plants that tolerate full shade.

Water requirements

Has low watering requirements. Is drought tolerant.

Thrives best in moist, well-drained soils. Will benefit from supplementary watering when it has been dry.

Has high watering requirements. Tolerates flooding and temporary inundation. Good for frog bogs, around dams, or along waterways.

Interesting uses

Bush-tucker

Used by First Nations peoples for food, fibre, medicine and/or tools.

See the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Flora List* for more detailed information about the plant's Aboriginal cultural use.

Grows in pots

For renters, growing plants in pots means they can move with you. Plants in pots can also be shifted around the garden to meet their needs as the seasons change.

Wildlife

Birds

Provides shelter, nesting sites, roosting perches, nectar, pollen, leaves, seeds, fruits, or attracts insect prey for a variety of birds.

Butterflies

Provides shelter, nectar for adult butterflies, or is a caterpillar host food plant.

Bees

Provides nectar and pollen for native bees and their brood larvae.

Lizards

Provides shelter, fruits, leaves, or attracts insect prey for small lizards.

Frogs

Provides shelter for adult frogs, or attracts insect prey. Is suited to growing in waterlogged soils, in or around a frog bog.

Mammals

Provides shelter, nesting hollows, nectar, leaves, seeds, fruits or attracts insect prey for various mammals.

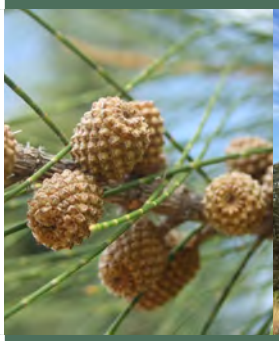
Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*)


- H: 6 – 10m W: 3 – 6m
- Lives 15 – 30 years. Good for privacy screens, shade, in erosion control, & windbreaks.
- Clusters of creamy-yellow flowers Dec-Apr.
- Mature canopy can be sparse.
- Drought tolerant. Thrives in dry, shallow soils; copes with moist well-drained soils.

Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*)


- H: 4 – 8m W: 3 – 6m
- Fast growing, small tree, lives 10 – 15 years.
- Profuse golden flowers in winter or spring.
- Supports caterpillars of some butterfly species. Sap is eaten by Krefft's Glider.
- Drought tolerant, & tolerates mild frosts. Prefers dry, well-drained loamy soils.

Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*)




- H: 4 – 10m W: 3 – 6m
- Graceful weeping form as branchlets drop down, & grey-green needle-like foliage.
- Slow-growing & long lived at 50+ years.
- Cockatoos & parrots eat the cones.
- Very drought & wind tolerant. Thrives in poor but well-drained soils.

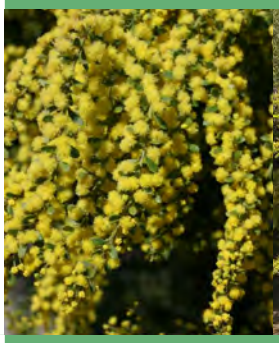
Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*)


- H: 2 – 8m W: 1 – 5m
- Excellent small habitat tree for all gardens.
- Variable growth form. Stiff green leaves have silvery underside.
- Lives 50 – 100 years in good conditions.
- Has flowers & cones for most of the year.
- Drought tolerant, dislikes waterlogging.

Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*)


- H: 10 – 20m W: 8 – 15m
- Large tree, with strips of bark at base of trunk, & smooth upper limbs.
- Surviving for over 100 years.
- Profuse flowering attracts most animals, & forms hollows for nesting sites.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Adaptable to various well-drained soils.

Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*)




- H: 1 – 2m W: 2 – 3m
- Dense rounded form, arching branches.
- Bright golden flowering peaks in Sept.
- Good in mid-layer; is low maintenance.
- Attracts pollinators & provides shelter for various ground-dwelling animals.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Well-drained soils.

Sweet Bursaria, Kurwan (*Bursaria spinosa*)


- H: 6 – 10m W: 3 – 6m
- Variable form, as small tree to large shrub.
- Prickly branches, small leaves, & masses of fragrant cream flowers in summer.
- Great for small birds, bees, & butterflies.
- Tolerates drought, frost, & exposed sites. Adapted to range of well-drained soils.

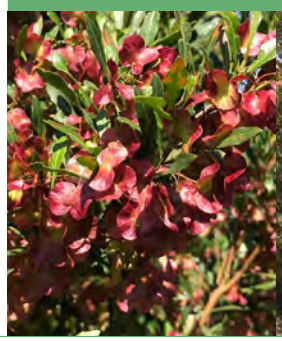
River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*)


- H: 2 – 5m W: 2 – 3m
- Large, weeping shrub; can be pruned.
- Plant near waterways & for windbreaks.
- Creamy-green flowers in spring & summer.
- Attracts range of pollinators & small fauna.
- Tolerates dry conditions to periodic flooding, & frosts. Suits clay to loamy soils.

Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*)


- H: 1 – 2m W: 1 – 3m
- Dense, small shrub, great for mid-layer.
- Prune or hedge to shape after flowering.
- Yellowish tubular bell flowers, long-flowering period, peaking over winter.
- Drought, frost & shade-tolerant. Prefers well-drained soils, from clay to rocky sites.

Wedge-leaf Hop-bush (*Dodonaea viscosa*)




- H: 2 – 3m W: 2 – 3m
- Upright shrub, good for privacy screens.
- Sticky green leaves, & papery winged fruits are green to reddish-purple in spring.
- Food & shelter for small birds & insects.
- Highly drought, wind & frost tolerant. Adapted to poor, sandy, & rocky soils.

Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*)


- H: 1 – 2m W: 1 – 2m
- Quick growing shrub, copes with shady spots, & responds well to pruning.
- Long flowering period, peaks in spring.
- Attracts lots of insects & birds.
- Prefers moist, well-drained soils, but is drought tolerant once established.

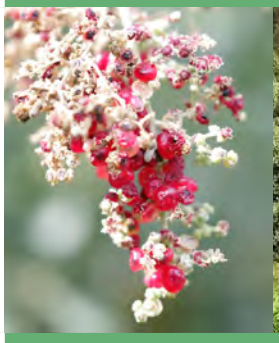
Rosemary Grevillea (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*)


- H: 0.5 – 2m W: 0.5 – 2m
- Prune to shape, stiff Rosemary-like leaves.
- Red to pink spider-like flowers throughout dense shrub, mainly in winter & spring.
- Attracts range of nectar feeders, & dense form is excellent habitat for small birds.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Prefers well-drained soils.

Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*)


- H: 1 – 2m W: 1 – 2m
- Fast growing, soft branches with bluey fern-like leaves, & has open, sparse form.
- Mauve pink sprays of pea-flowers in spring.
- Is adaptable, better in a sheltered position.
- Tolerant of both drought & water-logging, but prefers dry, well-drained soils.

Fragrant Saltbush (*Rhagodia parabolica*)




- H: 1 – 2m W: 1 – 2m
- New name is *Chenopodium parabolicum*.
- Silvery foliage on hardy, spreading shrub.
- Insignificant flowers followed by bright red berries; great source of food and shelter.
- Highly drought & salt tolerant. Thrives in dry, exposed sites & various soils.

Large Kangaroo-apple (*Solanum laciniatum*)


- H: 1 – 3m W: 1 – 3m
- Fast-growing but short-lived, up to 5 years. Self-seeds readily. Good for a quick screen.
- Leaves look like kangaroo footprints. Purple flowers turn to green (toxic) fruit, which are edible when mature (orange).
- Frost tender when young. Drought tolerant. Prefers moist well-drained soils.

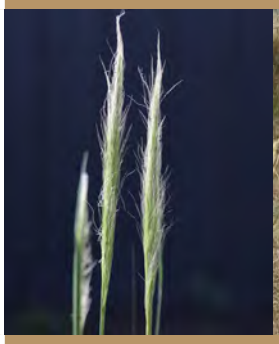
Windmill Grass (*Chloris truncata*)


- H: 20 – 40cm W: 20 – 50cm
- Small tussock with bright green leaves; native lawn substitute in sunny areas.
- Distinctive large windmill seedheads dispersed by wind in summer & autumn.
- Seeds for birds & shelter for insects.
- Drought tolerant. Adapted to poor soils.

Silky Blue-grass (*Dichanthium sericeum*)


- H: 30 – 80cm W: 10 – 40cm
- Ornamental, fine, silvery-blue leaves. Great for rockeries & to colonise bare soils.
- Readily self-seeds, from velvety seedheads.
- Food for grazing herbivores, seed for birds, & shelter for small animls.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Found in dry, open, well-drained sites.

Long-hair Plume-grass (*Dichelachne crinita*)




- H: 50 – 100cm W: 30 – 60cm
- Visually distinctive hairy seed plumes on tall stems above a tussock of fine leaves.
- Self-seeds from seed dropped in summer.
- Food & shelter for small birds & insects.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Adapted to a range of well-drained soils.

Common Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardierei*)

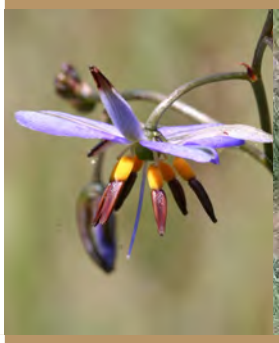

- H: 50 – 120cm W: 50 – 100cm
- Fast-growing, dense tussock with rolled leaf blades, bearing tall flowering stems & fine seedheads in spring & summer.
- Excellent all-round wildlife habitat plant. Caterpillar host plant for several species.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Thrives in moderately moist to dry soils. Very hardy.

Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)


- H: 30 – 100cm W: 20 – 60cm
- Iconic native grass with bronzed leaves & distinctive rusty-red seedheads in summer.
- Adds colour & movement to the garden.
- Another fabulous wildlife habitat plant.
- Highly drought & frost tolerant. Prefers well-drained soils; grows in low-nutrients.

Grass-like and Sedges

Spreading Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*)

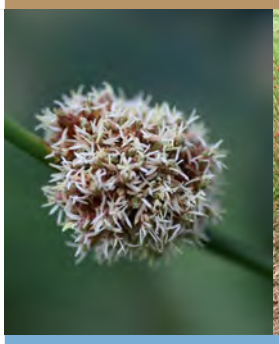
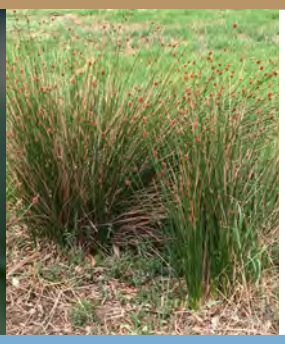



- H: 40cm – 100cm W: 10cm – Spreading
- Forms a perennial, strappy-leaved clump.
- Bears flowering sprays of purple-blue star-shaped blooms, followed by purple berries.
- Excellent wildlife habitat plant. Adored by Blue-banded Bees.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Grows in wide range of soils and conditions.

Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)


- H: 50 – 100cm W: 50 – 100cm
- Strappy-leaved clump for mass planting, rockeries, borders, & is low maintenance.
- Fragrant, yellow flower spikes in spring.
- Great source of shelter, food, & nesting materials for a wide range of wildlife.
- Extremely hardy. Tolerates drought, frost, shade, inundation, and poor soils.

Knobby Club-rush (*Ficinia nodosa*)

- H: 30 – 90cm W: 30 – 60cm
- Ornamental clumping sedge; rounded stems & retains brown seedheads on tips.
- Low maintenance with architectural look, use in rain gardens, & for erosion control.
- Highly tolerant of salt, wind, frosts, drought & waterlogging. Very hardy.

Climbers

Small-leaved Clematis (*Clematis microphylla*)


- H: 0.5 – 5m W: Spreading
- Vigorous climber or rambler, with fine small leaves, cream-coloured star (male) or tubular (female) flowers, & fluffy seed.
- Ideal for growing on a trellis, up fences, & over shrubs or stumps.
- Flowers attract pollinators. Good shelter.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Well-drained soils.

Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)


- H: 0.5 – 3m W: Spreading
- Sold as Happy Wanderer; a vigorous climber or rambling groundcover.
- Smothered in purple pea-flowers in late winter to spring, with glossy green leaves.
- Many animals utilise this plant.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Likes well-drained soils; adaptable to varied conditions.

Berry or Creeping Saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*)


- H: 10 – 30cm W: 100 – 200cm
- Mat-forming perennial with silver-grey leaves & small, orange berries (Jan to May).
- Great as a green mulch; grows well under trees in dry, shady conditions as “bird halo”.
- Birds & lizards eat fruit, spreading seed.
- Very hardy, tolerant of drought & frost.

Inland Pigface (*Carpobrotus modestus*)


- H: 10 – 20cm W: 50cm – Spreading
- Prostrate succulent forming dense mats, with vivid pink flowers & edible fruits.
- Great amount of food & shelter for wildlife.
- Very easy to propagate from cuttings.
- Extremely drought, salt, & wind tolerant. Ideal for sites with poor or sandy soils.

Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*)


- H: 30 – 50cm W: 50 – 150cm
- Hardy, low-growing plant with soft, grey-green succulent leaves, & bears yellow or red fleshy berries for much of the year.
- Use in bushtucker gardens, escarpments, & under trees as dispersed by birds.
- Very drought & salt tolerant. Thrives in poor, sandy or salty soils, & exposed sites.

Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*)


- H: 10 – 20cm W: 50 – 150cm
- Trailing stems with green clover-like leaves & bright red pea flowers in spring.
- Good for hanging baskets, retaining walls.
- Wildlife feed on nectar, pollen, leaves & seeds, & seek shelter in its dense mat.
- Tolerates drought & mild frosts. Thrives in dry, well-drained or gravelly soils.

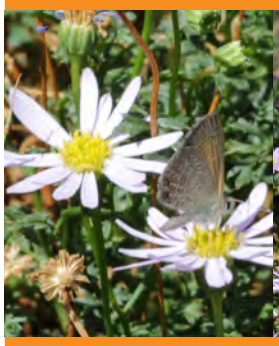
Creeping Boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*)


- H: 10 – 20cm W: 1m – Spreading
- Glossy green or purplish foliage with small, white star-like flowers in spring & summer, followed by purple berries.
- Low maintenance. Good for retaining walls.
- Attracts pollinators, & great for shelter.
- Highly drought, frost, & salt tolerant. Thrives in well-drained soils.

Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*)

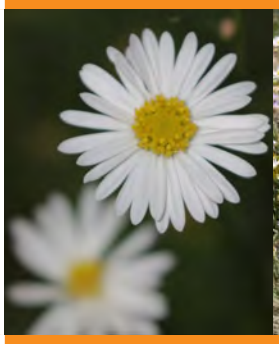
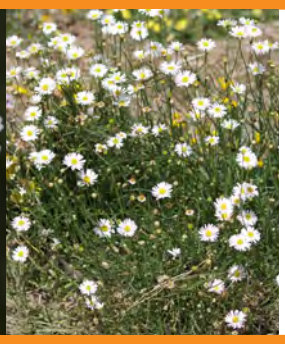

- H: 20 – 60cm W: 20 – 40cm
- Narrow, grass-like leaves with slender stems bearing fragrant purple flowers in spring, smelling faintly of chocolate.
- Ornamental, low maintenance borders.
- Flowers attract pollinators.
- Drought & frost tolerant once established. Prefers well-drained soils.

Cut-leaf Daisy (*Brachyscome multifida*)




- H: 20 – 30cm W: 30 – 100cm
- Compact, spreading perennial with masses of purple, mauve, or occasionally white daisy flowers most of the year.
- Reshoots with pruning, & suckers.
- Flowers supports many beneficial insects.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Prefers well-drained soils.

Basalt Swamp-daisy (*Brachyscome paludicola*)

- H: 20 – 30cm W: 20cm – Spreading
- Very rare wildflower, with masses of small white daisies from spring to autumn.
- Ideal for frog bog gardens, pond edges, rain gardens, & moist native plantings.
- Long-flowering supports lots of pollinators.
- May die back during drought conditions.

Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*)


- H: 20 – 60cm W: 15 – 30cm
- Clumping perennial herb with soft onion-like leaves; bears bright yellow star-shaped flowers, mainly in spring & early summer.
- Easy to collect seed as capsules split open, & ripens up the tall flowering stem.
- Moderately drought & frost tolerant.Prefers moist, well-drained soils.

Lemon Beauty-heads (*Calocephalus citreus*)


- H: 10 – 30cm W: 30 – 100cm
- Small, compact perennial herb with silvery foliage & bright lemon-yellow button-like flower heads in spring to autumn.
- Great mass planted, rockeries & borders.
- Attracts range of pollinating insects.
- Frost & drought tolerant. Thrives in moist, well-drained soils.

Milky Beauty-heads (*Calocephalus lacteus*)


- H: 20 – 30cm W: 20cm – Spreading
- Low, spreading perennial herb, with silvery woolly foliage, & cream to yellow rounded flowers, mainly in spring & summer.
- Good for borders, rockeries & moist areas.
- Flowering attracts pollinators & dense mat provides shelter for small animals.
- Frost & drought tolerant.

Common Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)


- H: 20 – 30cm W: 20cm – Spreading
- Mounding perennial herb that can spread, with grey-green foliage & bright, golden yellow, flowers most of the year.
- Supports various pollinators & gives cover for ground-dwelling animals.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Thrives in well-drained soils.

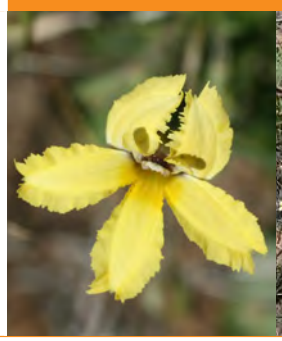
Clustered Everlasting (*C. semipapposum*)


- H: 30 – 100cm W: 50cm – Spreading
- Small, upright, perennial shrub, with green or silver foliage, bearing clusters of bright yellow-orange flowers in spring & summer.
- Prune off stems after flowering finishes.
- Attracts pollinators & provides shelter.
- Drought & frost tolerant, adaptable to well-drained or rocky soils.

Blue Devil, Eryngo (*Eryngium ovinum*)


- H: 30 – 60cm W: 30cm – 100cm
- Upright, clumping perennial with stiff, spiky leaves, & striking metallic blue to purple flower heads in summer.
- Adds bold colour & testure to the garden.
- Attracts bees, wasps & other pollinators.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Prefers well-drained, often heavier clay soils.

Spur Goodenia (*Goodenia paradoxa*)




- H: 10 – 30cm W: 20 – 50cm
- Low, spreading perennial, with soft green, toothed leaves & ring of yellow, fan-shaped flowers, mostly in spring and summer.
- Ideal for rockeries & mass border plantings.
- Flowers attract native bees & pollinators.
- Moderately drought tolerant once established. Prefers well-drained soils.

Native Flax (*Linum marginale*)


- H: 30 – 80cm W: 30 – 50cm
- Upright, slender perennial with small, narrow leaves & masses of delicate blue flowers in spring & summer.
- Readily self-seeds; good in rockeries.
- Food sources include nectar & seed.
- Drought & frost tolerant once established.

Murnong, Yam Daisy (*Microseris scapigera*)


- H: 20 – 50cm W: 20cm – 30cm
- Rosette-forming perennial herb, with, toothed leaves at the base & tall, nodding stems bear dandelion-like yellow flowers, followed by fluffy seed heads.
- Staple food plant for First Nations people.
- Attracts nectar-feeders & seed-eaters.
- Benefits from extra watering over summer.

