Gardens for Wildlife

CITY OF MELTON

The City of Melton has been occupied by Indigenous people for thousands of years. The City of Melton is the traditional home of the Kulin Nation. The land to the east of the Werribee River is the traditional home of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people and the west side of the Werribee River is the traditional home of the Wathaurong.

Melton City Council acknowledges the leadership and inspiration of Knox City Council in developing the 'Gardens for Wildlife' project.

This booklet was produced by Green Gecko Publications
greengeckopublications.com.au

© Green Gecko Publications 2018

Text by Mary Trigger of Green Gecko Publications
and the City of Melton

Photographs: Mary Trigger, Raf Heriot, Ian Moodie (IM), Nick Clemann (NC), Elaine Shallue (ES), www.natureshare.org.au: Russell Best (RB), Chris Clarke (CC), Chris Lindorff (CL), Giorgio De Nola (GDN), James Booth (JB), Kevin Sparrow (KS) and John Edwards (JE).

Cover photo: New Holland Honeyeater by Nora Peters

Design: Naina Knoess

Disclaimer: Although precautions have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information, the publishers, authors and printers cannot accept responsibility for any claim, loss, damage or liability arising out of the use of the information published.

Some plants can be toxic or cause an allergic reaction in some people and your pets. This publication does not cover such issues and you need to refer to other materials if you are concerned.

Green Gecko
PUBLICATIONS
ABN: 90618914198

Contents

Introduction
Our changing environment

Alterations to the natural environment can have a number of effects including a decrease in habitat and a loss of biodiversity.

Our environment is changing and we as local gardeners can make a positive contribution that helps to offset some of the negative impacts of that change while at the same time creating enjoyable living gardens that connect us to the colour and beauty of the natural environment. Our efforts can mean that some of the change effects, including a decrease in habitat extent and/or quality, and a loss of biodiversity, are offset in our backyards.

White-plumed Honeyeater

Urbanisation

In Victoria, over half the native vegetation that existed before European settlement has been cleared for houses, roads, agriculture and other infrastructure. Native vegetation in the landscape now exists largely as isolated patches; often poorly connected. This fragmentation means that it is more difficult for wildlife to move around and encounter other members of their species to breed with, resulting in a decline in species numbers in many rural and urban landscapes.

Replacing areas of native vegetation with surfaces such as concrete contributes to an increase in temperatures in urban areas, known as the urban heat island effect, and changes the way rain water finds its way into rivers and groundwater.

Climate change

Changes in our global climate are impacting our natural environment. Ongoing lower rainfall and an increase in heatwaves and storm events are predicted to continue. It is difficult for plants and animals to adapt quickly to new conditions, resulting in a loss of indigenous species and biodiversity. In some cases weeds and pest animals are advantaged by climate change, exacerbating their impacts.

Weeds

Many non-indigenous species can become invasive, competing with indigenous plants for space, nutrients, water and light. This leads to a reduction of habitat extent and/or quality for wildlife, and a resulting loss of biodiversity.

Pollution

Herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers from our gardens can enter our stormwater system, where they end up polluting local waterways, and harming plants and wildlife.

Our gardens provide an opportunity to support our unique plants and animals. Many local plants are great choices for landscaping, and can be used in any style of garden. In addition, your garden can provide a stepping stone for native birds and other animals to move safely across our highly urbanised landscape.

Habitat and biodiversity

Biodiversity
The variety of life forms, including plants, animals, micro-organisms and the ecosystems of which they are a part. Biodiversity encompasses all living things and importantly, the functions and processes that link and sustain them.

Biodiversity is important as it sustains the natural systems which provide us with clean air and water, regulate climate and maintain healthy soils for food production.

Habitat
The environment where an animal naturally lives or occurs.

Habitat along a creek for example, allows wildlife to move through the landscape more easily with greater access to food and shelter. Indigenous gardens act in a similar way, providing habitat stepping stones to help local wildlife move around the landscape.

A high diversity of plant species improves the chances of local ecosystems to survive destructive events or processes such as fire or climate change.

Rock Correa and Common Tussock-grass

Indigenous plants

Indigenous plants are the original or local plants that occur naturally in a given location. They have adapted to the conditions within the local environment such as the soil and climate.

These local plant species have also evolved alongside native wildlife, therefore providing the best possible food and shelter for native animals. A greater variety of indigenous plant species means more food and more diverse habitat for native wildlife. Wildlife corridors connect isolated areas of habitat in a landscape.

There are a number of benefits to establishing indigenous plants in your garden. Indigenous plants:

- are perfectly suited to our local soils and climate, and many species will thrive without fertilisers or sprays
- require little maintenance to keep them looking healthy and neat
- can withstand City of Melton's hot, dry summers and long dry periods with little or no watering
- grow quickly and often flower within the first season of being planted
- have greater resistance to disease
- attract and provide food and shelter for native wildlife
- reflect City of Melton's natural character, preserving and enhancing a sense of local identity
- will save you money and water
- offer you an opportunity to grow a more sustainable garden.

What are native plants?

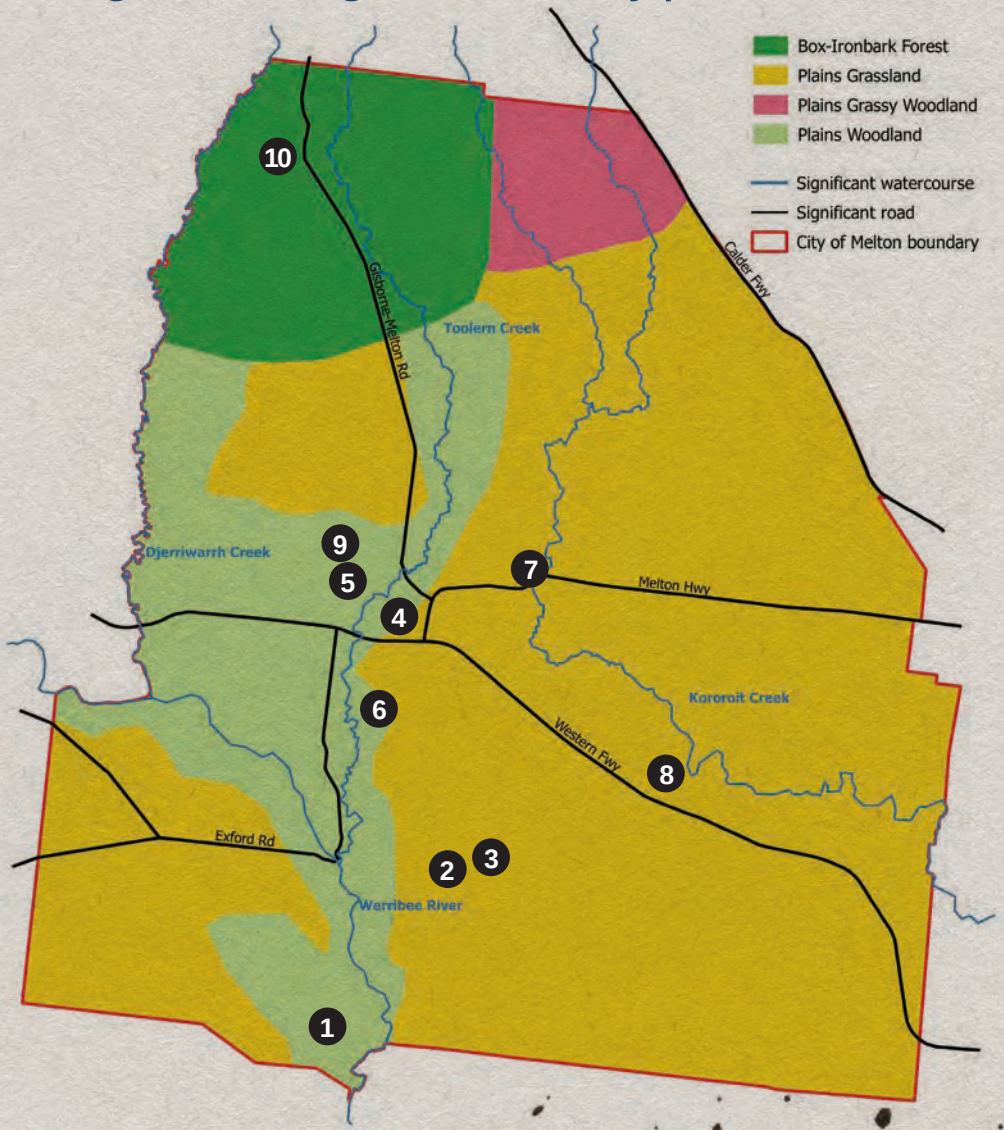
While indigenous plants are species which occur naturally in a local area, there are also species known as native plants.

Many retail nurseries sell 'native' plants, which refers to any plant species that occurs naturally in Australia. They can include a *Grevillea* species from NSW or a *Eucalyptus* from Tasmania.

Just like plants introduced from another country, native plants have the potential to become an environmental weed outside their natural range.

For example, the Bluebell Creeper (*Billardiera fusiformis* - often still called *Sollya heterophylla* on nursery labels) from Western Australia was a popular native nursery plant that is now aggressively invading bushland around Victoria.

Original vegetation types



Plant Communities / Eco Hotspots

City of Melton plant communities

The City of Melton has 18 indigenous plant communities that were once more widespread but are now fragmented across the municipality. The Plains Grassland, Grassy Woodland, Grey Box Woodland and Seasonal Herbaceous Wetland communities are now critically endangered or endangered at a national level. The dominant plant communities (simplified) in the City of Melton are:

Box Ironbark Forest
Dominated by Ironbark, Red Stringybark, Bundy and/or Yellow Gum, with an understory of shrubs and tussock grasses.

