Creating Wildlife-friendly Gardens

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

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Photographs: Mary Trigger (all photos unless otherwise attributed). Special thanks to Neville Bartlett (NB), Matthew Clancy (MC), Chris Tzaros (CT), Ian Moodie (IM), James Booth (JB), Raf Heriot (RH), Lizette Slamon (LS), Janet Hagen (JH), Nick Clemann (NM), Pam Sheean (PS), Anthony Sheean (AS), Bruce Carpenter (BC), P & F Johnson (PFJ), City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB).

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Front cover image: New Holland Honeyeater by Neville Bartlett

Back Cover image: Yellow-footed Antechinus by Sarah Treby

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Green Gecko
PUBLICATIONS

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Foreword by Mayor

Greater Bendigo is very fortunate to be in the heart of Victorian box and ironbark country, a 'city in the forest'. It is, in part, the native flora and fauna that gives Bendigo its unique character. An expansive system of parks and reserves provide wonderful opportunities to connect with nature through walking, cycling and a whole range of other leisure pursuits.

Our gardens can also support wildlife; indeed, they can often be vital refugia particularly in times of drought. A growing understanding of the role our gardens can provide urban wildlife and the enjoyment and health benefits this provides people, has led to a movement of programs such as

Gardens for Wildlife and other wildlife-friendly gardening.

There are many threats to wildlife and the impacts of climate change will intensify many of these threats. Increasingly, scientific studies tell us that biodiversity and ecosystem decline is a significant issue that needs urgent attention. While action is required at a global scale, in practice it is the action we all take at the community and local level that gets things done.

Creating a wildlife-friendly garden is something we can all do, no matter how small or large an area may be. A courtyard or balcony can provide a home to a beautiful Marbled Gecko or a visit from a Blue-banded Bee or hungry New Holland Honeyeater.

The City of Greater Bendigo is delighted to be able to provide this free resource as part of an ongoing commitment to educating and supporting our community. I hope this booklet provides some inspiration, ideas and practical advice to help you make a few changes to an existing garden, or if creating a new garden, design a wildlife haven from the outset.

Cr Jennifer Alden

Mayor

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People, the Traditional Owners of the land.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Introduction

Each of our gardens provides us with an opportunity to support the unique plants and animals of our local environment.

The City of Greater Bendigo has developed this booklet to help our residents to design and plant gardens – or even small patches of gardens – that will benefit local wildlife by providing food and shelter, as well as stepping stones so they can move freely across our landscapes.

The Bendigo region contains a range of different vegetation types that are important habitats for indigenous (or locally native) species. Maintaining and expanding these habitats is key to sustaining biodiversity, which is key to ensuring ecosystems remain healthy now and into the future.

Development and population growth, farmland clearance, introduced pests and weeds – together with the effects of bushfires and the impacts of a changing climate – are increasing pressure on native wildlife. As these threats increase, native animal habitat becomes more isolated and fragmented. This makes it difficult for wildlife to breed, forage, find shelter, and move across the landscape, resulting in a decline in species diversity and abundance.

Parks such as the Greater Bendigo and Heathcote-Graytown National Parks, the Bendigo Regional Park and various state forests and reserves provide valuable sanctuaries for our local plants and animals to survive and are wonderful places to explore. However, wildlife does not understand the concept of a fence and will often venture out of the parks seeking food, water and a mate. Creating wildlife-friendly gardens provides a safe space for our local wildlife to cross our landscape.

Wildlife-friendly gardens are infinitely rewarding. To sit at a window and watch a honeyeater feeding from a grevillea that you've planted, to listen to the chorus of frogs at dusk, or spy a sugar glider soaring between trees are all good for the soul and help connect you to your natural environment.

Magpie Moth on Native Raspberry

Garden Design

New Holland Honeyeater feeding on a banksia flower. (NB)

Many native animals depend on indigenous plants for food, shelter (from predators, competitors or the weather), and somewhere to breed safely. Likewise, plants benefit from animals through pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, waste breakdown and soil maintenance.

There are no hard and fast rules with designing a wildlife-friendly garden, other than trying to mimic some natural conditions. Local wildlife will generally benefit most from indigenous plants, but your garden does not need to be exclusively indigenous.

Key design elements

Wildlife-friendly gardens can be designed in different styles - they can be formal, a riot of colour in a cottage style, or an informal natural look.

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

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

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

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

Consider the **growing requirements** of each plant species and group together those with similar requirements for water and light to maximise efficiency of water use.

Ensure you are aware of the **mature size of your plants** to avoid ending up with a 60 metre gum tree towering over your house!

If you are considering changing your garden quite a bit, a **planned approach** is important. Blitzing a garden may result in wildlife abandoning your garden for years or being exposed and preyed upon if the intact vegetation is removed too quickly. Better to adopt a staged approach with patches of intact vegetation progressively replaced with new plants.

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

Layers

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

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

Note that logs and rocks should not be sourced from local bushland where they are already providing habitat. If you live in a bushfire-prone area, consider locating logs some distance from your house.

Diversity

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

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

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

Garden layers

TREES
Provide food and shelter for birds, possums, gliders, bats, goannas and insects.

SMALL TREES AND LARGE SHRUBS
Habitat for birds, possums, gliders, goannas and insects.

SMALL SHRUBS
Provide food and shelter for birds, possums, gliders, lizards and insects.

GRASSES AND GROUNDCOVERS
Provide food and shelter for birds, lizards, frogs and insects.

LOGS, MULCH AND ROCKS
Provides habitat for lizards, frogs and insects.

Food

Plants that produce nectar, pollen, fruit, seeds, leaves and roots provide food for many of our native animals. Dead plant material can also be a source of food for invertebrates.

Insects that live and feed on the plants, mulch and soil in turn provide food for birds, lizards, frogs and mammals.

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

Host plants

Some insects, such as butterflies, only lay their eggs on certain plants known as host plants. Most native caterpillars are small, shy and nocturnal, leaving little evidence of their presence in your garden. If you want butterflies to visit your garden, include host plants such as Wattles (*Acacia* species) for Imperial Blue Butterflies, Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) for Common Brown Butterflies or Everlasting Daisies (*Xerochrysum* species) for Australian Painted Lady Butterflies.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater (NB)

Sticky Everlasting (*Xerochrysum viscosum*)

Common Brown Butterfly

Water

A reliable water source, particularly in summer, will help attract wildlife to your garden.

A shallow birdbath on a pedestal next to a dense or prickly shrub will help protect birds from predators while they bathe and drink. A shallow dish of water at ground level will provide a much-needed drink for echidnas and lizards on a hot day. Add some branches and rocks to enable access for invertebrates that cannot swim. Frogs need a permanent or semi-permanent water source to keep their skin moist and provide opportunities to breed. Butterflies love to gather on a wide dish of damp sand or a small puddle in the soil. They take in water, essential salts and minerals from the soil.

Shelter

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

Grasses, climbers, dense and prickly shrubs and mature trees can provide protection for a large range of insect, reptile, frog, bird and mammal species. Small lizards, microbats and invertebrates shelter in crevices under bark. Logs on the ground provide shelter for small mammals, lizards, frogs and invertebrates. Likewise, rocks, particularly a small pile of rocks, provide shelter for lizards, frogs, invertebrates and the Lesser Long-eared Bat.

Grey Fantail

Striated Thornbill in Gold-dust Wattle

The importance of tree hollows

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

Most eucalyptus species produce natural tree hollows, although only old trees develop hollows. As they fall and die or are cleared, they cannot be replaced without 100 or more years of growth.

Avoid removing any established trees that contain hollows. They are essential for shelter and breeding for many birds such as parrots, treecreepers, kingfishers and owls. Mammals such as microbats, sugar gliders, antechinus and phascogales also need hollows to survive.

An effective way of providing an alternative to a natural tree hollow is by providing a nest box. Different kinds of birds, bats and possums need different kinds of nest boxes, so its important to choose the correct box for the species in your area. For further information visit:

www.ari.vic.gov.au/research/people-and-nature/use-of-nest-boxes-in-victoria

Seek advice on the type of nest box required, where to locate it and how to maintain your nest box.