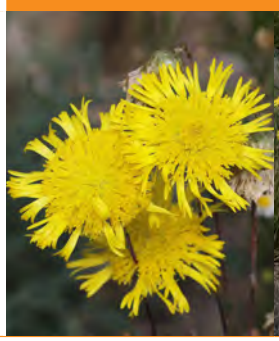
Austral Stork's-bill (*Pelargonium australe*)


- H: 20 – 50cm W: 30 – 60cm
- Fast-growing, low-spreading perennial herb, with velvety, aromatic, green leaves, & clusters of pink & purple-veined flowers, mainly in spring & summer.
- Can self-seed. Great for rockeries, borders, & native cottage gardens.
- Drought & lightly frost tolerant.

Smooth Rice-flower (*Pimelea glauca*)

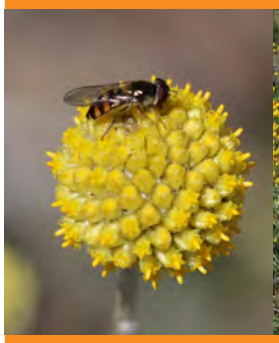

- H: 30 – 60cm W: 30 – 60cm
- Erect, multi-stemmed, small shrub, with clusters of small, white to pale pink tubular flowers from spring to summer.
- Flowers attract pollinators & provides shelter for small ground dwelling animals.
- Frost & drought tolerant. Thrives in moist, well-drained soils.

Basalt Podolepis (*Podolepis linearifolia*)




- H: 30 – 60cm W: 20 – 30cm
- Upright herbaceous perennial or annual that is now very rare in the wild.
- Slender, linear green leaves with tall stems bearing showy, bright yellow daisy flowers, mainly in spring & summer.
- Attracts various insect pollinators.
- Drought tolerant once established.

Golden Billy-buttons (*Pycnosorus chrysanthus*)

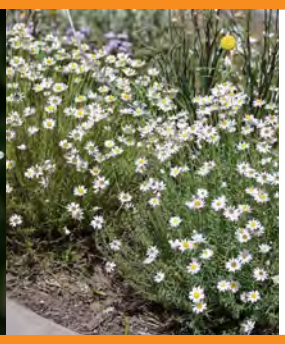



- H: 20 – 60cm W: 30 – 100cm
- Upright perennial herb, with slender grey-green leaves & stems bearing bright yellow, spherical flower heads in spring & summer.
- Ornamental borders, cut flowers.
- Attracts pollinating insects. Good for bogs.
- Frost & drought tolerant. Thrives in moist, well-drained soils.

Drumsticks (*Pycnosorus globosus*)

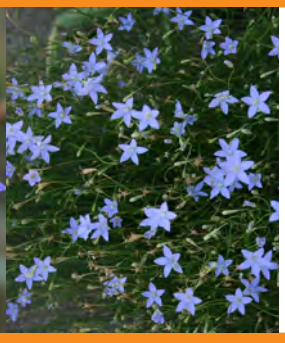

- H: 20 – 100cm W: 20 – 90cm
- Narrow, silvery leaves with tall, slender stems topped by distinctive golden-yellow, spherical flower heads in spring & summer.
- Valued for bold, long-lasting dried flowers.
- Feeds & shelters pollinating insects.
- Frost & drought tolerant. Thrives in moist, well-drained soils. Adaptable to poor soils.

Chamomile Sunray (*Rhodanthe anthemoides*)

- H: 20 – 30cm W: 20 – 60cm
- Compact, mounding perennial or short-lived annual. Fine, grey-green foliage with masses of white papery daisy flowers, mainly in spring & early summer.
- Perfect for borders, rockeries, cottage style.
- Provides nectar & pollen.
- Drought & frost tolerant once established.

Branching Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia multicaulis*)

- H: 15 – 40cm W: 15cm – Spreading
- Slender, branching perennial herb with fine green leaves, topped with vivid-blue, star-shaped flowers for several months.
- Will self seed & send up suckering stems.
- Especially attracts native bees.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Prefers well-drained soils.

Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*)


- H: 20 – 90cm W: 30 – 100cm
- Erect, bushy biannual herb with sticky, green leaves & bright yellow papery daisy flowers mainly from spring to autumn.
- Great for attracting insect pollinators.
- Drought & frost tolerant. Thrives in well-drained soils.
- Responds to summer watering.

Sourcing indigenous seedlings

Hume City Council holds an exclusive seedling giveaway each winter for G4W participants. People can collect up to 50 seedling tubestock, from the various growth forms available.

👉hume.vic.gov.au/gardensforwildlife

Places to purchase indigenous seedlings:

- 👉Search DEECA's online map of indigenous plant nurseries.
- 👉Search Australian Plant Society Victoria's online map of nurseries.
- 👉Go to the retail nursery at Nangak Tamboree Wildlife Sanctuary, at the Bundoora campus of La Trobe University.
- 👉Order from Nugal Biik, an indigenous nursery run as a social enterprise by Whittlesea Community Connections.
- 👉Buy seedlings from the Friends of Melton Botanic Garden and visit the Melton Botanic Garden to see displays of native plants.
- 👉Newport Lakes Native Nursery is a retail supplier, with a great gift shop.

Learning about indigenous plants

Participants who have a garden visit, receive a comprehensive list of indigenous plants with their report.

To learn more about specific indigenous species, see the *Flora of Hume* series of plant factsheets, available on Council's G4W website.

Borrow reference books from your local library to deepen your plant knowledge too, including:

- *Plants of Melbourne's Western Plains: A gardener's guide to the original flora.*
- *Grow What Where* lists over 3,000 native plants for all conditions, problem areas, and uses. For example, there is a chapter on shade-tolerant plants.
- *Flora of Melbourne* is a comprehensive botanical guide for the plants living across Greater Melbourne.
- *Habitat: A practical guide to creating a wildlife-friendly Australian garden* is a bible in G4W circles.

👉Hume Libraries

Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*)

Garden Design, Soils, and Planting Scenarios

Develop a plan and capture your garden design ideas on paper. This allows you to refine your vison and identify the stages to help you achieve it. Healthy plants come from healthy soils, and there are plenty of planting scenarios to consider.

Garden Design

Step 1: What do you have

- ○ What hard structures are fixed in your garden? Think about fences, gates, paths, retaining walls, sheds, pergolas, clothes line.
- ○ Important issues to consider and plan for?
  - What is the orientation of your garden?
  - Where is there ample sunlight or full shade, in summer and winter?
  - Are there wind tunnels or slopes to deal with?
  - Do you have bushfire risks?

👉CFA Landscaping Guidelines

  - Are there any drainage issues? Where can you divert water to and how?
  - What is your access for getting machinery and materials into your garden?
- ○ Where are your utility services located? Think about taps, water tanks, gas, electricity, sewerage, or stormwater pipes.