Plains Grassland
Dominated by tussock grasses and wildflowers.

Plains Grassy Woodland
Dominated by River Red Gum, with an understory of tussock grasses.

Plains Woodland
Dominated by Grey Box, Yellow Box and Yellow Gum, with an understory of shrubs (e.g. wattles) and tussock grasses.

Creekline Grassy Woodland
(Along most watercourses)
Dominated by River Red Gums, with an understory of tussock grasses and water-loving plants in areas where water pools.

Eco hotspots

One of the best ways to find out how indigenous plants look and the conditions they thrive in is to go and see them in their natural environment. The City of Melton's most significant natural environment sites include:

1. **Eynesbury Estate**
2. **Bush's Paddock**
3. **Mount Cottrell Recreation Reserve**
4. **Melton Botanic Garden**
5. **Arnold's Creek**
6. **Toolern Creek**
7. **Kororoit Creek**
8. **Deanside Wetlands**
9. **Melton Gilgai Woodlands**
10. **Chapmans Road Crown Reserve**

Garden design

Start Small but Plan Big

The key for garden design is understanding existing site conditions, developing your vision for your garden and developing a plan for delivering your design.

Step 1

What exists already? Site analysis

To design for the future, you need to understand the existing conditions in your garden. Through site analysis you will identify the pros, cons, limitations and possibilities for your garden.
It is important to work with existing conditions when making plant selections. For example, if you know a section of your garden is shady and damp, select plants that are suited to those conditions. Trying to fundamentally change the site characteristics can be risky and expensive.

Create a scaled drawing of your property, either on graph paper or sketch paper. Mark in the main structural and environmental features e.g. fences, pathways, shed, outdoor taps, clothesline, patio, rainwater tank, garden beds, major trees and lawn areas. Highlight the sunny and shady areas in summer and winter. Do you have any drainage issues where the ground is often too wet or dry? Are there significant slopes that need to be terraced?

Step 2
What are your needs?

What style of garden do you desire - cottage, bush, formal or contemporary (see pages 48-64)? What levels of maintenance are you comfortable with? What plant and flower colours and textures appeal to you? Do you want different styles for different areas of your garden? For example an indigenous garden at the rear, but a formal garden at the front of the house. For dining areas, what position will allow morning light but shade from the afternoon sun? Do you want to attract birds, butterflies or frogs? If yes, you will need to consider installing a bird bath, butterfly dish or frog pond.

A good way to decide what you want in your garden is to look through gardening magazines or what is working in your neighbourhood gardens.

Once you have made a list of what you desire, work out what work will need to be done on your garden and in what order, e.g. relocate clothesline before work can be done for the frog pond.

Step 3
Preparing the Site

Remember to look at existing conditions and see what is/isn't working with your site. What plants do you need to remove? What type of soil do you have?

What existing plants will work with the garden style you have selected? Establish how much light is falling on your existing garden at different times of the day and year. Remember future plants will need to suit these conditions. What earthwork will be required? Is excavation needed for drainage?

It is important at this stage to establish what works will need to be done before bringing in any plant/hard materials.

Simple soil test

To work out your garden's soil type simply take a handful of slightly moist soil and squeeze it. If it forms and holds as a smooth ball, it's a clay soil. If it does not hold form and simply falls apart, it's a sandy soil. If it roughly holds together, but falls apart readily when squeezed, it's a loam soil.

Step 4
Research

Develop a list of the plants you need to create the style of garden you desire. Of this list, what will be suitable for your garden's conditions e.g. existing plants, soil type, access to light? What is your budget? A money saving tip is to buy tube stock. Tube stock is cheap and these plants will establish better in the long term. If plants die or need replacing, tube stock is relatively inexpensive to purchase. Consider what space each tree/ shrub needs to grow and how many plants you need for each garden bed. What hard landscaping do you need? Compare costs to get the best price. Materials may include mulch, rocks, pond liner or dining setting. Do you have a range of plant layers from trees to shrubs to ground-covers?

Step 5
Develop the plan

Once you have decided what you want, you can explore different options in your garden plan. Focus on the overall look and feel then move into the finer details. Break the site up into zones and activity areas, then create paths linking areas. Consider curving paths if you have room – to add interest. Then think about what plants work well together and how you would plant them to create layers.

Step 6
Planting your garden

This is the stage where you can start planning tasks and planting your garden. Plan which jobs need to be started first. This is important as certain tasks will be difficult if not done in the correct order. Remember that it doesn't need to all be done at once. If you can construct your garden in stages, it will make the process more manageable. Consider in which season you are doing the work. Planting is best done from April to August, whereas constructing paths may be a better task for the summer months.


Rocks are attractive and provide a sunny lizard lounge


Curving paths add interest

Creating your habitat garden

A wide variety of indigenous plants and landscape features provide a range of places for many birds, insects and other animals to feed and shelter.

Key design elements of a habitat garden

Many native animals depend on indigenous plants for food, shelter (from predators, competitors or the weather), or somewhere to breed safely. Likewise, indigenous plants benefit from native animals through pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, waste breakdown and soil maintenance. Some wildlife species may raise their young in your garden if the habitat is suitable.

Layers

A key to creating a habitat 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.

If you are considering replacing a considerable number of non-indigenous plants in your garden, a planned approach is important. Blitzing a garden may result in wildlife abandoning your garden temporarily until the cover and complexity returns, or remaining wildlife being more exposed and vulnerable to predation.

It's better to adopt a staged approach with patches of intact vegetation progressively replaced with new indigenous plants.

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 should not be sourced from bushland areas where they are already providing habitat.

Layered indigenous garden

Log & leaf litter

Food

Plants that produce nectar, pollen, seeds, fruit, leaves and roots provide food for many of our native animals. Dead plant material can also be a source of food. Insects that live on the plants, mulch and soil also provide food for birds, lizards, frogs and mammals.

Host Plants

Some insects, such as butterflies and moths, only lay their eggs on particular plants known as host plants – different for each species. Most native caterpillars are small, shy and nocturnal leaving little evidence of their presence in your garden. If you want butterflies to stay in your garden, include host plants such as the ones detailed on page 17.

Hover fly feeding on Yam Daisy

Echidna

Flax-lily

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. 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 and essential salts and minerals from the soil.

Shelter

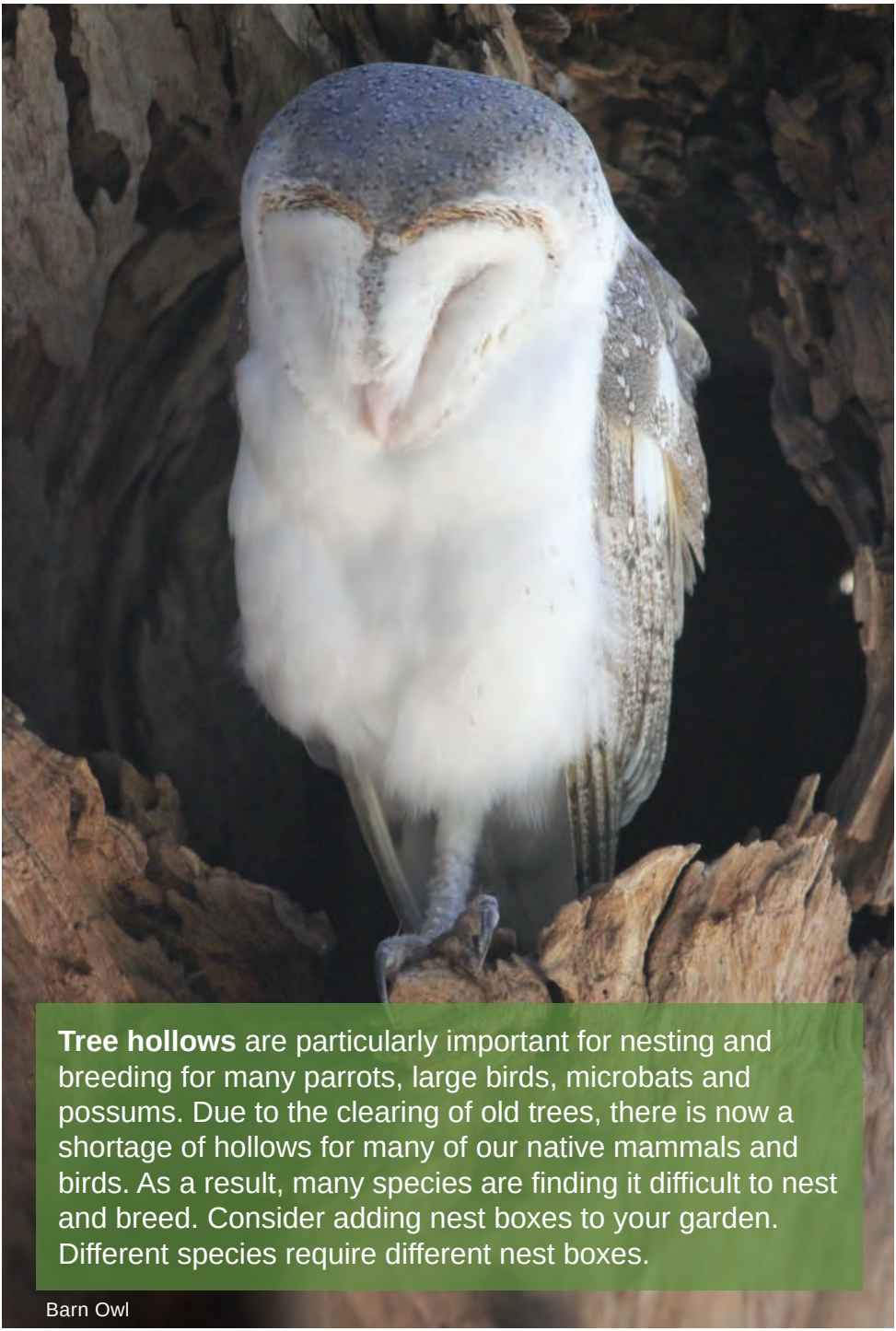
Native wildlife needs to find shelter from bad weather, predators, and competitors. They need a refuge in which to build their homes and raise their young. Prickly shrubs such as Hedge Wattle *(Acacia paradoxa)*, Blue Devil *(Eringium ovinum),* Sweet Bursaria *(Bursaria spinosa)* and mature trees such as the Yellow Box *(Eucalyptus melliodora)* can provide homes for a large range of insect, bird and mammal species.