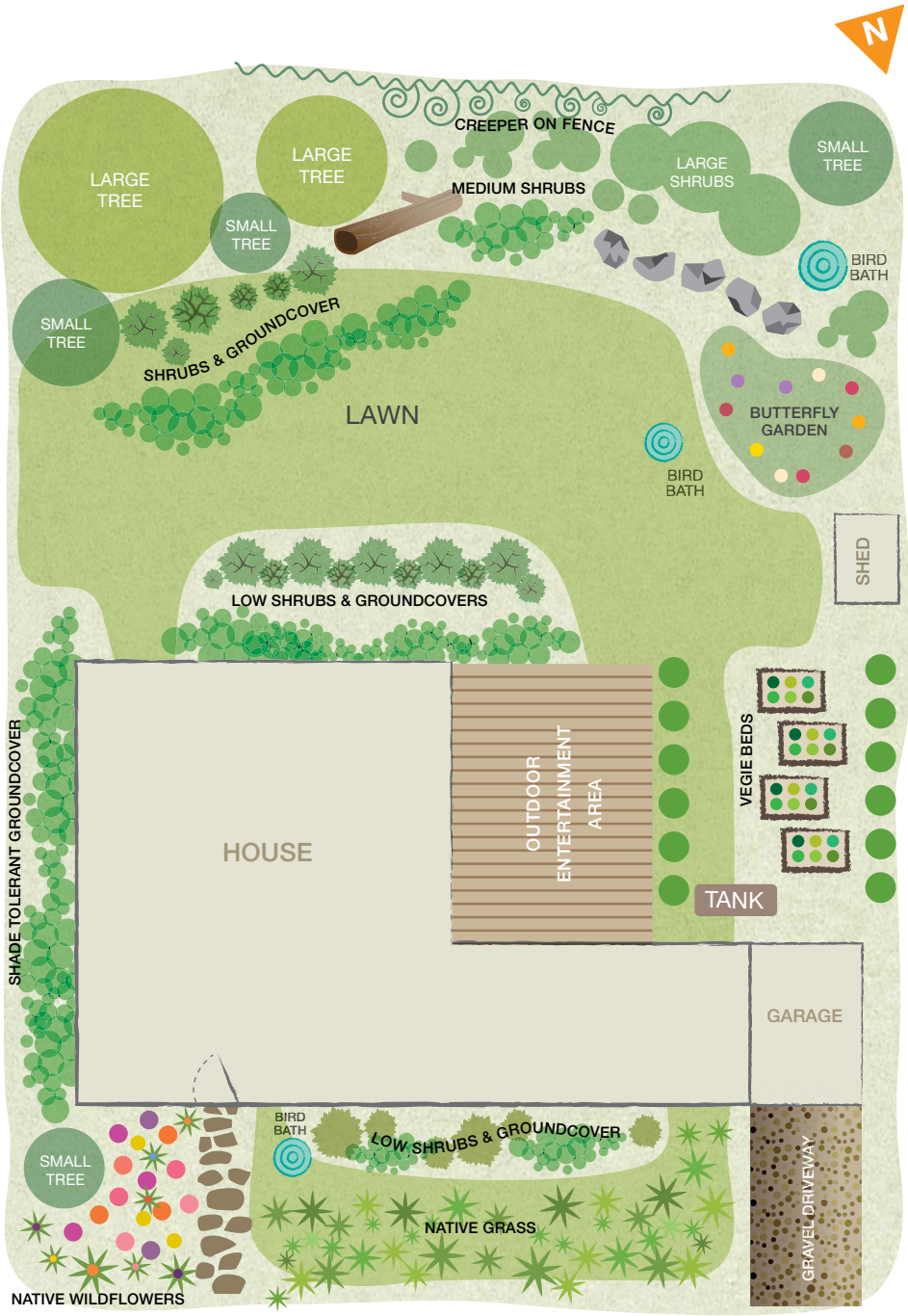
Rainbow Lorikeet

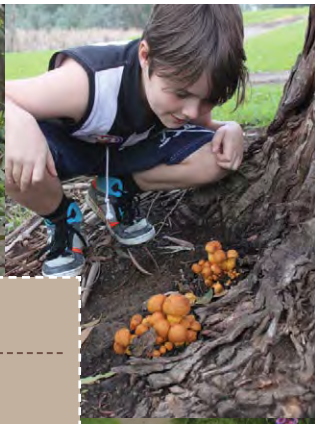
Southern Boobook Owl (IM)

Nest boxes Greater Bendigo National Park (CT)

Garden plan for a large block

Garden plan for a small block





Natureplay

Gardening is a great activity for children to have fun, learn new skills and spend quality time with family. Garden spaces big and small are a perfect outdoor play space.

Kids in the garden and reserves

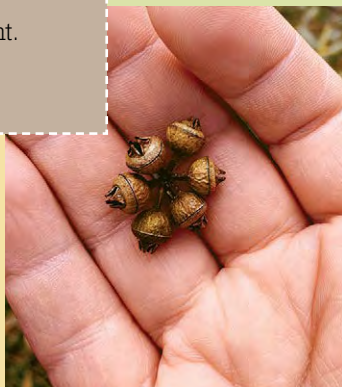
Being outdoors in the garden or a local reserve is fun and exciting for children. Links with nature are fundamental to children's connection with the natural world and a perfect play space!

Natureplay ideas:

- Make secret places in the garden to hide and watch wildlife.
- Explore with a magnifying glass.
- Draw pictures or take photos of garden wildlife.
- Build a lizard lounge.
- Count how many birds visit your birdbath.
- Plant native River Mint and Chocolate Lilies for their scent.
- Explore your local parks and reserves.

Build a twig cubby

Go for a discovery walk with a magnifying glass



Fire and CFA guidelines

If you live in a high bushfire risk area, we recommend you download the CFA publication *Landscaping for Bushfire* from www.cfa.vic. gov.au. The document contains detailed information on garden design, maintenance and plant selection to reduce the risk of losing your house or life.

Design considerations include:

- Create areas of low fuel between your house and vegetation. This includes driveways, patios, water features, paths and mown lawn areas.
- Create separation between plants, garden beds and tree canopies. For example: do not plant shrubs under trees; separate garden beds with lawn or paths; and prune branches to a minimum of 2m above the ground.
- Avoid locating plants near windows, decks, eaves, or overhanging your roofline.
- Ensure your house and other structures, such as car ports and sheds, are free of plants that can easily catch fire, such as creepers and vines.
- Locate trees at least 10m from buildings, separate tree canopies by at least 2m and avoid planting trees with loose bark.

Nature strip (AS)

Nature strip planting

Bendigo residents are permitted to plant out their nature strips with indigenous grasses, groundcovers and low-growing shrubs, provided Council approval is obtained. Pedestrian safety and vehicle visibility of traffic is paramount.

A minimum of 500mm must be kept clear from the kerb to allow people to safely exit their cars. Plants (except Council planted street trees) must be maintained at a maximum height of 600mm to ensure a clear line of sight for pedestrians and motorists. Plants need to be pruned so they do not protrude beyond the nature strip boundary. Mulch can be laid but must be level with the footpath and not spill onto the footpath.

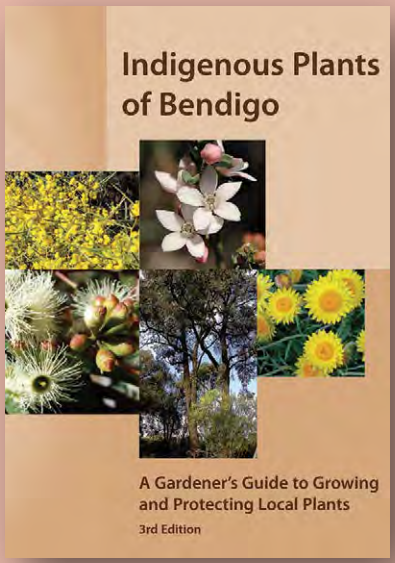
For further information visit: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Roads-and-Drainage/Roads/Nature-strips

Requests for street tree planting can be made at www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Trees-and-reserves/Tree-management/Tree-planting

Native Plants

The Bendigo region has a vast array of indigenous plants that provide spectacular displays of colour and texture throughout the year and support our unique local wildlife. The following pages provide a small sample of some of our local plants and the benefits to local wildlife.

For detailed descriptions of 104 local plants and their growing requirements download the free companion guide *Indigenous Plants of Bendigo – A Gardener's Guide to Growing and Protecting Local Plants.* Visit: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/About/Document-Library/indigenous-plants-bendigo



FAUNA KEY

- **Butterflies**
- **Insect pollinators**
- **Small birds**
- **Honeyeaters**
- **Parrots**
- **Large birds**
- **Lizards**
- **Frogs**
- **Small mammals**


Gold-dust Wattle | *Acacia acinacea*

Flowers attract insect pollinators, honeyeaters, parrots and small mammals. Host plant for numerous butterfly and moth caterpillars. The shrub provides shelter for small birds, honeyeaters and lizards.


Sweet Bursaria | *Bursaria spinosa*

Spines along the branches provide protection for small birds and honeyeaters. Flowers attract butterflies, insects and honeyeaters. Seeds that are eaten by insects and finches. (Refer to pg 31 for details on the symbiotic relationship between the Eltham Cooper Butterfly, Bursaria and ants).


(RB)


River Bottlebrush | *Callistemon sieberi*

The nectar-rich flower spikes attract butterflies, insects, honeyeaters, lorikeets and small mammals. Parrots and insects feed on the seeds. The dense form of the shrub provides excellent shelter for small birds and honeyeaters.


(RN)

(KS)

Common Fringe-myrtle | *Calytrix tetragona*

Flowers are a food source for moths, butterflies and other insects. The foliage provides good refuge for small birds and shelter for lizards. Seeds provide a food source for small birds and insects, especially ants.


Rock Correa | *Correa glabra* ssp. *glabra*

Nectar contained within the bell-shaped flowers attract specialist feeders such as honeyeaters. The leaves provide food for plant-eating insects which in turn is a food source for insect-eating small birds and honeyeaters. The dense foliage provides shelter.

HERBS

Common Everlasting
Chrysocephalum apiculatum

The flowers attract insect pollinators. Small wind-dispersed seeds are eaten by insects such as ants. The foliage of the plant provides shelter for small birds, lizards and frogs.

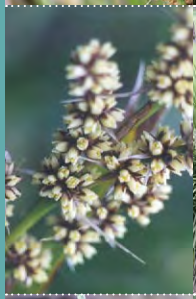
Austral Stork's-bill | *Pelargonium australe*

The fragrant flowers attract native bees and other insects. Small birds feed on plant-eating insects. Skinks eat the foliage and flowers and seek shelter under the broad leaves of the plant. Frogs can also be found sheltering under the foliage.

GRASSES

Tall Sedge | *Carex appressa*

Excellent habitat and refuge for frogs, lizards, small birds and insects. Nesting material for birds. Flowers attract butterflies. Host plant for caterpillars of various native butterflies and moths. A food source for small birds and insects.