👉Before You Dig Australia

- ○ What are your soils like? What do you need to do to improve them?
- ○ What existing garden features do you want to keep? Much loved trees, veggie gardens, entertainment spaces, privacy hedges.

Step 2: What do you want

- ○ What different areas do you want and or need in your garden?
  - Views from inside your house, or as “street appeal.”
  - Privacy for your indoor and outdoor living areas.
  - Play spaces for children or lawn areas for treasured pets.
  - Productive areas for fruit, veggies, or indigenous food tucker.
- ○ What fixed assets or hard landscaping do you need to achieve your vison?
  - Raised beds, paths, seating areas, outdoor lights.

Sometimes these are the things that need to go in first.

Step 3: Plant choice and habitat features

Determine what plants will help you to achieve the look you want. Use information in this booklet but also look at the gardens and parks around you to see what is growing well.

- ○ What habitat features do you want to install?
- ○ Where will it be best to locate things like bird baths or lizard lounges.

Step 4: Document your plan

Put your ideas down on paper.

Develop a timeline that breaks the activities up into individual projects that reflect your available budget, time availability, and physical capacity. Work out what logically should be done first. Remember – don’t try to do everything at once!

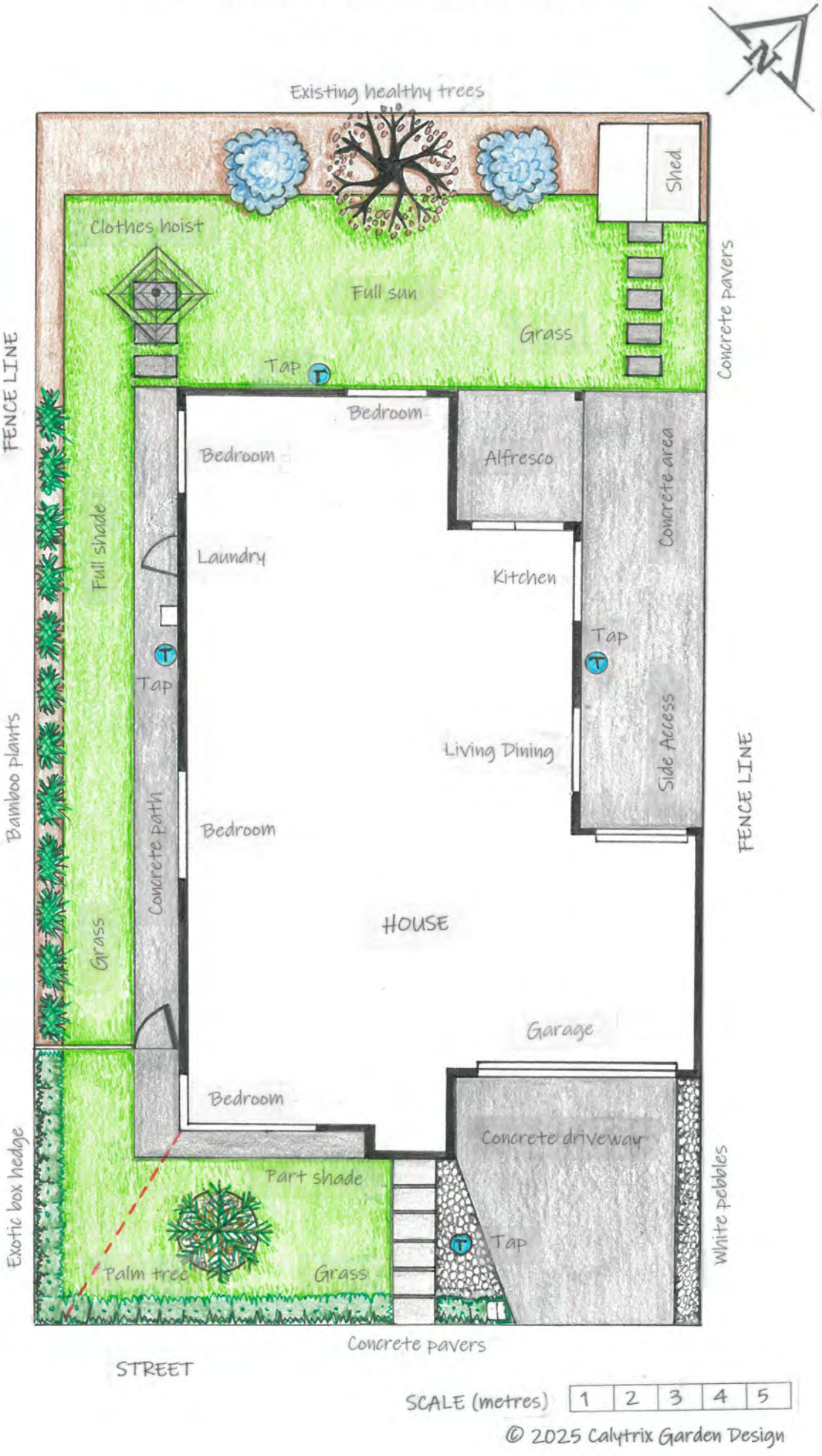
Keep revisiting your plan over time, it will, and should, change depending on needs, successes (and failures), budgets, etc.

Ongoing Maintenance:

- ○ Re-mulch beds when required.
- ○ Prune after flowering to maintain shape and promote compact growth.
- ○ Don’t over fertilise indigenous plants and always use no phosphorus fertilisers.

Revisit your Garden Plan and adapt to changing needs, successes, and failures.

EXAMPLE OF A SITE ANALYSIS



EXAMPLE OF A GARDEN DESIGN

Healthy Soils

Healthy soil is living soil. It is the foundation for thriving plants and habitat gardens. To support soil health, simply add mulch; our greatest ally in the garden. Go for natural mulches like shredded bark, leaf litter, or straw.

Mulch helps retain moisture, improves soil structure and friability, and adds nutrients as it breaks down. Like an insulating blanket, mulch regulates soil temperatures over the seasons, while reducing water run-off and soil erosion. Beyond these benefits, mulch suppresses weed growth, provides shelter for small animals, and supports a rich community of microorganisms and insects, forming the base of a vibrant, living food web.

Much of Hume City sits atop heavy clay soils, formed by volcanic activity. While many indigenous plants can flourish in clay soils, they will respond well to the addition of organic matter to make the soil loamier and more friable.

Suitable options of organic matter include home-made or commercial compost, blood and bone fertiliser, well-aged manures, sawdust, or leaf litter. Mulch goes on top of this compost layer.

Remediating areas with organic matter and mulch is very important where the soil has previously been covered with artificial turf, plastic sheeting, weed mat, or stone mulches. These coverings may leave the ground compacted, baked dry, and lacking the beneficial microorganisms that support healthy soil.