Sticky Everlasting

Seaberry Saltbush

Bird bath

Silvereye



Tree hollows are particularly important for nesting and breeding for many parrots, large birds, microbats and possums. Due to the clearing of old trees, there is now a shortage of hollows for many of our native mammals and birds. As a result, many species are finding it difficult to nest and breed. Consider adding nest boxes to your garden. Different species require different nest boxes.

Barn Owl

A sunny spot

Lizards, frogs and insects need the warmth of the sun to function. A large rock or log that receives the winter sun offers a welcome basking point for wildlife.

Responsible pet ownership

Ensure your efforts to attract native wildlife to your yard are not undone by pets such as cats and dogs. Keep your pets, especially cats, inside during the night to avoid them attacking wildlife. Collar bells on cats have limited success. Outdoor cat enclosures are increasingly popular.

Natural pest control

The greater the diversity of wildlife in your garden, the greater the natural pest control potential it will provide. Birds, bats, frogs, lizards, spiders and insects such as Praying Mantis all eat insects. Monitor your garden regularly, tolerate a minor infestation, remove pests such as snails by hand, or use home remedies such as linseed oil traps for earwigs.

Encourage others

Invite your neighbours to create a habitat garden as well. This will attract more wildlife to the whole area.

Native wildlife needs to find shelter from bad weather, predators, and competitors.


Sunny spot


Natural insect control


Nest box

Native animals

Attracting native animals to your garden can add extra colour, interest and enjoyment. For plant information please refer to pages 33 to 43.

Native bees

There are over 1,500 species of native bee in Australia, including 10 stingless species. Most are solitary bees which raise their young in burrows in the ground or tiny hollows in timber. Consider adding a 'bee hotel' to your habitat garden to provide shelter for these important pollinators of our unique vegetation.

Bee Hotel

Attracting butterflies and invertebrates to your garden

Butterflies are a welcome addition to any garden. A dish of damp sand for moisture and salts, a flat rock to bask in the morning sun and a sheltered retreat from the midday sun will attract butterflies to your garden. Butterflies prefer flat flowers, such as daisies, that are easy to land on in order to feed on nectar. They are attracted to a range of flower colours, in particular blue, yellow and red. Plant large groups of flowering plants together for a greater chance of attracting butterflies.

If you want butterflies to stay in your garden, include host plants that they can lay their eggs on. Examples include Kangaroo Grass *(Themeda triandra)* for Common Browns, Wallaby Grass (*Rytidosperma* spp.) for Golden Sun Moths or Everlasting Daisies (*Xerochrysum* spp.) for Australian Painted Ladies. Some butterfly species are less fussy about host plants, but rely on particular ant species to tend the caterpillars – the Common Grass Blue is often common in gardens, because the ants it relies on are also common in urban areas.

Native invertebrates such as butterflies, bees, ladybirds, ants, gnats, beetles, spiders, dragonflies and lacewings benefit the environment in many ways. They are our plant pollinators, our waste recyclers, our pest eaters and an important source of food for many native birds, frogs, reptiles and mammals.

Plants to attract butterflies and other invertebrates

Basalt Daisy
(Brachyscome paludicola)

Clustered Everlasting
(Chrysocephalum semipapposum)

Common Everlasting
(Chrysocephalum apiculatum)

Chocolate Lily
(Arthropodium strictum)

Creeping Bossiaea
(Bossiaea prostrata)

New Holland Daisy
(Vittadinia cuneata)

Common Tussock-grass
(Poa labillardieri)

Kangaroo Grass
(Themeda triandra)

Common Sedge
(Carex tereticaulis)

Spiny-headed Mat-rush
(Lomandra longifolia)

Austral Indigo
(Indigofera australis)

Hop Goodenia
(Goodenia ovata)

Sweet Bursaria
(Bursaria spinosa)

Woolly Tea-tree
(Leptospermum lanigerum)

Eastern Yellow Robin

Red-browed Finch

Plants to attract small birds

Small birds, such as Silvereye, Red-browed Finch, Eastern Yellow Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Grey Fantail and Superb Fairy-wren, forage in the protected lower levels of the garden. They feed on insects, caterpillars and spiders and eat berries and seed. The following indigenous plants are an example of some plants that will attract small birds to your garden:

Berry Saltbush
(Atriplex semibaccata)

Blue Devil
(Eringium ovinum)

Climbing Saltbush
(Einadia nutans)

Small-leaved Clematis
(Clematis microphylla)

Common Tussock-grass
(Poa labillardieri)

Kangaroo Grass
(Themeda triandra)

Hedge Wattle
(Acacia paradoxa)

Sweet Bursaria
(Bursaria spinosa)

Willie Wagtail

Superb Fairy-wren

New Holland Honeyeater

Red Wattlebird (JB)

Plants to attract honeyeaters

Honeyeaters such as the Singing Honeyeater, White-plumed Honeyeater, Red Wattlebird and New Holland Honeyeater are attracted to the flowers of plants that produce lots of nectar. They also include insects in their diet. The following indigenous plants will attract honeyeaters to your garden:

Creeping Bossiaea
(Bossiaea prostrata)

Running Postman
(Kennedia prostrata)

Austral Indigo
(Indigofera australis)

Moonah
(Melaleuca lanceolata)

River Bottlebrush
(Callistemon sieberi)

Rock Correa
(Correa glabra)

Golden Wattle
(Acacia pycnantha)

Silver Banksia
(Banksia marginata)

Singing Honeyeater (CC)

White-plumed Honeyeater

Eastern Rosella

Musk Lorikeet

Plants to attract parrots

Parrots feed on a variety of food sources. Some parrots such as Eastern Rosellas, Rainbow Lorikeets, Gang-gang Cockatoos and Musk Lorikeets feed on the flowers and seed of Eucalypts, She-oaks and Bottlebrush. Red-rumped Parrots feed mainly on the ground sourcing indigenous and exotic grass seed. Long-billed Corellas dig for ground tubers and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos love to find grubs hiding under tree bark. The following indigenous plants will attract parrots to your garden:

Common Tussock-grass
(Poa labillardieri)

Moonah
(Melaleuca lanceolata)

River Bottlebrush
(Callistemon sieberi)

Blackwood
(Acacia melanoxylon)

Drooping She-oak
(Allocasuarina verticillata)

Silver Banksia
(Banksia marginata)

Red-rumped Parrot

Rainbow Lorikeet

Attracting lizards and skinks to your garden

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy states that Australia has more threatened reptile species than any other country in the world. Small reptiles such as lizards and skinks have declined steadily from suburban gardens because of lack of suitable habitat, dog and cat attack, lawn mower encounters and from eating snails poisoned by snail bait (even pet-friendly ones).

To encourage lizards and skinks, such as the Common Blue-tongue Lizard, Tussock Skink, Marbled Gecko or Garden Skink, into your garden provide some protected, flat rocks, logs or brick paving in a sunny spot for them to warm up. Cultivate lots of leaf litter and provide mulch where they can hunt for insects and tussock grasses for protection.

Plants to attract lizards and skinks

Berry Saltbush
(Atriplex semibaccata)

Blue Devil
(Eringium ovinum)

Climbing Saltbush
(Einadia nutans)

Kangaroo Grass
(Themeda triandra)

Knobby Club-rush
(Ficinia nodosa)

Seaberry Saltbush
(Rhagodia candolleana)

Garden Skink

Common Blue-tongue Lizard

Avoid using snail baits, including the pet friendly ones, in your garden. Common Blue-tongue Lizards will die if they eat either the snail bait or the dead snails.

Snakes

Snakes perform a vital role in the environment as one of our few native predators. Snakes are shy and will generally avoid a busy residential garden. You can make your garden less appealing by ensuring you avoid having stacks of timber and tin lying around or long grass. If you do discover a snake in your garden you should not try to handle them yourself. Most bites occur when people try to kill a snake. Not only is this dangerous, but it is illegal to kill a snake in Victoria. Instead contact Melton City Council on 9747 7200 or check local contacts for professional snake removal.

Attracting frogs to your garden

Frog populations have undergone serious declines in recent decades and a third of species are now listed as threatened worldwide.

Eastern Australia has been identified as a global hotspot of frog decline with nine species already listed as extinct in the last 20 years. Not only are frogs vulnerable to the issues of habitat loss and feral animal predation, but they are also susceptible to disease, pollution, pesticides and climate change.
The City of Melton is home to many species of frogs including the Growling Grass Frog, Southern Brown Tree Frog, Common Froglet, Pobblebonk and Spotted Marsh Frog. Create a permanent frog friendly garden and hope that they move in.

For further information on building a frog pond refer to page 58.

