

Local plants for bird friendly gardens

(adapted from article by *Trees In Newcastle*)

Trees In Newcastle supplies plants that grow naturally in the Hunter area. As the seeds and cuttings are sourced from local plants they are suited to local conditions, flowering and fruiting at appropriate times for native birds and other wildlife.

Certain plants will provide the right food, home, nesting materials and shelter for native birds.

It will depend on your garden, location and the surrounding area as to what you can grow, and what birds will be attracted to your garden. For instance, yards backing onto natural bushland might attract different birds to gardens that are deep in suburbia and surrounded by lawns and a few tall trees.

You can still make a difference no matter where you are or the size of your garden. Some plants can be planted in pots – this might suit a balcony garden or a rented property eg *Melaleuca thymifolia*, *Goodenia ovata*, *Grevillea sericea*. Gardens with largely exotic plants and lawns can be gradually replaced with local natives. Small gardens in suburbia can provide safe pit stops and refuges for some birds.

Ideally, a bird attracting garden will provide diverse layers, be bushy to the ground, and have some native grasses. Aim for layers of trees or taller shrubs, smaller shrubs, ground covers, mulched areas and un-mulched areas, rocks and logs.

To attract some smaller native birds plant dense, small to medium sized shrubs eg the local *Acacia myrtifolia*, *A. terminalis*, *Grevillea sericea*, and prickly ones, ie, *Bursaria spinosa*, *Hakea teretifolia*, or the less prickly *H. bakeriana* and *Acacia ulicifolia*. This creates a safe space from cats, dogs and more aggressive birds. The bigger hybrid Grevilleas tend to attract the larger more aggressive birds like lorikeets and noisy miners that scare off smaller birds. Next time you visit us take some time to admire the birdlife around *Belmont Wetlands*.

Having a variety of natives provides a range of food types throughout the year eg nectar, insects, fruit, nuts and seeds -

Nectar plants include:

Eucalyptus, *Banksia*, *Correa*, *Callistemon*, *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, *Melaleuca*, *Persoonia*.

Insect attracting plants include:

Eucalyptus, Cheese Tree, *Leptospermum* (Tea-tree), *Kunzea*, *Acacia* (Wattle), Native Peas.

Fruit:

Ficus coronata (Sandpaper Fig), *Homalanthus populifolius* (Bleeding Heart Tree), *Polyscias*, *Austromyrtus dulcis* (Midyim berries), *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (Blueberry ash), Lilly Pilly.

Seeds:

Lomandra longifolia, *Themeda*, (Kangaroo grass), *Poa* (Tussock grass).

Water:

Provide clean water as a Dragonfly Waterpot with native aquatic plants! Water attracts wildlife like magic!

See Lake Mac's fantastic 'Backyard Habitat Planting Guide' by *Lake Macquarie Council*.

Australian Plants Society-Newcastle Group