We generally don't recommend turning over the soil to incorporate organic matter, unless it's extremely compacted. Tilling can disrupt the natural soil layers, encourage weeds and invasive species, and harm the delicate ecosystem living in the top few centimetres of soil.

Soil preparation can take time, but the long-term rewards are worth the effort. You don't need to do it all at once. Start with a manageable area, then expand gradually as you go.

Establishing new garden beds

If you have space to create new garden beds, the following tips may help:

Remove weeds

Ideally, remove any weeds and undesirable plants. If that's not possible, mow them down as low as you can.

Loosen the soil

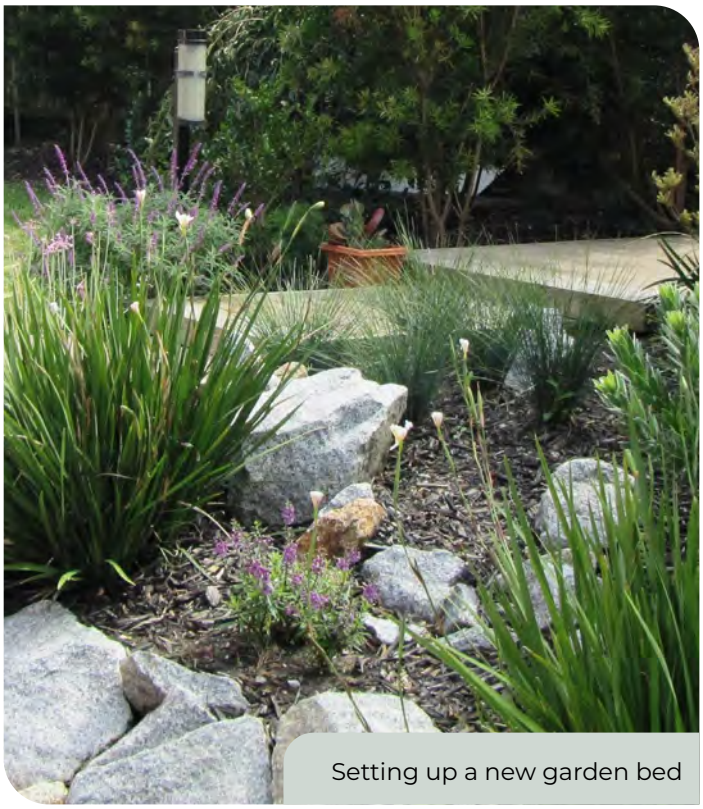
If the soil is dry and compacted, gently aerate it with a garden fork, without turning it over. Avoid this step if the soil is too wet.

Amend clay soils

For heavy clay soil, consider adding gypsum or using a commercial clay breaker spray to improve structure. First, do a simple test by adding a small sample of dry soil to a jar of clean water. Do not shake it, but if the water becomes milky and cloudy, then the soil will benefit from the addition of gypsum. If it does not go cloudy, then gypsum or other clay breakers will not help.

Add organic matter

To improve and enhance any type of soil, spread a few centimetres of organic material over the surface. Ensure any commercial fertilisers used are safe for native plants, choosing those with low or no phosphorus. Allow the organic matter to break down for a few weeks before planting.



Setting up a new garden bed

Suppress weeds naturally

Lay down cardboard or sheets of wet newspaper (avoid using plastic weed mat) to block weed and grass regrowth. Water it in well, then cover with up to 10cm of mulch. Use heavier bark, recycled wood chip, or thick bush mulch for woody shrubs and trees. For more delicate plants like wildflowers, opt for lighter mulches such as straw, sugar cane, or fine leaf litter. These finer mulches will break down faster and need replenishing more often.

Add edging

Define and protect garden beds with edging to keep weeds or invasive running grasses out of the bed, and it can help keep the mulch in place.

Planting

To plant, simply push the mulch aside and cut a hole in the cardboard. Dig a hole beneath and place the seedling in. For an extra boost, dig a larger hole and surround the plant's root ball with a friable soil and compost mix.

Plant in groups

For best results, plant multiples of the same indigenous species in swathes, swards, or clumps. Grouping plants together provides visual appeal, but also has greater ecological value with more resources for visiting wildlife.

Ongoing care

Over time, the cardboard and mulch will decompose. You can then top them up or plant living green mulch, where groundcovers serve the same functions as bark mulch while also enhancing habitat values for wildlife.

Maintaining garden beds

Seedling propagation

Your established garden can be a seed orchard for rare and threatened plants. Collect seed and fruits to propagate more seedlings. Plant them back into your garden or to share with your family and friends.

By observing the lifecycle of your plants, you will come to recognise when the seed or fruit is mature and ready to be collected. For example, most daises will form a fluffy seed head and the seed will come away with the light brush of your thumb. Native peas and lilies form pods and seed capsules that change colour and start to split open when ripe.

Store dry seed in a paper bag or envelope, with the plant name written on it. Sow fresh fruit immediately or ensure it dries out properly before storing it.

Many plants can be propagated from tip cuttings (e.g., *Correa, Callistemon, Goodenia*, etc). Or break off a branch of Inland Pigface (*Carpobrotus modestus*), pop it into the ground and it should grow. Other plants can be dug up to divide the corms and bulbs. The spreading rhizome base of strappy leaved clumps such as *Dianella* can also be divided. Some plants like Cut-leaf Daisy (*Brachyscome multifida*) or Fragrant Saltbush (*Chenopodium parabolicum*) are self-propagating. They form new roots from branches lying on the ground.

To gain more knowledge about seed collection and seedling propagation, attend workshops advertised in Hume Live Green.

👉Subscribe to the Live Green e-newsletter

Planting scenarios

Nature strip

👉Hume City's Nature Strip policy, guidelines, and application form

Nature strips are the responsibility of residents to look after.

Underground utilities (telephone, electricity, gas, water) may be located on the nature strip. Other services like rubbish bin collection, or car parking also occur next to the verge. Local governments therefore have regulations about what can be done in this space.

Hume City Council requires people to submit plans and an application form, outlining the proposed changes to nature strip treatments, such as planting out the nature strip.