Common Froglet (JB)

Pobblebonk (NC)

Growling Grass Frog

Spotted Marsh Frog (NC)

Southern Brown Tree Frog (JB)

Attracting mammals to your garden

According to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. Altogether, 18 mammal species have become extinct since the arrival of European settlers a little more than 200 years ago. Twenty percent of our remaining mammal species are threatened with extinction.

The City of Melton is home to many species of mammals. Most likely you will encounter Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Swamp Wallaby, Echidna, Platypus or Koala within the Eco Hotspots of the City of Melton. Mammals more likely to visit your garden include the Common Ringtail Possum, Common Brushtail Possum, microbats and Grey-headed Flying-fox.

While some gardeners despair when their roses and vegetable crops become the food source of possums, we do have to remember that urbanisation has replaced their natural habitat and they have adapted extremely well to our suburban properties that offer an abundance of food and excellent nesting sites. Providing trees with hollows or species specific nesting boxes, will encourage possums and microbats to roost away from your roof, especially if you close up any entry points. Microbats such as Gould's Wattled Bat eat an enormous quantity of insects each night.

Plants to attract mammals

Berry Saltbush
(Atriplex semibaccata)

Black-anther Flax-lily
(Dianella revoluta var. *revoluta)*

Kangaroo Grass
(Themeda triandra)

Gold-dust Wattle
(Acacia acinacea)

Kangaroo Apple
(Solanum laciniatum)

Moonah
(Melaleuca lanceolata)

River Bottlebrush
(Callistemon sieberi)

Tree Violet
(Melicytus dentatus)

Blackwood
(Acacia melanoxylon)

Silver Wattle
(Acacia dealbata)


Brushtail Possum


Koala


Eastern Grey Kangaroo

Living with wildlife

Birds, possums and bats enjoy our plants as much as we do, sometimes a bit too much! To reduce the wildlife impacts on indigenous plants there are a number of options.

Tree guards

If your young indigenous plants are in danger of being eaten, it may be worthwhile protecting them with a staked tree guard until they are established.

Injured wildlife

If you find an injured animal, call your local vet or Wildlife Victoria on 1300 094 535.

Avoid feeding birds

Generally they do not need supplementary feeding. Seed trays tend to attract the more aggressive birds, and introduced pest birds such as the Common (Indian) Myna and the Spotted Dove Myna love nothing more than an easy feed from a pet food bowl. Feed pets indoors or where birds cannot access their bowl.

Indian Myna

Tree guard

Tree collar

Wildlife of the City of Melton

You may be incredibly fortunate to attract to your garden, or observe in a conservation reserve, some of the following vulnerable species that are struggling to survive the impacts of urbanization.

Growling Grass Frog
(Litoria raniformis)

Size: females (60-104mm), males (55-65mm)
Habitat: among reeds, sedges and rushes growing in and along slow moving water
Diet: mostly invertebrates such as beetles.

Striped Legless Lizard
(Delma impar)

Size: up to 30cm long
Habitat: grasslands
Diet: moths, crickets, caterpillars and spiders.

Grey-headed Flying-fox
(Pteropus poliocephalus)

Size: body length 23-29cm, up to 1kg, wingspan to 1m
Habitat: tree canopies
Diet: fruit and nectar.

Platypus
(Ornithorhynchus anatinus)

Size: females (43cm), males (50cm), weight 1.5kg
Habitat: streams and riverbanks
Diet: worms, yabbies and insect larvae.

Southern Boobook Owl
(Ninox novaeseelandiae)

Size: length (25-36cm), females larger
Habitat: tree canopies
Diet: small animals such as mice, microbats and moths.

Fat-tailed Dunnart
(Sminthopsis crassicaudata)

Size: body 6-7cm, tail 5-7cm, weight 10-20g
Habitat: open woodlands and grasslands
Diet: beetles, slugs, worms and spider larvae.

Golden Sun Moth
(Synemon plana)

Size: wingspan 3.1 to 3.4cm
Habitat: grasslands and grassy woodlands
Diet: Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma* spp.).

Diamond Firetail
(Stagonopleura guttata)

Size: 12-13cm
Habitat: open eucalypt forests/ woodlands and golf courses
Diet: grass seed.

Rakali
(Native Water Rat)
(Hydromys chrysogaster)

Size: body up to 40cm in length, weigh up to 1kg
Habitat: near fresh water, live in burrows dug in bank of creek
Diet: mostly fish, crustaceans and insects.

Planting and maintenance

There are four important elements to successful planting:

Plant selection - Site preparation - Planting technique - Maintenance

Plant selection

When it comes to selecting indigenous plants for your garden always consider which species are most appropriate for your site.

For example, a Swamp Gum is well suited for planting in a gully situation or waterlogged site but would not do well if planted on a dry hilltop. To find the ideal spot for your plant, consider its soil, moisture and sunlight requirements and potential size when fully grown. Also consider how plants may interact with each other, especially the impact large trees may have in your garden as they mature.

If they are 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.

Site preparation

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

Soil

The City of Melton soils are a mix of sands, clays and loams. Indigenous plants are suited to the original soils of the area. However, your garden soil may be depleted, or may have been imported from another area of Melbourne as happens with urban development.

If you have a clay soil that is holding too much water or dries out in summer to be very hard, add a dusting of gypsum and organic matter such as aged animal manure and compost.

A potential problem with sandy soils is that once they have dried out they can become water repellent - water will bead on the surface rather than soaking in. To improve a sandy soil, regularly apply organic matter and mulch.

To improve loam soils, apply leaf litter and mulch. This will replenish nutrients taken up by your plants.

Pre-planting mulch

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

Weeds

Weeds should be controlled prior to planting to reduce competition and post-planting maintenance. A range of techniques and products can be effective in controlling weeds, including both chemical and non-chemical methods. Mulch improves soil and helps to prevent weed growth.

Mulched garden bed

Planting technique

Once your site is well prepared you can begin planting. Generally, planting after the first heavy autumn rain is the best time for dry or exposed sites. For frost prone areas, spring may be a more appropriate time for planting. Try to avoid any planting during the summer period.


Step 2


Step 4

Step 1

Prepare the planting

The hole should be approximately twice the width of the plant container and slightly deeper. Remember to dig the hole into the soil below the mulch – if you plant straight into the mulch your plant will dry out and die.

Step 2

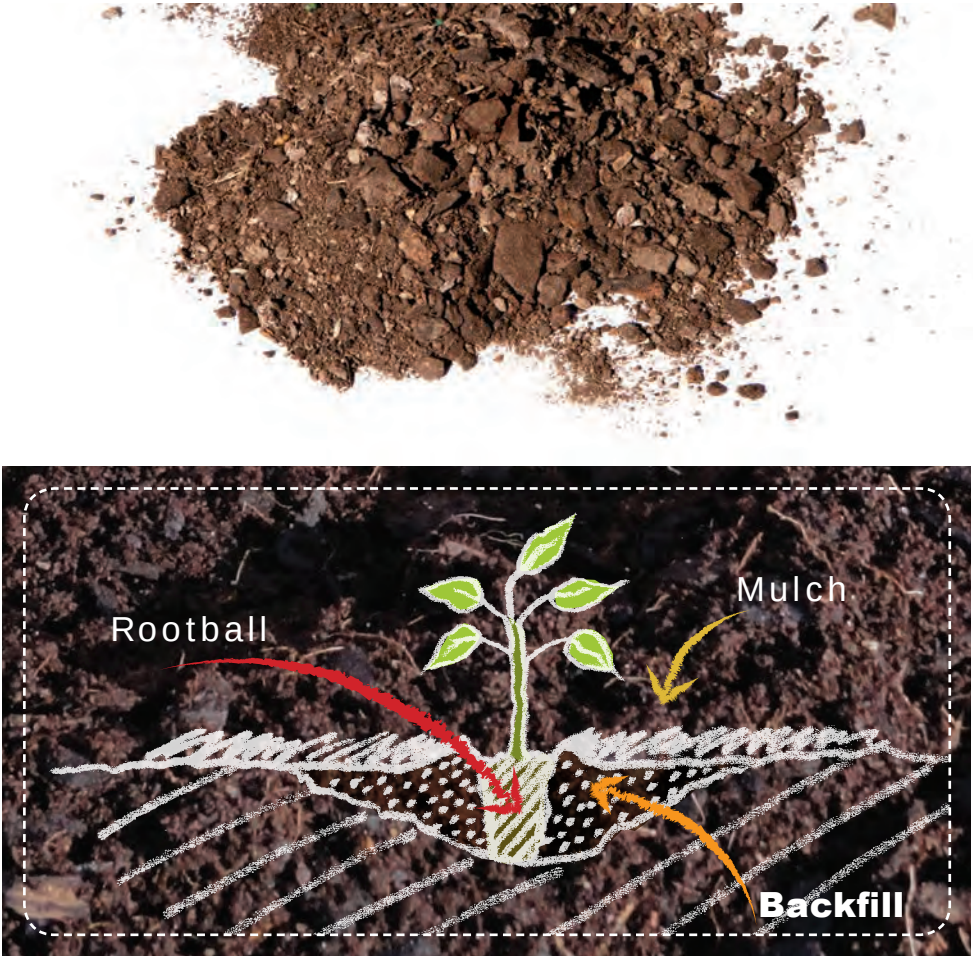
Pre-soaking

Give your plants a thorough pre-soaking in a bucket of water prior to planting. In dry soils, fill the hole with water and allow it to drain before planting.

Step 3

Prepare the plant

Any particularly long or coiled roots protruding through the bottom of the pot can be pruned with sharp secateurs before removing the plant from the pot. Some root disturbance is tolerable but be careful not to damage living roots. When planting good quality tubestock, it is not necessary to 'tickle', or tease out the plant's roots.