Spiny-headed Mat-rush | *Lomandra longifolia*

Strappy leaves of this tussock provide shelter for insects, lizards, frogs and small mammals. Flowers are pollinated by beetles and nectar sought by bees and honeyeaters. Seeds a food source for ants and small birds. The leaves are an important food plant for the larvae of skipper butterflies.

Common Tussock-grass | *Poa labillardierei*

The tussock provides shelter. The flower heads attract butterflies and other insects. The leaves are an important food plant for numerous butterfly and moth caterpillars. The seeds attract insects, small birds and grass-parrots.

GRASSES

Kangaroo Grass | *Themeda triandra*

Kangaroo Grass is an important food plant for numerous caterpillars of native butterflies and moths. The flower heads provide food for insects and the seeds support insects (especially ants), small birds and grass-parrots. The tussocks shelter insects, lizards, frogs and small mammals.

CLIMBERS

Small-leaved Clematis | *Clematis microphylla*

Provides excellent protection and nesting sites for small birds. Flowers a nectar source for butterflies and insect pollinators. The leaves provide food for plant-eating insects which in turn is a food source for insect-eating small birds and honeyeaters. The seeds provide food for insects such as ants.

TREES

Lightwood | *Acacia implexa*

The pollen-rich flowers are an important food source for insects, honeyeaters, parrots and mammals. Birds attracted to plant-eating insects and large birds roost on the branches. The seeds are eaten by insects (especially ants), finches, parrots and small mammals.

Silver Banksia | *Banksia marginata*

The copious nectar-rich flowers of the Silver Banksia attract butterflies, insects, honeyeaters, lorikeets and small mammals from near and far! Parrots such as the Yellow-tail Black Cockatoo tear open the woody seed cones to eat the seeds. Excellent roosting and shelter for all birds.

Green Mallee | *Eucalyptus viridis* ssp. *viridis*

Rough bark on lower stems of the tree provides shelter for invertebrates and small lizards. Summer flowers attract butterflies, insects, honeyeaters, parrots and small mammals. Plant-eating insects attract small birds. Ideal roost and nest site for larger birds.

Geology and soil summary

Much of the Bendigo region consists of dissected uplands of Lower Palaeozoic deposits. Metamorphic rocks have formed steeply-sloped peaks and ridges.

A variety of relatively poor soils are dominant with yellow, grey and brown texture contrast soils (Chromosols and Sodosols) and minor occurrences of friable earths (Dermosols and Ferrosols). They vary from sandy to silty loams depending on grain size and are known as duplex soils because they typically have a thin grey top-soil layer, and a yellowish sub-soil between this and the bedrock. Sedimentary soils tend to have poor water-holding capacity and be low in organic matter.

The north of Bendigo is characterised by flat to gently undulating landscapes on recent unconsolidated sediment with evidence of former stream channels and wide floodplains associated with major river systems and prior streams. Alluvial soils of red brown earths and texture contrast soils (Chromosols and Sodosols) are found in the stream valleys and tend to be deeper and more fertile.

For more information refer to pg 9 (Geology and soils) of the following publication: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/About/Document-Library/indigenous-plants-bendigo

Big Hill Range (BC)

Plant communities of the region

Bioregions

Bioregions are a classification given to landscapes on a large scale based on natural features and a range of attributes including geology, soils and vegetation. Bioregions are a nationally recognised classification with two found across the City of Greater Bendigo.

Goldfields Bioregion:
is characterised by low hills, rolling plains and rugged slopes and ridges. About half of the Bioregion has retained native vegetation. Twenty-three percent of the remaining extent occurs on public land.

Victorian Riverina Bioregion:
is generally flat to gently undulating landscapes. Across the Bioregion native vegetation is heavily fragmented with relatively little remaining.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's)

In Victoria Bioregions are further divided into Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's). EVC's are a classification of a community of plant lifeforms and ecological characteristics which uniquely exist together. Because the natural landscape has been changed considerably throughout Victoria, individual EVC 'benchmarks' have been developed as a pre-European colonisation condition benchmark. These benchmarks can be used to assess the quality of an existing patch of native vegetation and also to determine what plant species occur naturally within each EVC.

Box Ironbark Forest (PS)

Creekline Grassy Woodland (CT)

Heathy Dry Forest (CT)

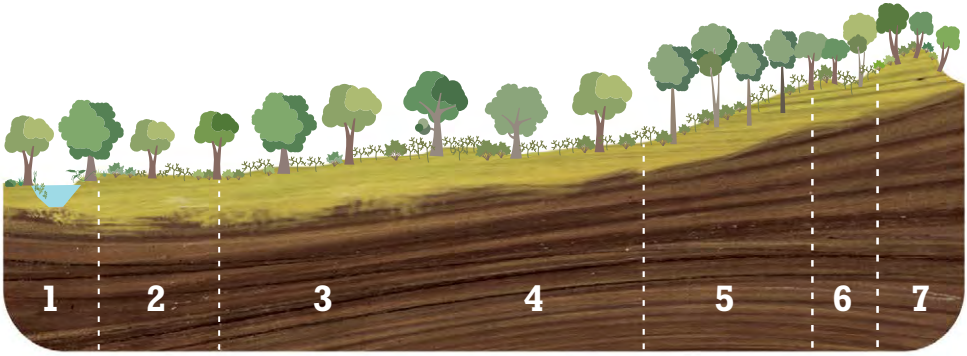
Low Rises Woodland (CT)

Woodlands and forests

Occurring on relatively poor soils, much of the protected Crown Land throughout Bendigo is dominated by Box Ironbark Forest and Dry Forests EVC's.

Grassy Woodland EVC's occur on flat fertile land which has now largely been cleared for agriculture and is why Woodlands are classified as Vulnerable and Endangered.

Woodlands have larger and wider spaced trees where canopies don't touch or overlap. The trees are often shorter in height and the understorey consists of a higher cover of grasses. Trees within a forest grow closer together with canopies overlapping. Understorey consist of a higher cover of shrubs. Both community types are important as they each provide specific habitat for threatened species.



1. **Creekline Grassy Woodland** – River Red Gum, Yellow Box
2. **Alluvial Terraces Herb-rich Woodland** – Yellow Box, Grey Box
3. **Plains Woodland** – Grey Box, Yellow Gum, Buloke
4. **Low Rises Grassy Woodland** – Grey Box, Yellow Gum
5. **Box Ironbark Forest** – Red Ironbark, Yellow Gum, Grey Box
6. **Grassy Dry Forest** – Red Stringybark, Red Box, Yellow Box
7. **Heathy Dry Forest** – Red Stringybark, Red Box, Long-leaf Box

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Mapped EVC's can be viewed on NatureKit at
https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/naturekit

EVC Benchmarks can be viewed on the DELWP website
https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/bioregions-and-evc-benchmarks

Biolinks

Biolinks are areas of vegetation such as native forests, woodlands, grasslands, waterways and roadside reserves that connect areas of valuable habitat such as bushland reserves and parks. The Bendigo Creek Reserve is a good local example. Biolinks enable wildlife to move freely and safely and have access to the broader landscape to feed, drink, reproduce and shelter.

A biolink can also be created by developing patches of bushland or a series of paddock trees that act as 'stepping stones' for wildlife, reducing the distances between habitat patches. For example, Krefft's Sugar Gliders need patches of vegetation a minimum of 50m apart to enable safe movement through the landscape.

Trees forming 'stepping stones' across a paddock

Roadside vegetation

Native vegetation along roadsides is very significant for many reasons and it is protected by law. Often very old and undisturbed from past activities, it can be the last remaining example of the original vegetation type within an area and provides critical wildlife corridors throughout the landscape. It is important naturally vegetated road reserves are left untouched. Understorey plants, fallen branches and leaves provide important habitat for native fauna and provides natural weed suppression.

(JH)

Nurture and enjoy

The City of Bendigo and neighbouring towns are in a unique position of being surrounded by many beautiful parks, bushland reserves, state and national parks.

Many of our unique plants and animals are struggling from the pressures of expanding urban development that threatens their survival. Habitat removal and the spread of pest plants and animals alone has resulted in the decline and loss of a significant number of species. This makes our bushland reserves vitally important as a sanctuary for local species.

Being surrounded by bushland means Bendigo residents have a wonderful opportunity to explore and enjoy the natural environment, but we need to be mindful of doing so responsibly. While enjoying a bushwalk, bike ride or picnic please:

- Stay on the path to reduce the impact of foot and bike traffic on the native vegetation.
- Do not collect logs, rocks or plants as these are vital habitat for many animals.
- Do not feed animals as food scraps can make them ill and encourage demanding, aggressive behaviour in some animals.
- Take all your rubbish home.
- Make sure your clothes and gear are free of weed seeds.
- Adhere to the 'no pets' signage in sensitive areas. Where dogs are permitted keep them on-leash and dispose of their waste responsibly. Observe the Council's cat curfew and confine your pet to your property.

Visit: www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Animals-and-Pets/Dog-and-Cat-Laws/Cat-curfew

As plants and animals do not recognise boundaries such as reserve fences it also means wildlife can be encountered along roadways, in backyards and on farms. Creating a wildlife-friendly garden enables wildlife to move safely, rest, feed, access water, roost and nest.

The urban forest interface (CoGB)

Unwanted plants

Non-native or 'exotic' plants can be useful for shade, structure, colour and interest in the garden. However, we need to be constantly aware that they also make up the vast majority of Australia's invasive weeds and include many introduced aquatic and semi-aquatic plants used in ponds and aquariums.