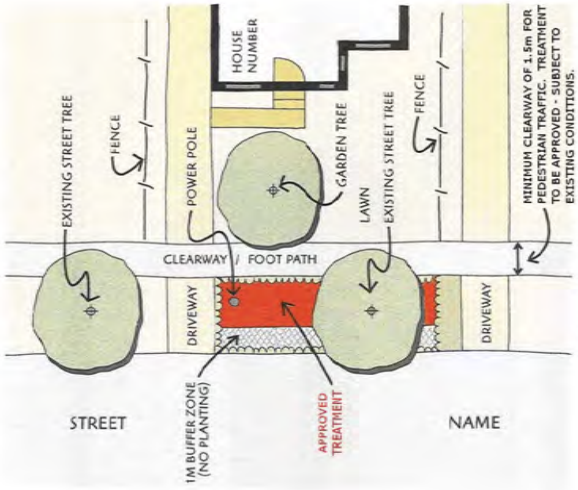
From a G4W perspective, consider extending the garden area onto the nature strip. This adds ecological connectivity to aid wildlife moving through the area. It can also enhance your home's street appeal.

Council's regulations for nature strip gardens:

- Plants are not allowed to be taller than 40cm, to enable sight lines for passing traffic.
- Have a one-metre-wide clear edge along the road gutter for people to get out of cars and leave a place to put out rubbish bins for collection.
- Have a one-metre-wide clear edge along any footpath so people have safe, clear access to walk or ride on the footpath.
- There can be no raised garden edging, boulders, or stakes that could present a trip hazard or risk in car accidents.

Request a free report to identify any underground utilities on your nature strip.

👉Before You Dig Australia (Victoria)



Street trees

👉Hume City's Street Tree policy

Trees selected to be planted as street trees are proven, hardy species. Hume City aims to increase the tree canopy cover for various reasons, including to mitigate the heat island effect by providing more shade.

Upper layer canopy trees are vital wildlife habitat. Newer suburbs tend to have houses taking up most of the property with little space left for gardens, let alone large plants.

This makes caring for your street tree or trees very important. Occasionally water them, and clear the lawn or any weeds away from around the base of the trunk.

Call Council on 9205 2200 about any issues with existing street trees or to request a new street tree be planted.

Street tree management

Productive gardens

Blending indigenous plants into your vegetable and fruit gardens has many positives. Flowering companion plants attract essential pollinators, who play a crucial role by increasing the production of your crop of fruits and vegetables.

Attract birds, lizards, and other beneficial predatory insects like spiders, hoverflies, praying mantis, and ladybugs, to help naturally control pests that feed on your food plants.

While many gardeners are happy to share some of their harvest with birds or fruit bats, others may prefer to net their trees or veggie beds. Only use legal, wildlife-safe fruit netting, with mesh fine enough that a finger cannot poke through the holes.

Native Raspberry

Kangaroo Grass

Sensory gardens for children

A sensory garden is a space designed to engage children's senses through touch, smell, sight, sound, and even taste. It encourages exploration, supports learning, and helps children connect with nature in a playful and calming way.

Colour

- Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*) has masses of purple flowers.
- Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*) has spectacular red flowers.
- Billy-buttons (*Craspedia* species, *Pycnosorus* species) with delightful golden, ball flowers.

Texture

- Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*) with strappy leaves for weaving.
- Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) to brush your hands through the flowers.
- Blue Devils (*Eryngium ovinum*) with spiky leaves and flowers.
- Austral Storksbill (*Pelargonium australe*) with soft velvety leaves.

Smell/fragrance

- Fragrant Saltbush (*Chenopodium parabolicum*) with aromatic leaves.
- River Mint (*Mentha australis*) to crush the leaves for a stimulating odour.
- Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*) to smell the flowers.

Taste

- Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) has succulent leaves and edible berries.
- Native Raspberry (*Rubus parvifolius*) with subtle sweet and mildly tangy fruit.

Purple Coral-pea

Native lawn

Having a native lawn is admirable, but there is work involved. On the wetter, eastern side of Melbourne, native lawns tend to grow better.

Native lawns thrive with regular hand weeding and well-timed watering to encourage flowering and seed set. Do not mow over late spring to summer to allow native grasses to flower and seed to drop. Seeding will help fill any gaps and create a more lush, full lawn.

The best native grass species for lawn are:

- Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*)
- various Wallaby Grasses (*Rytidosperma caespitosum, R. geniculatum, R. racemosum, R. setaceum*)
- Windmill Grass (*Chloris truncata*)
- Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*).

Use a turf cutter to completely remove the exotic lawn and all its roots. Exotic Couch and Kikuyu grasses reshoot easily from any segments of roots left, as “running” grasses.

Bring in new topsoil to replace any removed soil to the appropriate level. Either plant hundreds of small grass seedling cells 20 – 30cm apart, or sow a mix of native grass seed and water well until established.

But if you are going to go to this level of effort and cost, then you might as well make it a diverse ecosystem including all the herbs and wildflowers to truly represent the diverse grassland meadows we once had.

Visit Evans Street Native Grassland Reserve in Sunbury from September to November to see an example of what once existed, only a couple of hundred years ago. Or convert a patch of the front nature strip, to test the idea and the look of these plants first.

Another alternative native “lawn” is to plant Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*), which a soft evergreen, low-growing groundcover with kidney-shaped leaves. This will readily spread with its branches taking root. But it is less tolerant of foot traffic and will have higher requirements for watering than native grasses.