Step 4

Remove plant from pot
This is best achieved by turning the pot upside down and striking the rim gently against a solid object.

Step 5

Place the plant
Place the plant a little lower than the original soil level. Firmly replace the soil around the plant, breaking up any lumps as you go.

Step 6

Water the plant well
Initially all plants need to be watered individually to settle soil around the root system. Plants may require a good deep soaking once a week when establishing, particularly during dry periods.

Plants may require a good deep soaking once a week when establishing.

Maintenance

One of the great things about indigenous plants is that they require very little maintenance. With just a little work each year, your indigenous garden will continue to look healthy, neat and beautiful.

Watering

Most indigenous plants (unless they are wetland plants) are suited to dry conditions. They generally do not need additional water once they have established. Monitor them during heat waves and give them a good soaking if they show signs of wilting. Apply water to the base of the plant and provide a long, deep watering. A rainwater tank for the garden is always a good idea to reduce the amount of mains water used on your garden. Dripline irrigation is an efficient way to deliver water to your plants. Install garden tap timers to reduce over-watering and monitor.

Mulch

Mulch is an important part of the garden because it smothers weeds, adds nutrients to the soil and helps hold water in the soil. Bush mulch is ideal for an indigenous garden. When spread on your garden it will create a natural leaf litter look and provide habitat for insects and lizards to shelter and feed. If you have an established habitat garden, you can rely on the natural leaf litter to mulch, saving you time and money. Avoid pine bark mulch as it can burn indigenous plants or slow their growth.

Deep watering

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.

Non-chemical pest control

Herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers from our garden can enter our stormwater system, where they end up polluting our local waterways and harming plants and wildlife. By using non-chemical pest control actions we can 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. These 'good guys' are attracted to pots of marigolds, parsley, coriander and dill
- removing pests by hand or spray with a jet of water
- trying home remedies such as linseed or fish 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 our local soils. A good bush 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.

Indigenous gardens can provide texture and contrast.

Bluebells and daisies

Indigenous plant guide

Indigenous plants look great in any garden, providing spectacular displays of colour and texture throughout the year.

The City of Melton has an array of indigenous plants that differ to those in other parts of Australia, and even parts of Melbourne. They have been here since before European settlement and are therefore adapted to the soils, topography and climate of the local area. They tend to grow quickly often flowering within the first season of being planted and have greater resistance to disease.

The following plants are a sample of the diverse range of indigenous plants of the City of Melton. Visit the nurseries listed on page 65 for a wider range and expert advice on how to grow and maintain your plants.

Refer to this key for the following table of 50 common indigenous plants.

Animals

Butterflies such as the Australian Painted Lady.

Small birds such as wrens, robins and fantails.

Parrots such as rosellas, lorikeets and cockatoos.

Honeyeaters such as spinebills, wattlebirds and honeyeaters.

Large birds such as owls and kookaburras.

Lizards such as skinks and Blue-tongue Lizards.

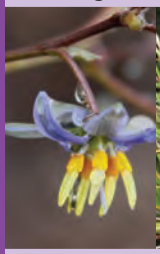
Frogs such as Pobblebonk and Spotted Marsh Frog.

Mammals such as microbats, dunnarts and possums.

50 Common **Indigenous Plants**

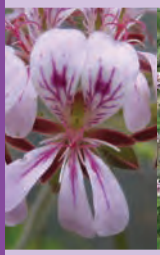
GROUNDCOVERS & WILDFLOWERS

Arching Flax-lily *(Dianella longifolia* var. *grandis)*




- 1.3m high to 1m wide.
- Grows in well-drained skeletal soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.
- Fragrant, pale blue flowers November to January.

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




- A fast-growing plant for rockeries and small gardens.
- Grows to a height of 30-60cm and a width of 30cm-1m.
- Flowers from October to February.
- Prefers well-drained soils in full to part sun.

Austral Tobacco *(Nicotiana suaveolens)*

- Fast-growing plant to 1m high and 60cm wide.
- Tubular white flowers from September to April.
- Well-drained sandy or rocky soil.
- Full sun.

Basalt Daisy *(Brachyscome paludicola)*


- Pretty, white daisy flowers from October to February.
- Grows to a height and width of 30-60cm.
- Prefers a sunny position in moist soils.
- Prune in winter to rejuvenate.

Black-anther Flax-lily *(Dianella revoluta* var. *revoluta)*


- Long-lived tussock excellent for dry spots and around the base of trees.
- Grows to 60cm high and wide.
- Blue-mauve flowers from August to May, followed by purple berries.
- Prefers full to part sun, well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.

GROUNDCOVERS & WILDFLOWERS

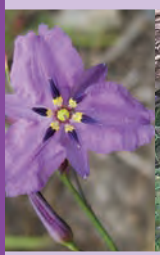
Blue Devil *(Eryngium ovinum)*


- Blue flowers from November to February.
- Grows 10-60cm high and 30-50cm wide.
- Not long-lived, but removing the stems at ground level after flowering will extend its life.
- Full sun, well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.

Bulbine Lily *(Bulbine bulbosa)*

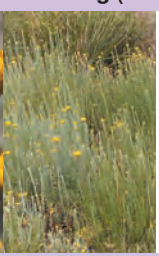

- Long-flowering plant grows to 25cm high and 30cm wide.
- Full to part sun, well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Flowers from September to January.
- Dies down to underground tuber after flowering or in dry conditions, to re-shoot in autumn.

Chocolate Lily *(Arthropodium strictum)*




- A rosette of grassy leaves 30-40cm high and wide.
- Prefers well-drained soil. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.
- Chocolate-scented flowers from October to December.
- Dies back after flowering until autumn.

Clustered Everlasting *(Chrysocephalum semipapposum)*

- Hardy, spreading daisy grows well in full sun.
- Prefers well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Can grow to 1m high and 3m wide.
- Clustered gold flowers from October to February.
- Prune in winter to rejuvenate.

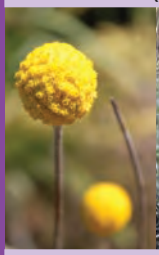
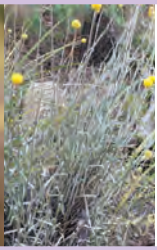
Common Everlasting *(Chrysocephalum apiculatum)*


- Prostrate to 30cm high and 1-2m wide.
- Beautiful golden daisy flowers from September to February.
- Pruning back in late winter encourages new growth.
- Grows in all well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.

50 Common **Indigenous Plants**

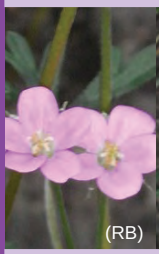
GROUNDCOVERS & WILDFLOWERS

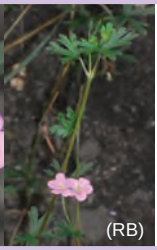
Drumsticks *(Pycnosorus globosus)*

- Unique, ball-like flowerheads from November to February.
- Grows from 20-90cm high and wide.
- Stunning when planted on mass.
- Cut flowers hold their colour.
- Prefers moist soil and full sun.

Grassland Crane's-bill *(Geranium retrorsum)*





- Scrambling plant grows to 30cm high and 1m wide.
- Well-drained to moist soil.
- Prefers part sun.
- Pale pink flowers July to January.

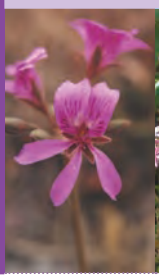
Inland Pigface *(Carpobrotus modestus)*

- Prostrate to 1-3m wide.
- Succulent leaves with light purple flowers from August to January.
- Grows well in rocky soil and full sun.
- Salt and drought tolerant.

Kidney-weed *(Dichondra repens)*


- Creeping groundcover that forms a dense mat of leaves.
- Prefers moist, well-drained soil.
- Light to full shade.
- An excellent lawn substitute in low traffic areas.

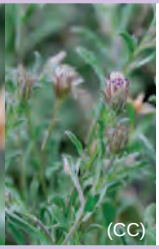
Magenta Stork's-bill *(Pelargonium rodneyanum)*




- Stunning, magenta pink flowers from November to February.
- Grows 10-30cm high and 30-50cm wide.
- Full sun to light shade.
- Well-drained soil. Copes with heavy basalt soil.

GROUNDCOVERS & WILDFLOWERS

New Holland Daisy *(Vittadinia* spp.*)*


(CC)

(CC)

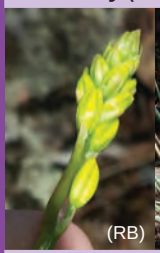
- Attractive, lilac-purple flowers most of the year.
- Grows 10-40cm high and 30-50cm wide.
- Fluffy seedheads after flowering.
- Prefers full sun and well-drained soil.

Pink Bindweed *(Convolvulus angustissimus)*


(KS)


- A fast-growing, trailing groundcover or light climber.
- Attractive, pink flowers from October to February.
- Grows well in heavy basalt soils.
- Full to part sun.

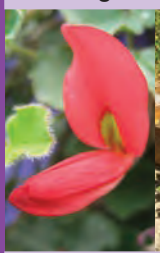
Rock Lily *(Bulbine glauca)*


(RB)

(RB)

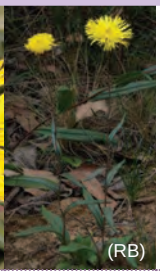
- Yellow star-like flowers September-January.
- Grows to 50cm high.
- Prefers well-drained soil and full sun.

Running Postman *(Kennedia prostrata)*




- An attractive, trailing groundcover that also grows well in containers or hanging baskets.
- Showy flowers from August to November.
- Prefers dry, well-drained, gravelly soils.
- Full sun or light shade.