Some non-local Australia plants are also environmental weeds and should be avoided.

An environmental weed is a plant that escapes from your garden into parks, bushland and other spaces. Weeds are a problem because they out-compete indigenous plants for light, water and nutrients. In a short period of time they can change local ecosystems so that habitat no longer supports native birds and animals.

Weed seed and cuttings can be carried many kilometres by water, wind, birds, animals, vehicles and on clothing. Weeds can spread from people dumping garden waste in reserves and waterways.

Below are examples of a few garden plants that have become weeds in the Bendigo region. For more information on identification and control visit:

www.nccma.vic.gov.au/resources/publications/weeds-identification-guide

or www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds

Blue Periwinkle
Vinca major

Gazania
Gazania linearis

Weeping Willow
Salix x sepulcralis

Cootamundra Wattle
Acacia baileyana

Freesia
Freesia leichtlini

Japanese Honeysuckle
Lonicera japonica

Native Animals

The following animals live in the Bendigo region or pass through regularly. Many are under pressure from habitat loss, habitat degradation and habitat fragmentation. You can help our unique wildlife by creating a wildlife-friendly garden, keeping your cat indoors at night, practicing chemical-free pest control and driving carefully on our roads, especially at night.

Blue-faced Honeyeater

Habitat: Open forests, woodlands, farms, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar, fruit and invertebrates.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats.

Boulenger's Skink

Habitat: Leaf litter of forests and woodlands.
Diet: Invertebrates such as moths, snails and spiders.
Threats: Habitat loss. Pesticides (snail bait). Cats.


(NL)

Common Brushtail Possum

Habitat: Forest, woodland, parks and gardens.
Diet: Eucalyptus leaves, flowers and fruit.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes. Vehicle collisions.


(JB)

Common Eastern Froglet

Habitat: Shallow wetlands
Diet: Small insects
Threats: Habitat degradation. Pesticides. Chytrid disease. Cats, dogs and foxes.


(SWG)

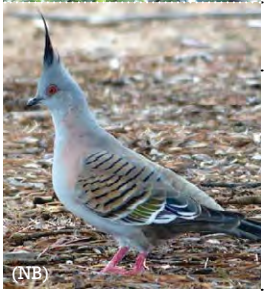
Yellow-footed Antechinus

Habitat: Leaf litter and fallen logs in forests, heath and woodlands.
Diet: Mainly insects such as spiders and beetles, but also worms, small lizards and frogs.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes.
High frequency bushfires.


(GA)

Common Ringtail Possum

Habitat: Forests, woodlands and gardens.
Diet: Mainly eucalyptus leaves, also fruit and flowers.
Threats: Cats, dogs and foxes. Electrocution from power lines. Vehicle collisions.


(NB)

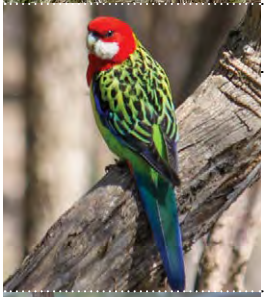
Crested Pigeon

Habitat: Lightly wooded grasslands, parks and gardens.
Diet: Seeds and some insects.
Threats: Cats and dogs.


(JB)

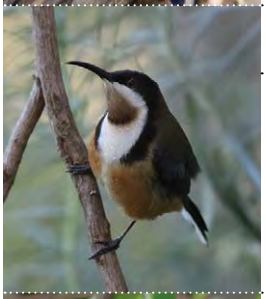
Eastern Banjo Frog (Pobblebonk)

Habitat: Most habitats with still water.
Diet: Invertebrates.
Threats: Habitat loss. Pesticides. Chytrid disease. Cats, dogs and foxes. Vehicle collisions.



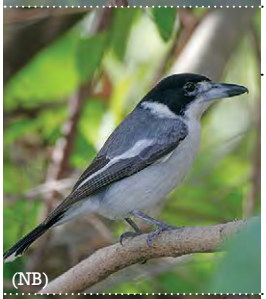
Eastern Rosella

Habitat: Open forests, woodlands, grasslands, parks and gardens.
Diet: Eucalypt and grass seeds, flowers and insects.
Threats: Habitat loss. Pest birds (Indian Myna and Starling). Cats.



Eastern Spinebill (winter migrant)

Habitat: Open forests and woodlands, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar and insects.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes.


(NB)

Grey Butcherbird

Habitat: Forests and woodlands.
Diet: Small birds and lizards. Insects. Some fruit and seeds.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes.


(IM)

Krefft's Sugar Glider

Habitat: Forests and woodland.
Diet: Wattle and eucalypt sap, pollen, nectar and invertebrates.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially hollows). Cats.


(RH)

Magpie-lark

Habitat: Woodlands, watercourses, parks and gardens.
Diet: Invertebrates such as insects and worms.
Threats: Cats, dogs and foxes.

Musk Lorikeet

Habitat: Open forests, woodlands, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar. Some fruit, seeds and insects.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially hollows). Cats.


(NB)

New Holland Honeyeater

Habitat: Forests, woodland, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar and insects.
Threats: Cats, dogs and foxes.


(NB)

Red Wattlebird

Habitat: Forests, woodlands, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar and insects.
Threats: Cats, dogs and foxes.


(NB)

Red-rumped Parrot

Habitat: Open woodlands, grasslands, watercourses, farms, parks and gardens.
Diet: Grass seed and leaves.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially hollows). Cats, dogs and foxes.

Silvereye

Habitat: Forests, woodlands, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar, fruit (Flax-lily) and insects.
Threats: Cats.

Superb Fairy-wren

Habitat: Any habitat with dense, low cover.
Diet: Invertebrates such as grasshoppers and spiders.
Threats: Cats, dogs and foxes. Pesticides.

White-plumed Honeyeater

Habitat: Open forests, woodlands, water courses, parks and gardens.
Diet: Nectar, insects, some seeds.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially River Red-gum). Cats and dogs.

Willie Wagtail

Habitat: Open forests, woodlands, water courses, parks and gardens.
Diet: Invertebrates such as insects and grubs.
Threats: Cats and pesticides.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill

Habitat: Open forest, woodlands, watercourses, parks and gardens.
Diet: Insects. Occasionally seed.
Threats: Cats and pesticides.

Grey-headed Flying-fox

The Grey-headed Flying-fox is one of Australia's largest bats with a wingspan of over 1 metre. They are mostly dark brown-grey, except for a grey head and orange-red mantle encircling the neck and often appear in large groups. Numbers are declining because of habitat clearing and food shortages. They are a protected species and it is illegal to harm or disturb them without a permit.

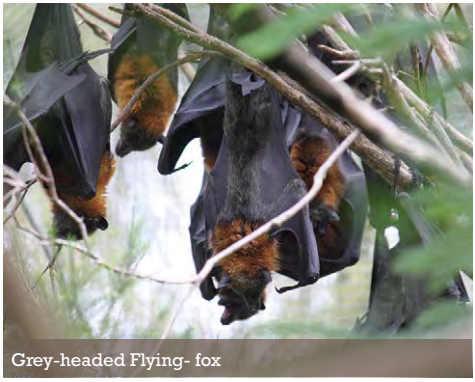
Grey-headed Flying-foxes first arrived in Bendigo in March 2010. Since that time, they have established a permanent breeding and maternity camp in Rosalind Park. Their population fluctuates depending on the time of the year and availability of food.

Quick facts:

- Navigates by eyesight, scent and sound.
- The only mammal capable of sustained flight and may travel up to 50km at night in search of food. They also hang by their feet because it is very energy efficient.
- Eats fruit from many native and introduced species and nectar and pollen from native trees, especially gum trees.
- Important to healthy forest ecosystems because they pollinate and disperse the seeds of many tree species.
- Nocturnal, however the colony is a busy place during the daytime where the bats spend part of the day sleeping and part of it interacting with their neighbours.
- Females are pregnant for six months, giving birth to a single baby around October. The young cling to their mother's fur for the first few weeks and are suckled until around five months old.

Enjoy Rosalind Park and its Flying-fox population but remember, if you come across a bat, whether healthy, sick or injured, don't touch it. Instead, please call the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on 136 186 or contact your nearest wildlife shelter.

More information: www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/our-wildlife/flying-foxes/victorias-flying-fox-colonies



Grey-headed Flying- fox

Grey-headed flying-fox (IM)

Microbats

Gould's Wattled Bat

Habitat: Roost in tree hollows and building crevices.

Diet: Insects including scarab beetles, caterpillars, crickets and moths.

Threats: Habitat loss. Disturbance. Pesticides. Cats and owls.

Lesser Long-eared Bat

Habitat: Roost in hollows, under bark, rocks, building crevices and occasionally caves.

Diet: Mainly catch moths in flight, also snatch insects off the ground or leaves.

Threats: Habitat loss. Disturbance. Pesticides. Cats and owls.

Gould's Wattled Bat (JB)

Lesser Long-eared Bat (JB)

Microbats are small, mouse-sized bats that use echolocation at night to hunt insects. They play an important ecological role in controlling insect populations, feasting on moths, beetles and grasshoppers. The Little Forest Bat is known to eat around 1,000 mosquitoes in one night! Most microbats fly above or below the tree canopy catching insects in mid-air. Others such as the White-striped and Southern Free-tail Bats also descend to the ground to feed on ants and non-flying beetles.