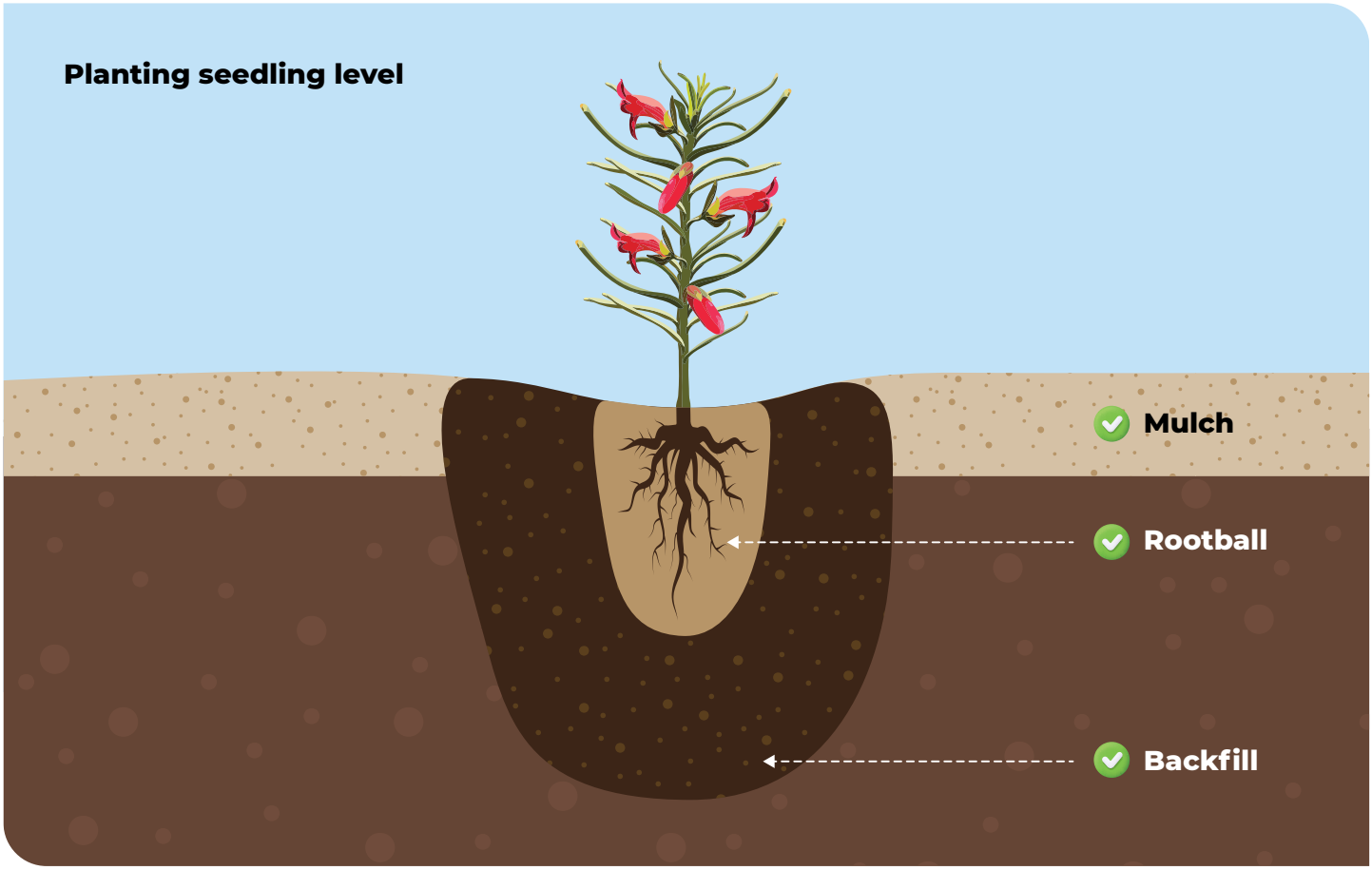
The other robust groundcovers, such as those in the previous section on indigenous plants, could also be used if you do not need to walk frequently on them. These groundcovers also act as a living green mulch.

Avoid fake lawn

Be mindful of the environmental and health concerns when considering whether to install fake lawn or Astroturf:

- Zero habitat value for wildlife.
- Heats the area up by several degrees and can become dangerously hot for people, pets, and wildlife.
- Bad for soil health as suffocates soil, and kills microbes and worms.
- Prevents water absorption, contributing to runoff and drainage issues.
- Creates micro-plastic pollution that can end up in waterways and eventually the ocean.
- Is a toxic fire hazard.
- Requires cleaning, as traps dirt, dropped leaves, spills, and pet waste.
- Short life-span of eight to 15 years.
- Adds to landfill waste when it needs to be replaced.
- Can be slippery or a trip hazard when frays.

Fake lawn



Planting seedling tubestock

Use this planting technique, giving the seedlings their best chance to survive and grow:

Pre-water

Soak seedlings or water them well before planting. This helps release them from the pot/ forestry tube and keeps the root ball intact.

Dig the right depth of hole

Test the depth of the hole with the tube – the potting mix level in the tube should match the surrounding soil. Avoid planting too high (roots exposed) or too low (stem buried).

Prepare the seedling

Gently squeeze all sides of the tube to loosen the soil. Check for roots growing from the base of the tube and remove if needed.

Remove from the tube

Hold the seedling with two fingers, tip the tube upside down, and tap or squeeze to slide it out, keeping the root ball intact.

Plant and firm

Place the seedling in the hole, fill gaps with soil, cover all roots, and gently press down. Create a soil ring around the seedling to hold water.

Water in

Water gently to settle soil around the roots. Ensure soil still covers the roots after watering.

Ongoing care

Mulch around but not over seedlings. Water twice weekly for the first month. Control weeds, prune after flowering, and feed with native-appropriate fertiliser or compost.

Further Resources

G4W reference book collection

Reference books on native animals, plants, and habitat gardening are available to borrow from Hume Libraries.

👉humelibraries.vic.gov.au/Home

iNaturalist

Join iNaturalist to explore and make observations of nature in your garden and neighbourhood. Use the website or install the app on your phone, then take a photo or sound recording, and upload. Easy!

👉Hume City's Wildlife iNaturalist project

Gardens for Wildlife Victoria

Across Melbourne there are many enthusiastic members of the G4W Victoria network. Join the friendly Facebook group to get ideas or share your own wildlife winning projects.

👉Gardens for Wildlife Victoria community

Gardening Australia ABC

Check out the Gardening Australia ABC YouTube channel of all the show's brilliant wildlife gardening segments focusing on habitat for a whole host of critters.

👉YouTube channel of habitat segments

Other useful websites

Australasian Bat Society

👉ausbats.org.au

Australian Plant Society Victoria

👉apsvic.org.au

Backyard Buddies

👉backyardbuddies.org.au

Melbourne Water

👉melbournewater.com.au

Sustainable Gardening Australia

👉sgaonline.org.au

SWIFFT

👉swifft.net.au

The Field Naturalists Club Victoria

👉ncv.org.au

Weeds Australia

👉weeds.org.au

Wildlife Nestboxes

👉wildlifenestboxes.com.au

Daily Dose of Nature

Enjoy your garden and the wonderful wildlife it attracts. Connecting with nature benefits both our wellbeing and the environment. Being mindful of biodiversity helps us care for it.

Deepen your connection to nature through five simple pathways:

1. ***Senses:*** Notice what you see, hear, smell, and feel – the sun, the breeze, the sounds.
2. ***Emotions:*** Reflect on how nature makes you feel – calm, happy, energised.
3. ***Beauty:*** Appreciate nature's beauty, from flowers to skies, and express it through art or awe.
4. ***Meaning:*** Let nature inspire thoughts, creativity, and self-reflection.
5. ***Compassion:*** Thank you for caring for nature and sharing that passion with others.

Contact Us

Email: gardensforwildlife@hume.vic.gov.au

Web: hume.vic.gov.au/gardensforwildlife

Phone: Customer Service 9205 2200

Postal address:

Gardens for Wildlife

Sustainability Engagement
Community Health & Wellbeing
Hume City Council

PO Box 119

Dallas VIC 3047

Office address:

1079 Pascoe Vale Road
Broadmeadows VIC

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Hume City Council is an affiliate of the Gardens for Wildlife Victoria network.