Showy Podolepis *(Podolepis jaceoides)*

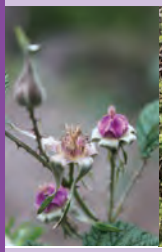
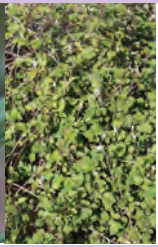


(RB)

- Spectacular plant in flower from October to February.
- Grows 30-70cm high and 30cm wide.
- Well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.
- Benefits from extra watering in summer.

50 Common **Indigenous Plants**

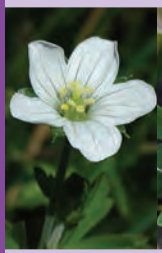
GROUNDCOVERS & WILDFLOWERS

Small-leaf Bramble *(Rubus parvifolius)*

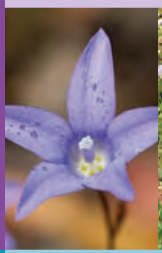
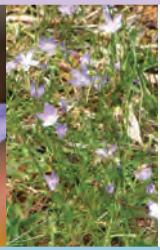
- Rambling plant grows to 2m high and wide.
- Pink flowers peaking October-February.
- Edible berries.
- Full to part sun.
- Well-drained soil. Copes with heavy basalt soil.

Soft Crane's-bill *(Geranium potentilloides)*




- Scrambling herb prostrate to 1m wide.
- Moist shaded conditions.
- Pink to white flowers October to March.
- Useful for stabilising soil in shaded situations.

Tufted Bluebell *(Wahlenbergia communis)*

- Masses of flowers peaking from October to March.
- Grows 15-50cm high and 15cm wide.
- Prune after flowering and provide additional water in summer.
- Full sun.
- Moist well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.

GRASSES

Common Plume-grass *(Dichelachne rara)*


- Tussocky grass that flowers from October to February.
- Grows 0.7-1m high.
- Moist to dry soils.
- Full to part sun

Common Tussock-grass *(Poa labillardierei)*


- A fast-growing tussock with delicate flowerheads from October to February.
- Grows 0.5-1m high and wide.
- Requires cutting back every few years to de-thatch old growth.
- Prefers moist to slightly dry soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.

GRASSES

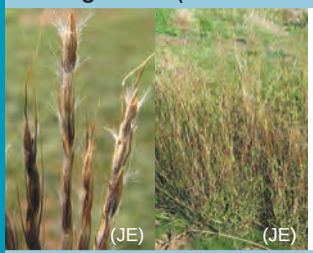
Feather Spear-grass *(Austrostipa elegantissima)*

- Grows 50cm-1m high and 2m wide.
- Attractive flowerheads September to November.
- Dry soil, but also tolerates saline and limy soils.
- Full to part sun.

Kangaroo Grass *(Themeda triandra)*

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

Redleg Grass *(Bothriochloa macra)*



- Grow to 30cm-1m high and 30cm wide.
- Flowerheads from March to October.
- Well-drained clay loam soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.
- Tolerates extended dry periods, but responds well to extra watering.

Silky Blue-grass *(Dichanthium sericeum)*

- Attractive grass grows to 80cm high and 20cm wide.
- Silky flowerheads from November to April.
- Self-seeds readily.
- Full sun and well-drained heavy clay soils.
- Responds well to extra water in summer and a hard prune after flowering.

Wallaby-grasses *(Rytidosperma* spp.*)*

- Tussock grasses that flower in summer.
- Grows 50-90cm high and 40cm wide.
- Prefer well-drained soils. Copes with heavy basalt soil.
- Full to part sun.
- Excellent contrast plant in the garden.

50 Common **Indigenous Plants**

GRASSES

Weeping Grass *(Microlena stipoides)*

- A fine-leafed lawn substitute in shady areas.
- Variable growth to 1m high and 60cm wide. Weeping flowerheads from September to November.
- Full to part shade, but performs best in shady sites.
- Moist, well-drained soils.

CLIMBERS

Small-leaved Clematis *(Clematis microphylla)*

- A scrambling climber can be trained to cover a fence or trellis.
- Prefers well-drained soils in full to part sun.
- Produces masses of starry flowers from July to September.
- Attractive, feathery seedheads after flowering.

SEDGES & RUSHES

Knobby Club-rush *(Ficinia nodosa)*

- Distinctive flowerhead for most of the year.
- Grows 15cm-1m high and 60cm-2m wide.
- Moist soils, tolerating dryness once established.
- Full or part sun

Poong'ort *(Carex tereticaulis)*

- Grows 40cm-1.2m high and 1m wide.
- Brown flower spikes from August to April.
- Full sun to part shade.
- Poorly drained, wet soils but will tolerate drying out.

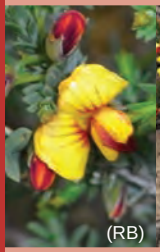
SHRUBS

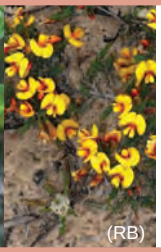
Austral Indigo *(Indigofera australis)*

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

SHRUBS

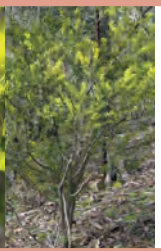
Common Eutaxia *(Eutaxia microphylla)*


(RB)


(RB)

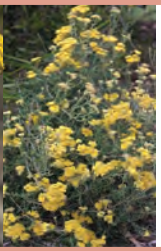
- Grows 30-50cm high and 1m wide.
- Yellow pea flowers August to November.
- Adapts to most soils once established.
- Full sun.

Gold-dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*)



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

Grey Everlasting *(Ozothamnus obcordatus)*



- A showy shrub for a difficult spot.
- Grows 1.2 high and 1.0m wide.
- Clusters of yellow flowers October to January.
- Well-drained dry soils.
- Full to part sun.

Hop Goodenia *(Goodenia ovata)*

- A fast-growing shrub that responds well to pruning to maintain a compact form.
- Grows 1-2.5m high and 1-3m wide.
- Attractive yellow flowers from August to February.
- Prefers moist, semi-shaded position, but will tolerate a range of conditions.

River Bottlebrush *(Callistemon sieberi)*

- A large, weeping shrub that responds well to pruning.
- Grows 3-10m high and 2-6m wide.
- Cream to pink flowers from November to May.
- Very adaptable but prefers moist to wet conditions. Will tolerate drying out.
- Full sun to part shade.

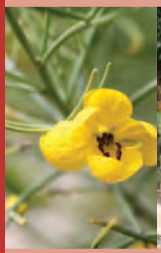
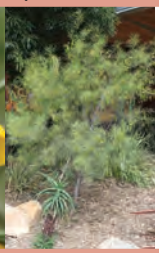
50 Common **Indigenous Plants**

SHRUBS

Rock Correa *(Correa glabra)*


- Bell-like flowers appearing from February to September.
- Grows 1-3m high and wide.
- Prefers dry, well-drained soils.
- Sunny or semi-shaded position.
- Responds well to hard pruning after flowering.

Silver Cassia (*Senna artemisioides*)

- An attractive and easily grown shrub.
- Grows 1-3m high and 0.5-1.5m wide.
- Golden flowers from June to November.
- Full sun and dry, well-drained soils.
- Drought tolerant.

Sticky Hop-bush *(Dodonaea viscosa* spp. *spatulata)*


- Variable form from open and spreading to erect and dense.
- Inconspicuous flowers August to November, followed by attractive red, winged seed capsules.
- Grows 1-3m high and wide.
- Full to part sun and well-drained soils.

Sweet Bursaria *(Bursaria spinosa)*

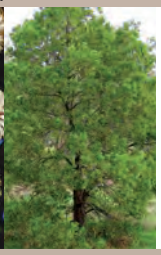

- Slow-growing in full sun or semi shade.
- Grows 2-6m high and 2-3m wide.
- Prefers dry, well-drained soils.
- Masses of fragrant flowers from October to February.
- Can be pruned for hedging.

Tree Violet *(Melicytus dentatus)*


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

TREES

Blackwood *(Acacia melanoxylon)*

- Grows 5-30m high and 4-15m wide.
- Cream, ball-shaped flowers from July to October.
- Grows best in deep, moist soil, but is adaptable.
- Tolerates some dryness once established.
- Full to part shade.

Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*)


- 3-6m wide.
- Fast-growing and graceful tree.
- Male flowers from March to December produce a golden effect.
- Prefers full sun and well-drained soils.
- Drought tolerant once established.

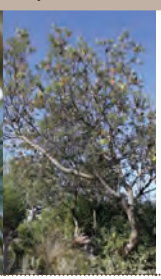
Golden Wattle *(Acacia pycnantha)*


- A spreading tree, although pruning while young encourages denser growth.
- Grows 3-10m high and 3-5m wide.
- Large golden flowers from June to November.
- Full sun and dry, well-drained soils.

Lightwood *(Acacia implexa)*


- Thrives in dry, sunny spots with shallow soil.
- Will also tolerate moist, well-drained soil types.
- Grows 5-15m high and 4-7m wide.
- Full to part sun.
- Cream flowers from December to March.

Silver Banksia *(Banksia marginata)*

- Striking feature tree or excellent screening plant.
- Grows 1-6m high and 1-4m wide.
- Bright yellow flower spikes from September to April.
- Well-drained local soils, but tolerates being wet in winter and dry in summer.
- Grows in full to part sun.

Weeds

When a plant thrives and invades an area where it does not naturally occur, it is known as an invasive plant, pest plant or weed.