Microbats roost (sleep and rest) during the daytime in tree hollows, under peeling bark, in caves or building crevices. Once the nights become cooler and their food disappears with the onset of winter, microbats lower their body temperature and go into a state of mini-hibernation until their food returns in spring. It is very important not to disturb microbats while they are roosting during the day or winter. They are often sluggish and vulnerable to prey and use up valuable energy reserves.

Microbats of the Bendigo region include: White-striped Freetail Bat, Southern Freetail Bat, Lesser Long-eared Bat, Gould's Wattled Bat, Chocolate Wattled Bat, Inland Broad-nosed Bat, Southern Forest Bat, Little Forest Bat and Large Forest Bat.

The Eltham Copper Butterfly

The Eltham Copper Butterfly has a close symbiotic relationship between Sweet Bursaria and the genus of Nontoncus ants. The butterflies feed on the nectar of the flowers pollinating them as they feed. Adult Eltham Coppers then lay their eggs on the roots and stems of the Sweet Bursaria. Once the eggs hatch, the ants guard the caterpillars (providing protection from predators) ushering the larvae to and from the ant nest at the base of the shrub to feed on the Sweet Bursaria leaves at night. In return the ants feed on the sugar secretions exuded from the body of the caterpillars.

Caterpillar of the Eltham Copper Butterfly and ants (IG)

Native ants

Ants are members of the same order as bees and wasps and share several characteristics including their social colony structure centred around a queen and female worker ants and, in some cases, packing a sting!

In the ecosystem ants perform a number of important functions. As ants build nests and construct tunnels in the ground, they aerate the soil, improve drainage and add nutrients to the soil. Ants provide an invaluable service to plants by carrying seeds back to their nests. Some seeds take root and germinate. This helps plants disperse into new areas. Ants are a leading predator of other insects, helping to keep pest populations low. Ants carry dead organisms back to the nest helping to recycle nutrients.

Banded Sugar Ants (RN)

Bull Ant (RN)

Rare and uncommon animals

There are 87 fauna species listed as threatened in the City of Greater Bendigo. This represents 65 birds, 7 mammals, 4 fish, 7 reptiles, 2 amphibians and 2 invertebrates. You may be incredibly fortunate to attract to your garden, or observe in a nearby natural reserve, some of the following vulnerable species that are struggling to survive the impacts of urbanization, or are difficult to see. Conservation status refers to the Victorian status.

(RF)

Australian Owlet Nightjar

Conservation status: Secure.
Habitat: Forests, woodlands and watercourses.
Diet: Feed at night on a variety of insects.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially hollows). Cats, dogs and foxes. Vehicle collisions.

(ST)

Brush-tailed Phascogale (Tuan)

Conservation status: Vulnerable.
Habitat: Open dry forests.
Diet: Large insects such as spiders and centipedes. Eucalypt nectar.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially hollows). Foxes and cats. Vehicle collisions.

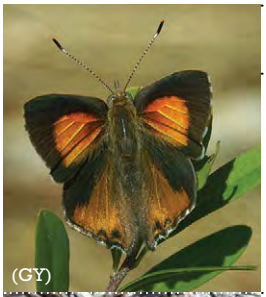
Diamond Firetail

Conservation status: Near threatened
Habitat: Open grassy woodland.
Diet: Seeds and occasionally insects.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes. Pet industry.

(GN)

Eastern Bearded Dragon

Conservation status: Secure.
Habitat: Open forests.
Diet: Leaves, fruit and flowers. Insects.
Threats: Habitat loss. Cats, dogs and foxes. Pet industry.


(GY)

Eltham Copper Butterfly

Conservation status: Endangered.
Habitat: Open woodland containing Sweet Bursaria and colonies of Nontoncus ants. (Refer to pg 31 for details).
Diet: Adult-nectar, larvae-Sweet Bursaria leaves.
Threats: Habitat loss and degradation.


(SK)

Golden Sun Moth

Conservation status: Critically endangered.
Habitat: Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands.
Diet: Larvae feed on roots of Wallaby Grass. Adults do not feed.
Threats: Loss of Wallaby Grass habitat.


(IM)

Growling Grass Frog

Conservation status: Endangered.
Habitat: Summer-still or slow-moving water with aquatic plants; winter-under rocks and logs away from water.
Diet: Mainly invertebrates.
Threats: Habitat loss including wetland drainage. Pesticides. Chytrid disease. Cats and foxes.


(OL)

Lace Monitor

Conservation status: Endangered.
Habitat: Forests
Diet: Insects, birds and their eggs and small skinks.
Threats: Habitat loss. Dogs and foxes


(RT)

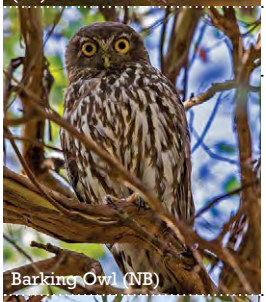
Musk Duck

Conservation status: Vulnerable
Habitat: Deep, still lakes and wetlands.
Diet: Aquatic insects, crustaceans, snails, fish and frogs. Occasionally seeds of aquatic plants.
Threats: Drainage of wetlands. Duck hunting.


(IM)

Native Water Rat (Rakali)

Conservation status: Secure.
Habitat: Lakes and river systems.
Diet: Fish, crustaceans, large aquatic insects, frogs and birds.
Threats: Habitat loss and degradation. Foxes and cats.


Barking Owl (NB)

Owls (Barking, Powerful, Southern Boobook and Barn)

Status: Barking (Endangered), Powerful (Vulnerable), Boobook and Barn (Secure).
Habitat: Forests, woodlands, watercourses.
Diet: Small mammals.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially hollows). Foxes and cats. Vehicle collisions.


Powerful Owl (IM)


(DR)

Regent Honeyeater

Conservation status: Critically endangered.
Habitat: Box Ironbark and eucalypt forests.
Diet: Nectar and insects.
Threats: Habitat loss and degradation.
Aggressive bird competition.

Short-beaked Echidna

Conservation status: Secure.
Habitat: Open forests, grassy woodland – anywhere with ants!
Diet: Ants and termites, worms, beetles and grubs.
Threats: Habitat loss (especially logs and stumps).
Vehicle collisions.


(AA)

Swift Parrot (winter migrant from Tasmania)

Conservation status: Critically endangered.
Habitat: Forests and woodlands (especially Box Ironbark).
Diet: Eucalypt nectar, seeds, flowers. Insects.
Threat: Habitat loss. Cats.

Attracting butterflies

Butterflies will move over large distances to find nectar-producing plants (e.g. daisies, banksias and wattles) to feed on and host plants to lay their eggs (e.g. grasses, wattles and Bursaria).

Recipe:

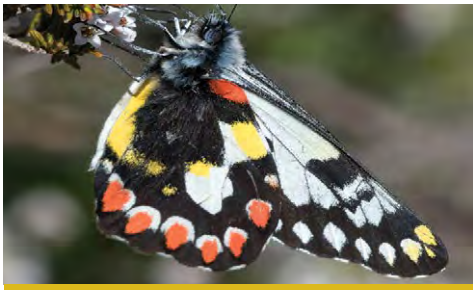
- Incorporate a range of plant sizes that cater for butterflies that fly at various heights, as different species will fly around grasses, groundcovers, shrubs or mature trees.
- Add a dish of damp sand. Butterflies take in water and essential salts and minerals from the soil.
- Include a flat rock or paver for butterflies to bask in the morning sun.
- Butterflies are not strong fliers. Provide protected areas where they can shelter from wind and rain. Messy patches are great!
- Practise natural pest control (pg 52).
- Plant a range of host plants for different butterflies to lay their eggs (for example Red-spotted Jezebel Butterflies breed on Mistletoe plants while Dainty Swallowtail Butterflies prefer Everlasting Daisies).

Threats:

- Insecticides
- Lack of habitat

Dainty Swallowtail (AA)

Meadow Argus Butterfly (IM)

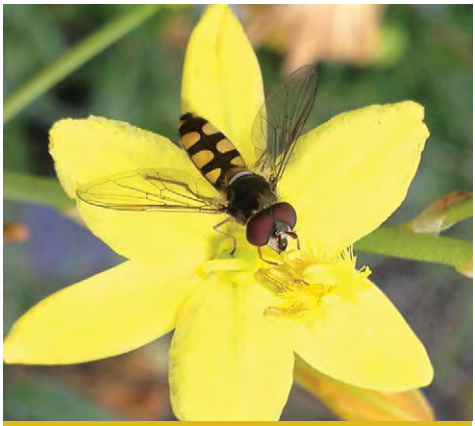


Red-spotted Jezebel (CC)

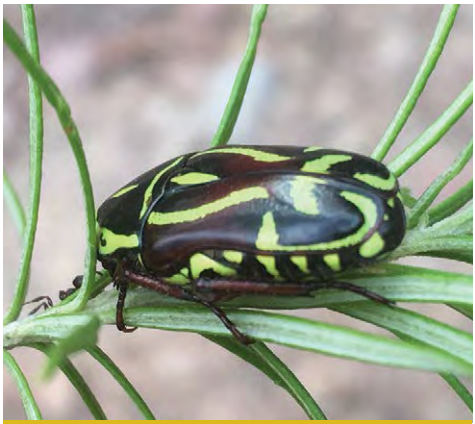
Butterflies

Look for the butterfly icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for butterflies.

Chequered Cuckoo-bee



Hoverfly on Bulbine Lily



Fiddler Beetle

Attracting insect pollinators

A wide range of invertebrates, as well as some birds and mammals, are important plant pollinators. Pollinator insects include many species of bees, flies, hoverflies, moths, wasps, butterflies, beetles, thrips and some ants.

Recipe:

- Provide water that is accessible for invertebrates that can't swim (they need to stand on the edge, a plant or floating material).
- Leave some messy patches in your garden.
- Use bush mulch on your garden beds (pg 51).
- Practice natural pest control (pg 52).
- Add an 'insect hotel'.
- Plant grasses and rushes for egg-laying pollinators. Examples include Kangaroo Grass, mat-rush and flax-lily.
- Plant a range of different plants that flower across the seasons.

Threats:

- Insecticides
- Lack of habitat

Invertebrate pollinators

Look for the bee icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for invertebrate pollinators.

Build an insect hotel

Have fun with the kids and make an insect hotel!

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

If you are drilling holes in wood to create burrows, drill holes of varying size ranging from 5-10mm wide and 15-80mm deep. Make the holes smooth and blind (not right through the timber) and slope them slightly upward to help keep them dry.

Or you can fill a pipe with clay and add some holes. Or simply bundle together some straws or bamboo and see who moves in!

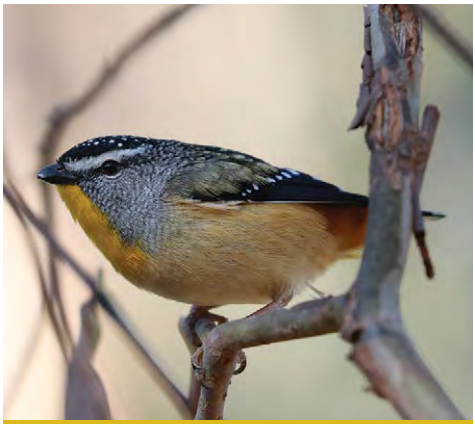
Locate your insect hotel with shelter from strong sun, rain and wind. Consider making a few insect hotels and locating them in different sections of your garden such as a high sunny location and a low shady spot.

You are now open for business!

Insect hotel

Red-browed Finch

Superb Fairy-wren (RH)



Spotted Pardalote

Attracting small birds

Small birds help control insects, recycle nutrients and disperse seeds. Birds such as pardalotes, robins, wrens, fantails and thornbills feed on insects. Finches and silvereyes feed on berries and seeds.

Recipe:

- Provide a shallow dish of fresh water in an elevated position near a prickly or dense shrub.
- Create open areas for foraging.
- Mulch garden beds to attract tasty insect treats.
- Practise natural pest control (pg 52).
- Plant dense or prickly shrubs for protection and safe nest sites.
- Prune shrubs to create a denser form.
- Plant a range of plants including prickly wattles, tea-trees, correas grasses and climbers.
- Keep your pets inside at night.

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs outside at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat

Small birds

Look for the small bird icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for small birds.

Attracting honeyeaters

Honeyeaters are very active birds that need a rich supply of nectar and pollen-producing flowers to keep them fuelled. They have a brush-tongue they use to collect nectar and pollen. Honeyeaters can be protective of a good supply of food and quite aggressive towards other nectar feeders. They also need insects in their diet so, despite their name, don't be surprised if you see them snapping at some bugs.

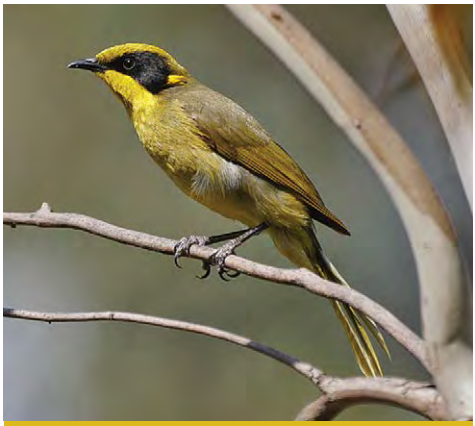
Recipe:

- Include a shallow dish of fresh water in an elevated safe position for bathing and drinking.
- Practise natural pest control (pg 52).
- Plant dense or prickly small and large shrubs for protection and safe nest sites.
- Plant a range of nectar-producing plants that flower across the seasons.
- Keep your pets inside at night.

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs outside at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat

White-eared Honeyeater



Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (NKB)

Brown-headed Honeyeater (RG)

Honeyeaters

Look for the honeyeater icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for honeyeaters.

Galah

Purple-crowned Lorikeet (PD)

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Attracting parrots

Parrots feed on a wide variety of plants. Nectar-feeders such as the Musk, Rainbow and Little Lorikeet have a brush-tongue to collect nectar and pollen. Seed-eaters such as Red-rumped Parrots, Galahs and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feed on wattles, banksias, eucalypts and grasses. Long-billed Corellas dig in the ground for tubers. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos love to find grubs hiding under tree bark and crack open seed pods and wooden fruits to extract seed and insects.

Recipe:

- Include a source of fresh water, especially for the seed-eating parrots that become very thirsty.
- Plant a range of nectar, pollen and seed-producing plants.
- Add a tall tree for perching, roosting and nesting.
- Keep tree hollows for birds to nest in.
- Practise natural pest control (pg 52).
- Keep your pets inside at night.

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs outside at night
- Lack of habitat, especially hollows

Parrots

Look for the parrot icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for parrots.

Attracting large birds

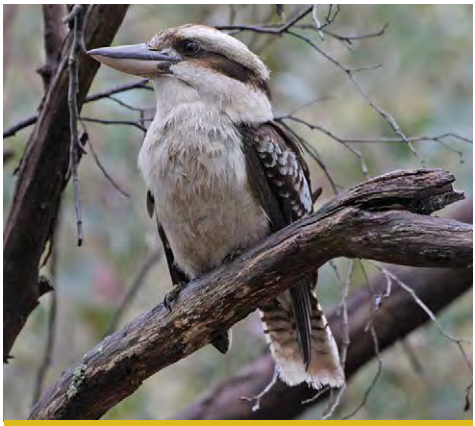
Birds such as Tawny Frogmouths, magpies, owls, eagles, Laughing Kookaburras and butcherbirds are carnivorous and feed on small mammals, lizards and large insects. A few large birds, such as the Common Bronzewing and Crested Pigeon are seed-eaters that mainly feed on grass seeds.

Recipe:

- Provide a source of fresh water for birds to bathe in and drink.
- Include a few tall trees for perching, roosting and nesting.
- Keep tree hollows for larger birds.
- Practise natural pest control (pg 52).
- Keep your pets inside at night.

Threats:

- Other carnivorous birds
- Cats and dogs outside at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat, especially tree hollows for owls



Laughing Kookaburra

Common Bronzewing

Tawny Frogmouth (IM)

Large birds

Look for the large bird icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for large birds.

Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard (NI)

Marbled Gecko (WM)

Garden Skink (NP)

Stumpy-tailed Lizard (PK)

Attracting lizards

Blue-tongued Lizards, Marbled Geckos and little Garden Skinks generally prefer to snack on insects, but are opportunists that will also eat berries and seeds. Avoid using snail baits, even pet-friendly ones can harm wildlife. Many a Blue-tongued Lizard has unfortunately died after eating either the snail bait or the dead snails.

Recipe:

- Provide flat rocks or pavers in a protected, sunny spot to warm up.
- Mulch garden beds to attract insects to eat.
- Practise natural pest control (pg 52).
- Include a fresh, shallow water supply on the ground.
- Plant tussocky grasses for protection.
- Provide cool shelter such as dense shurbs.
- Keep your pets inside at night.

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs outside at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat

Lizards

Look for the lizard icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for lizards, skinks and geckos.

Attracting frogs

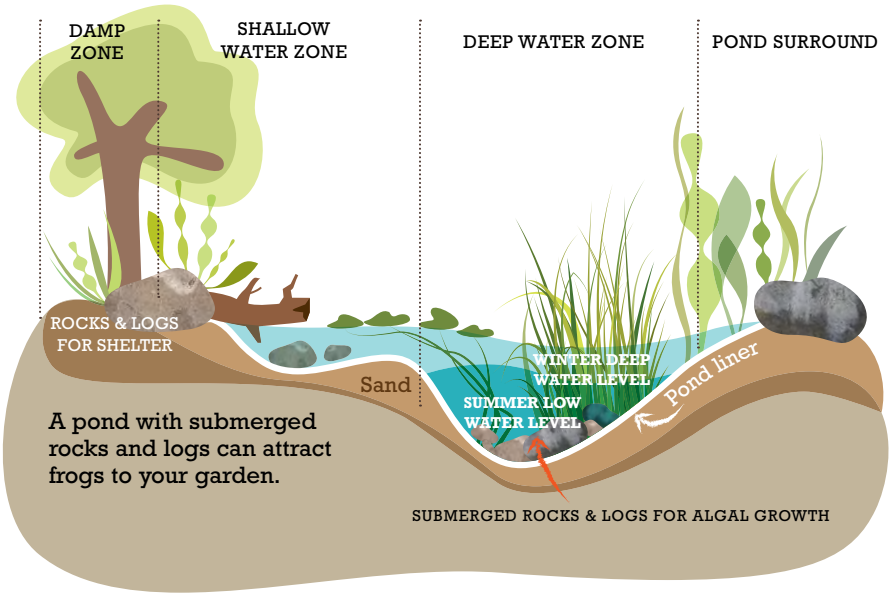
Frogs need water to lay their eggs and for tadpoles to grow into frogs. Tadpoles feed on algae and decaying vegetable matter. Frogs spend their non-breeding life away from water and eat insects. They are actually very quiet during this time.