Plants can spread from people dumping garden cuttings in parks, nature reserves and waterways. Wind can blow seeds many kilometres, for example a plume of Serrated Tussock can produce 100,000 seeds per plume and be carried over 30 kilometres. Seeds and cuttings can also be carried by water, tools, vehicles, clothing, pets, birds and animals.

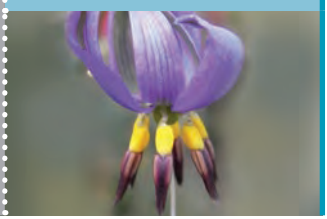
Weeds are a problem because they out-compete indigenous plants for light, water and nutrients. In a short time they can replace indigenous plants, effectively removing the food source and habitat of local wildlife.

It is therefore important to know which plants are a problem in the City of Melton so you can avoid planting them or consider removing them if they are already in your garden.

Ensure you dispose of all plants and cuttings in a Green Waste bin to avoid the plant spreading to other areas.

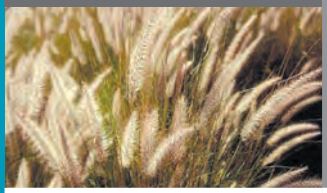
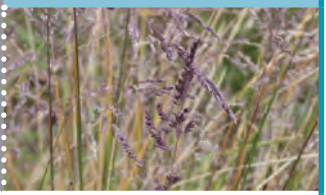
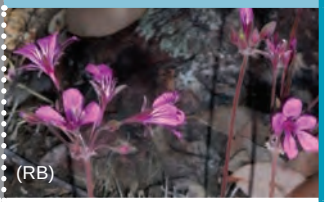
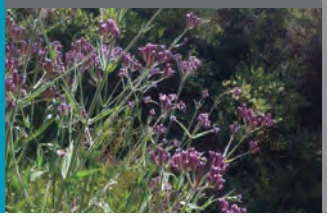
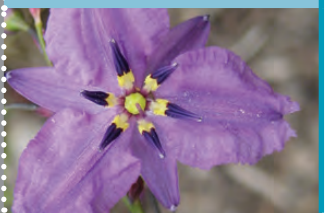
For more information about weeds, visit **www.melton.vic.gov.au**

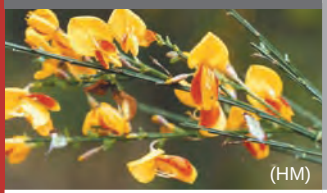
15 Common Weeds

	WEED	REMOVAL	REPLACEMENT PLANT
CLIMBERS & CREEPERS	**Blue Periwinkle** *Vinca major* 	• Spread by birds and animals and dumped garden waste. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Purple Coral Pea** *Hardenbergia violacea* 
	Bridal Creeper *Asparagus asparagoides* 	• Hand remove including stems and roots if small infestation. • Herbicide application for large infestations.	**Small-leaved Clematis** *Clematis microphylla* 
	Blue Morning Glory *Ipomoea indica* 	• Spread by plant parts taking root or birds and water spreading seed. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Large Bindweed** *Calystegia sepium*  (KS)
	Gazania *Gazania* spp. 	• Seeds spread by water, wind and dumped garden waste. • Hand pull ensuring roots are removed.	**Cut-leaf Daisy** *Brachyscome multifida* 
GRASSES & HERBS	**Agapanthus** *Agapanthus praecox* subsp. *orientalis* 	• Seeds spread by birds or water. • Remove flowers before seed forms in summer or remove whole plant by digging out.	**Black-anther Flax-lily** *Dianella revoluta* var. *revoluta* 

15 Common Weeds

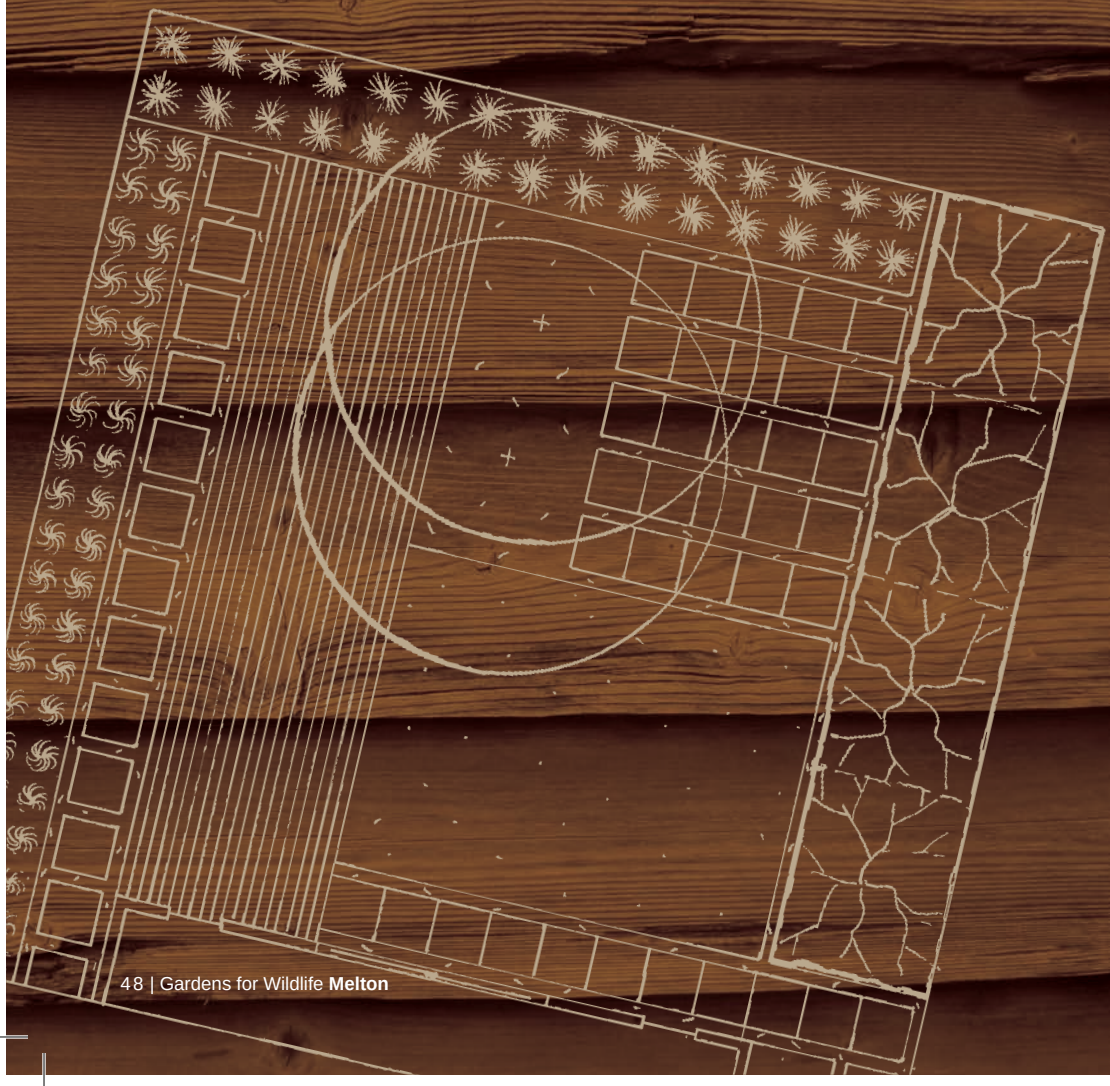
GRASSES & HERBS

WEED	REMOVAL	REPLACEMENT PLANT
White Arum Lily *Zantedeschia aethiopica* 	• Spread by water, animals and dumped garden waste. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Pale Flax-lily** *Dianella longifolia* (var. *grandis*) 
Fountain Grass *Cenchrus setaceus* 	• Spread by wind, water, clothing and dumped garden waste. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Plume-grass** *Dichelachne* spp. 
Serrated Tussock *Nassella trichotoma*  (RB)	• Seeds spread by wind, animals and vehicles. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Grey Tussock-grass** *Poa sieberiana* 
Three-corner Garlic *Allium triquetrum* 	• Spread by wind and water. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Austral Stork's-bill** *Pelargonium australe*  (RB)
Purple-top Verbena *Verbena bonariensis* 	• Seeds spread by wind, animals and vehicles. • Hand pull or dig out.	**Chocolate Lily** *Arthropodium strictum* 

	WEED	REMOVAL	REPLACEMENT PLANT
SHRUBS	**Cootamundra Wattle** *Acacia baileyana* 	• Seeds spread by birds, water and dumped garden waste. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Black Wattle** *Acacia mearnsii* 
	Flax-leaf Broom *Genista linifolia* 	• Invades disturbed areas. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea** *Daviesia leptophylla* 
	Montpellier Broom *Genista monspessulana* 	• Invades disturbed areas. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Gold-dust Wattle** *Acacia acinacea* 
	Prickly Pears *Opuntia* spp. 	• Readily regrows from stem fragments. • Dig out or herbicide.	**Large Kangaroo Apple** *Solanum laciniatum* 
TREES	**Desert Ash** *Fraxinus angustifolia* 	• Seeds spread by birds, water and dumped garden waste. • Remove by hand or herbicide.	**Blackwood** *Acacia melanoxylon* 

Examples of garden design

The following pages contain examples of various garden designs to achieve the look and feel that appeals to you.



The Cottage Garden

A relaxed informal garden with year-round seasonal colour. The species of plants should be colourful, ornamental and attract birds and butterflies. For extra attraction add a simple bird bath or butterfly dish. Paths are winding and narrow with openings for seats and tables. It's all about getting lost in the flowers.

Key items if you have limited space:

- A bird bath
- Gravel paths
- Flowering plants all year round
- A well-placed seat

TOP TIP **Birds & Butterflies**

Butterfly dish:

Place dishes in position to get morning sun;

Provide shady position to retreat during midday;

Flat flowers provide an easy landing point;

Most attracted to blue, yellow and red flowers.