You have two options for attracting frogs to your garden. One is to build a frog pond that will attract breeding frogs to sing their chorus to attract a mate and lay their eggs. The second option if you have a moist, shady area in your garden is to create a frog hide-away for non-breeding frogs to burrow under a log or mulch and quietly hop about feeding.

Recipe for a frog pond:

- Locate your pond in a low-lying section of your garden that has 70% shade.
- Avoid locating your frog pond under trees which may drop leaves.
- Ensure your pond includes shallow entry points and deeper sections for potted aquatic plants.
- Add rocks and logs and cover the bottom with gravel.
- Fill with rainwater or tap water (chlorinated tap water needs to stand for 5 days).
- Add a variety of indigenous aquatic and semi-aquatic plants as well as plants that thrive in moist soil.
- Lock up your pets or prevent cats from entering your pond surround.
- Avoid pumps and do not add fish.

Cross-section of frog pond



Spotted Marsh frog (NC)

Peron's Tree Frog (KM)

Southern Brown Tree Frog (JB)

Recipe for a frog hide-away:

- Find a moist, shady area in a quiet part of your garden.
- Provide shelter such as logs with holes and loose bark or rocks.
- Plant lots of groundcovers, grasses and small shrubs.
- Add chunky wood-based mulch.

Threats:

- Cats and dogs outside at night.
- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas.
- Pesticides.
- Lack of habitat.

Frogs

Look for the frog icon in the Indigenous Plant Guide (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for frogs.

Attracting small mammals

Small mammals most likely to visit your garden include the Common Ringtail Possum, Common Brushtail Possum, Krefft's Sugar Glider, microbats and the Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Recipe:

- Microbats like large old trees with hollows or loose bark.
- Plant a range of indigenous plants that flower across the seasons and attract insects.
- Provide trees with hollows or species-specific nest boxes.
- Plant eucalypts to provide both food and shelter.
- Consider the spacing of trees to allow easy movement for tree-dwelling species.
- Provide a water source at ground level.

Threats:

- Habitat loss (especially tree hollows).
- Cats, dogs and foxes.
- Vehicle collisions.
- Power lines.

Common Ringtail Possum (MM)

Krefft's Sugar Glider (IM)

Small mammals

Look for small mammal icon in the Local Plant Selection section (pp 14-17) for plants that provide food and shelter for small mammals.

Living with wildlife

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

Avoid supplementary feeding

Tempting as it may be to put out seed for parrots or nectar for honeyeaters, you may be causing them more harm than good. Wildlife can become dependent on artificial food that may in some situations lead to malnutrition. Feeding stations can attract numerous birds to the same area on a regular basis. Multiple birds eating and defecating in these small areas can greatly increase the spread of disease. A constant supply of 'easy' human food can also disrupt the natural population density within an area. Rather than artificially feeding wildlife, plant lots of food-producing native plants and provide a good supply of water! Change the water regularly to ensure it is fresh and clean.

Deter pest birds

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

Indian Mynas love nothing more than an easy feed from a pet food bowl or artificial feeding station. Feed pets indoors or where birds cannot access their bowl. Ensure compost bins and rubbish bins are covered. Block holes in roofs and eaves. For information contact the Northern Bendigo Landcare Group landcareversusmynas@gmail.com

Rainbow Lorikeets

Indian Myna

Tree guards

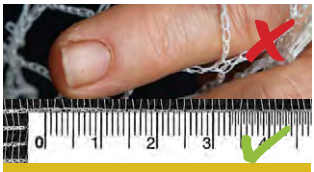
If your young plants are in danger of being eaten it is worthwhile protecting them with staked tree guards until they are established.

Tree guard

Netting

Loosely woven netting will trap wildlife and should be avoided. Choose netting with a mesh size of 5mm x 5mm.

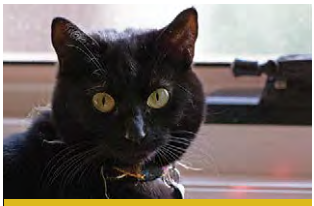
For details on netting visit: agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/pocta-act-1986/protecting-fruit-trees-and-wildlife



Finger test

Pet night curfew

Domestic cats and dogs are one of the main threats to our native wildlife. Prevent these problems by keeping all your pets inside from sunset to sun rise. Details www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Animals-and-Pets/Dog-and-Cat-Laws/Cat-curfew.



Cat curfew

Vehicle collisions

Wildlife vehicle collisions significantly contribute to death and injury of many wildlife species. Reducing your driving speed at dawn, dusk and night-time will give you more time to spot wildlife and the animals an opportunity to move off the road. If an animal appears dazzled by headlights, flash your lights a number of times if it is safe to do so.

Expert help

If you find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, immediately call for assistance.

Do not try to unnecessarily handle the animal. Always treat wildlife with caution, especially when distressed or injured. They may react unpredictably, carry disease and can be dangerous. Wherever possible, wait for an experienced/qualified person to arrive. Stress can kill wildlife. If you do move it, keep the animal in a dark and quiet box and do not attempt to give it any food or water.

Be prepared in case you find injured wildlife. Carry a lidded box, towels and blanket.

Add to your phone contacts:

Wildlife Victoria
03 8400 7300

Wildlife Rescue and Information Network
0419 356 433

Wildlife Rescue and Emergency Service
0427 301 401

Rescued baby Ringtail Possum

Planting and Maintenance

There are four important elements to successful planting:

PLANT SELECTION | SITE PREPARATION | PLANTING TECHNIQUE | MAINTENANCE

Plant selection

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

To find the ideal spot for your plant, consider its soil, moisture and sunlight requirements and potential size when fully grown. Plant labels and nursery staff should assist you with selecting suitable plants by understanding their needs. Also consider how plants may interact with each other, especially the impact large trees may have in your garden as they mature.

It's a good idea to know exactly where you are going to plant something. This will help avoid failed plantings or other issues in your patch. For example, if not carefully selected and positioned, large trees may shade out sun-loving plants underneath them, impact nearby buildings or plumbing with their vigorous roots, or create problems with leaves dropping in gutters.

When choosing plants from a nursery, remember that tall plants in larger pots will not necessarily give you better results. Tubestock (plants in 15cm tall plastic tubes) will generally catch up with and outgrow larger, more mature stock. They are also easier to establish in difficult sites with poor soils.

For information on plants which are local to the Bendigo region refer to pages 14-17.

Site preparation

To find the ideal spot for your plant, consider its soil, moisture and sunlight requirements and potential size when fully grown.

Weeds

Weeds should be controlled prior to planting to reduce competition and for post-planting maintenance. Hand-weed any pest plants from the site. Avoid spraying the weeds with chemicals as they can build up in the soil and are harmful to soil organisms and all wildlife within the food chain.

Pre-planting mulch

Good quality mulch should be spread over your garden to a minimum depth of 10cm prior to planting. Water your soil before laying mulch.

Covering the soil surface with mulch can improve soil structure, nutrient availability and water retention, and prevent future weed growth. Check if there is any existing indigenous vegetation to ensure you do not mulch over the top of it.

Ensure that the mulch you select is made from a sustainable resource. Chipped waste wood and green waste mulches are generally a good option. Always ensure that any green waste has been well composted before use to kill any weed seeds that may be present.

Mulch improves soil and helps to prevent weed growth.

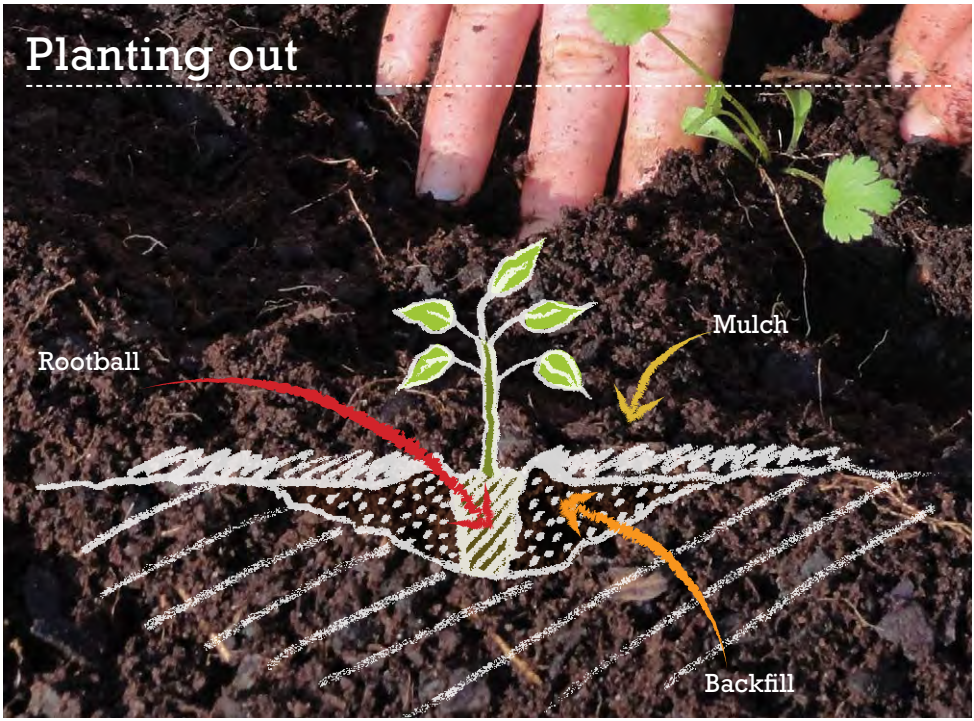
Stakes and guards

A plant will grow with greater strength if it is not tied to a stake. When a plant is blown around by the wind, plant hormones are released by this movement creating a stronger plant. Plants only need to be staked if they are in danger of toppling over. If staking is required, ensure that the ties allow for some movement. Ensure the ties do not ringbark the plant as it grows.

Young plants may need protection from wildlife. Position three stakes in a triangular formation and add a guard.

Plastic guards should be avoided around waterways or exposed, windy sites as they can become a litter problem. Consider instead biodegradable guards. Remove the guard once the plant is producing lots of new growth, generally after two years.

Planting out



1. Give your potted plant a good soak in a bucket of water prior to planting.
2. Dig a sloping, shallow hole 2 to 3 times the width of the root ball and as deep as the root ball.
3. Remove any weeds in the planting hole as they can emit a chemical that inhibits root growth.
4. Fill the hole with water and allow it to drain before planting.
5. Upend your pot. Any roots protruding through the bottom can be pruned before removing from the pot. Remove the plant from the pot by holding it upside down and gently tap it out of the pot. Note, there is generally no need to tease or separate the root ball, it is better not to disturb the root system.
6. Place the plant in the hole so that the top of the root ball is flush with the surface level.
7. Backfill loose soil around the plant and press down firmly.
8. Fashion a circle of raised soil around the edge of the root ball to form a watering basin.
9. Water thoroughly to settle the soil around the plant.
10. Mulch up to the edge of the root ball. Do not mulch up to the stem as this may cause collar rot.

Maintenance

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

Watering

- Indigenous plants generally need less water than introduced plants.
- Water in the evening or early morning to prevent water evaporating before it reaches your plant roots.
- Give your plants a slow, deep water at a rate that the soil can absorb the water.

Mulch

Top up your mulch as it breaks down. This will vary with climate, but is generally once a year in early summer.

Don't mulch right up to the stem of your plants as this can cause diseases such as collar rot.

Avoid bark mulch that is too fresh (e.g. recently chipped branches) as it depletes the soil of nitrogen as it breaks down causing nitrogen drawdown and your plants look a bit yellow.

Bush mulch is ideal for a native garden. When spread on your garden it will create a natural leaf litter look and provide habitat for insects and lizards to shelter and feed. It is low in nutrients and preferable for indigenous plants.

Also avoid using very fine mulch or grass clippings as a mulch as they tend to mat together forming an impenetrable layer. Better to compost your clippings.

Mulching tips

- Avoid hot, steaming mulch, as this indicates that it is still composting.
- Check for and remove mulch-borne seedlings to prevent weed invasion.
- Mulch to about 10cm to allow rain penetration, suppress weeds and reduce soil moisture loss.

Mulch conserves water, reduces weeds, helps keep the soil temperature even, adds nutrients and creates habitat!

Natural pest control

Herbicides and pesticides from our garden can enter our stormwater system, where they pollute local waterways and harm plants and wildlife. By using non-chemical pest control we create healthier habitats.

Consider:

- checking your garden regularly for pests
- attracting predatory animals to your garden. Not only do birds, bats, frogs and lizards eat pest insects, but so do ladybirds, praying mantis, hoverflies and dragonflies.
- removing pests by hand or spray with a jet of water
- trying home remedies such as linseed oil in a shallow dish to catch earwigs
- placing ground up egg shells around plants to deter snails.

Fertiliser

Indigenous plants generally do not require fertilising as they have adapted to suit local soils.

A good mulch will slowly break down and add nutrients to the soil.

If you do fertilise your indigenous plants, there are commercial products available for native plants that are slow-release and low in phosphate.

Ladybird eating aphids

Reference and Advice

Nursery list

A & B Trees
3 Thompsons Lane,
Heathcote, Victoria, 3523
Open: By appointment only
Phone: (03) 5433 2236
Email: abtrees3@tpg.com.au
Facebook: www.facebook.com/aandbtreesheathcote/

Goldfields Revegetation
230 Tannery Lane,
Mandurang, Victoria, 3551
Open: 7 days, 9am – 4.30pm
Phone: (03) 5439 5384
Email:
info@goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au
Website:
www.goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au

Habitat Native Plant Co
86 Maiden Gully Road
P.O. Box 878, Maiden Gully,
Victoria, 3551
Open: 9am – 4.30pm
Wednesday – Sunday
Phone: 0417 544 159
Email: habitatnp@bigpond.com

Neangar Nursery
8 McClelland Drive,
Eaglehawk, Victoria, 3556
Open: 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday
Phone: (03) 5446 9260
Email: neangarnursery@bigpond.com
Website: www.neangarnursery.com.au

Newstead Natives
Frances Cincotta
Newstead, Victoria, 3462
Open: By appointment only
Phone: (03) 5476 2691
Email: natives@newstead.vicmail.net

Rochester Nursery
6708 Northern Highway
(3 km North of Rochester)
Rochester, Victoria, 3561
Open: 8am- 4.30pm, Monday – Friday
Saturday 9am – 2pm
Closed Public Holidays.
Closed for a Christmas Break
late Dec to early Jan
Phone: (03) 5484 3777
Instagram: @rochesternursery
Email: info@rochesternursery.com.au
Website: www.rochesternursery.com.au

Community groups and organisations

Australian Plants Society Bendigo

PO Box 669
Bendigo, Victoria,
Australia, 3552
Email: bendigo@apsvic.org.au

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club

PO Box 396, Bendigo,
Victoria, Australia, 3552

Email:
info@bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au

Website:
www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au

Birdlife Bendigo-Echuca District

Email:
bendigoechuca@birdlife.org.au
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/
groups/333219706876981

Trust for Nature Victoria

www.trustfornature.org.au

Landcare

www.landcarevic.org.au

North Central Waterwatch

www.nccma.vic.gov.au/waterwatch

Become a citizen scientist!

You might like to record your wildlife observations. The iNaturalist platform helps you to share your observations, see sightings near you and have your records added to the national biodiversity database for use by others including scientists. Find out more at **www.inaturalist.ala.org.au**

Or participate in backyard wildlife surveys such as:

- Aussie Backyard Bird Count **www.aussiebirdcount.org.au**
- Wild Pollinator Count **www.wildpollinatorcount.com**
- Frog ID week **www.frogid.net.au**

Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife (Victoria) is a State government program supporting landholders or managers who provide habitat for native wildlife on their land.

Land for Wildlife is a voluntary wildlife conservation program. If your property is 0.4 hectares (1 acre) or greater and you wish to create or protect wildlife habitats, then the Land for Wildlife scheme can offer you advice and assistance no matter whether you manage a farm, a bush block, a council park or school ground.

Landholder participation is free and membership doesn't alter the legal status of your property in any way.

Over 12,500 people make a significant contribution to native biodiversity conservation through their combined membership, actively involved in protecting or restoring habitats on their own land. Approximately 4,500 properties (more than 500,000 hectares of private land) are currently registered throughout Victoria, many in Central Victoria.

For more information visit: www.wildlife.vic.gov.au/protecting-wildlife/land-for-wildlife

Photo supplied by Peter and Felicity Johnson

Further reading

Habitat – a practical guide to creating a wildlife-friendly Australian garden
Bishop, A. B.Murdoch Books, 2018.

Indigenous Plants of Bendigo – A Gardener's Guide to Growing and Protecting Local Plants
Free, available from the City of Greater Bendigo.

The Waterwise Australian Native Garden – A practical guide to garden design, plant selection and much more
Stewart, Angus & Bishop, A.B. Murdoch Books, 2019.

Frogs and Reptiles of the Bendigo District – a guide to identification
Green, Darren & Gibbons, Dale. Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc. 2010.

Grow Wild – Gardening to sustain wildlife in the Hepburn Shire
Teschendorff, Jill. Wombat Forestcare Inc. 2020.

Wildlife of the Box-ironbark Country (second edition) Tzaros, Chris. CSIRO Publishing. Due for release, second half of 2021

Useful websites

Birdlife Australia
www.birdlife.org.au

Sustainable Gardening Australia
www.sgaonline.org.au

Agriculture Victoria
www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds

Weeds Australia
www.weeds.org.au

Gardens for Wildlife Victoria
Gardensforwildlife.com

Bendigo Nature
www.bendigonature.org

iNaturalist
www.inaturalist.ala.org.au

Atlas of Living Australia
www.ala.org.au

Responsible Pet Ownership
www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Animals-and-Pets/Dog-and-Cat-Laws/Cat-curfew

Parks Victoria
www.parks.vic.gov.au

Land for Wildlife
wildlife.vic.gov.au/protecting-wildlife/land-for-wildlife

City of Greater Bendigo hopes this booklet provides the practical information you need to create a beautiful garden that will attract and support a wide variety of local wildlife that needs your help. In return you will be rewarded with hours of enjoyment watching the passing parade of our amazing native animals.

White-eared Honeyeater

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

Further information / Contact us

Main office, 15 Hopetoun Street, Bendigo

PO Box 733, Bendigo, 3552

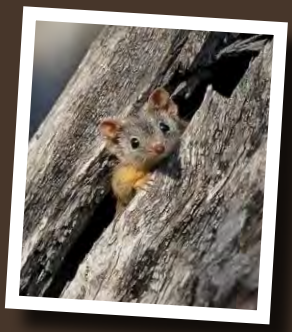
Telephone 5434 6000

Hearing or speech impaired?

Call via National Relay Service on 133 677

Email requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Website www.bendigo.vic.gov.au



Creating
Wildlife-friendly
Gardens