Place a flat rock on a dish of flat sand.

Bird bath:

Should mimic a shallow puddle, not too deep;

Position that sheilds it from afternoon sun;

Ensure there are good perching edges;

Keep the water fresh and clean.

In a shallow bowl, keep water fresh and add elements like a twig for birds to perch on.

Garden Section

Trees

Acacia melanoxylon
Blackwood

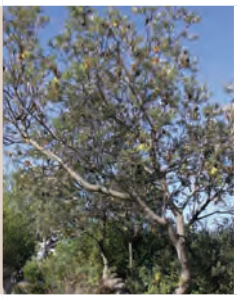
5-30m x 4-15m

Flowers:
July to October

Banksia marginata
Silver Banksia

1-6m x 1-4m

Flowers:
September to April



Acacia pycnantha
Golden Wattle

3-10m x 3-5m

Flowers:
June to November

Shrubs and Groundcovers

Acacia verticillata
Prickly Moses

2-4m x 2-4m

Flowers: June
to November

Duma florulenta
Tangled Lignum

2m x 2m

Flowers:
September
to March

Rubus parvifolius
Native Rasberry

2m x 2m

Flowers:
November to March

Suggested Species for a **cottage garden**

Shrubs and Groundcovers

Wahlenbergia communis
Tufted Bluebell

0.15-0.5m x 0.15-0.6m

Flowers: October to March

Chrysocephalum semipapposum
Clustered Everlasting

0.3-1m x 1-3m

Flowers: October to February

Viola hederacea
Ivy-leafed Violet

Prostrate x 1-2m

Flowers: September to February

Grasses

Dianella brevicaulis
Small-flower Flax-lily

0.3-1m x 0.5m-2m
Flowers: October to December

Dicantheum sericeum
Silky Blue-grass

0.8m x 0.1-0.3m

Flowers: November to April

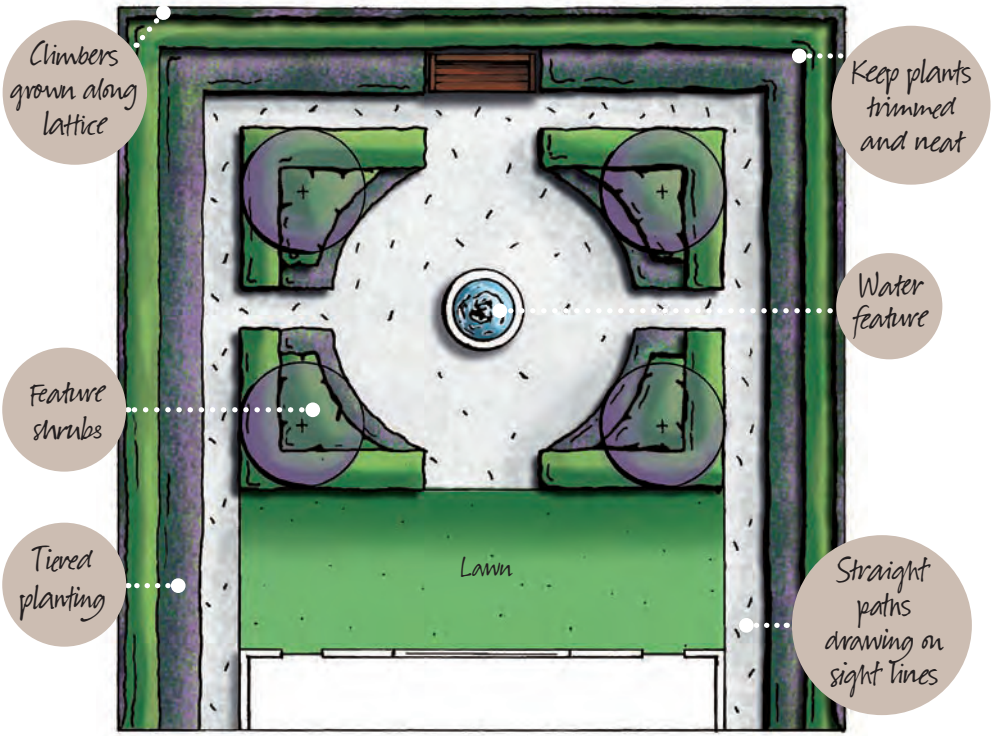
Poa labillardierei
Common Tussock-grass

0.5-1m x 0.5-1m

Flowers: October to February

The Formal Garden

Highly structured garden with clean shapes and well-defined edges. Focus is on the layout of planting as well as the spaces they define. Sight lines and access through the garden is key to provide 'rooms' for recreation and a sense of discovery.



Key items if you have limited space:

- Limited plant species
- Clipped hedges
- Straight lines
- Feature flowering plant
- Well-placed furniture

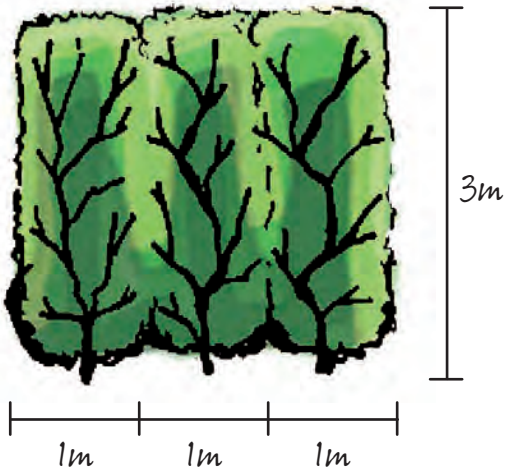
TOP TIP **Hedging**

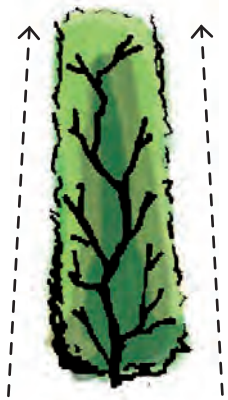
Consider the space available, the height you desire and then foliage colour.

3:1 planting rule. 3m high x 1m apart spacing e.g. 2m high x 0.6m spacing, 3m high x 1.3m spacing.

Think about how all faces that you can see will get access to light, otherwise you won't get full coverage.

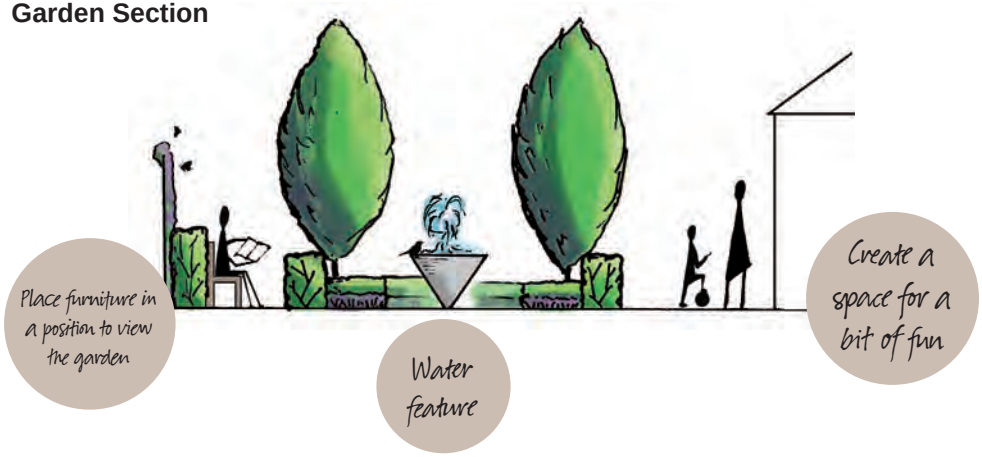
Don't wait for the plant to grow to the height desired then start trimming.





Clip the hedge so the base is wider than the top, so it can get access to light

Garden Section



Suggested Species for a **formal garden**

Trees

Senna artemisioides ssp. *filifolia*
Silver Cassia

1-3m x 0.5-1.5m

Flowers:
June to November

Callitris columellaris
White Cypress Pine

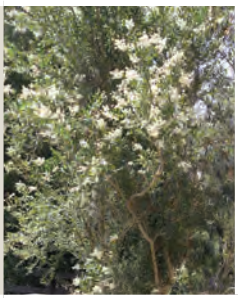
8-12m x 5-10m

Flowers:
October to February

Bursaria spinosa
Sweet Bursaria

2-6m x 2-3m

Flowers:
October to February



Climbers

Hardenbergia violacea
Purple Coral Pea

Flowers:
July to October

Glycine cladestina
Twining Glycine

Flowers:
August to February

Clematis microphylla
Small-leaved Clematis

Flowers:
July to September

Suggested Species for a **formal garden**

Hedges

Dodonaea viscosa ssp. *spatulata*
Sticky Hop-bush

1-3m x 1-3m

Flowers:
October to February

Myoporum petiolatum
Sticky Boobialla

2m x 2-3m

Flowers:
June to November

Correa glabra
Rock Correa

1-3m x 1-3m

Flowers:
February to September

Groundcovers

Brachyscome multifida
Cut-leaf Daisy

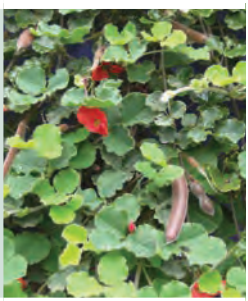
0.2m x 0.5m

Flowers:
September to March

Kennedia prostrata
Running Postman

Prostrate x 1-2.5m

Flowers:
August to November



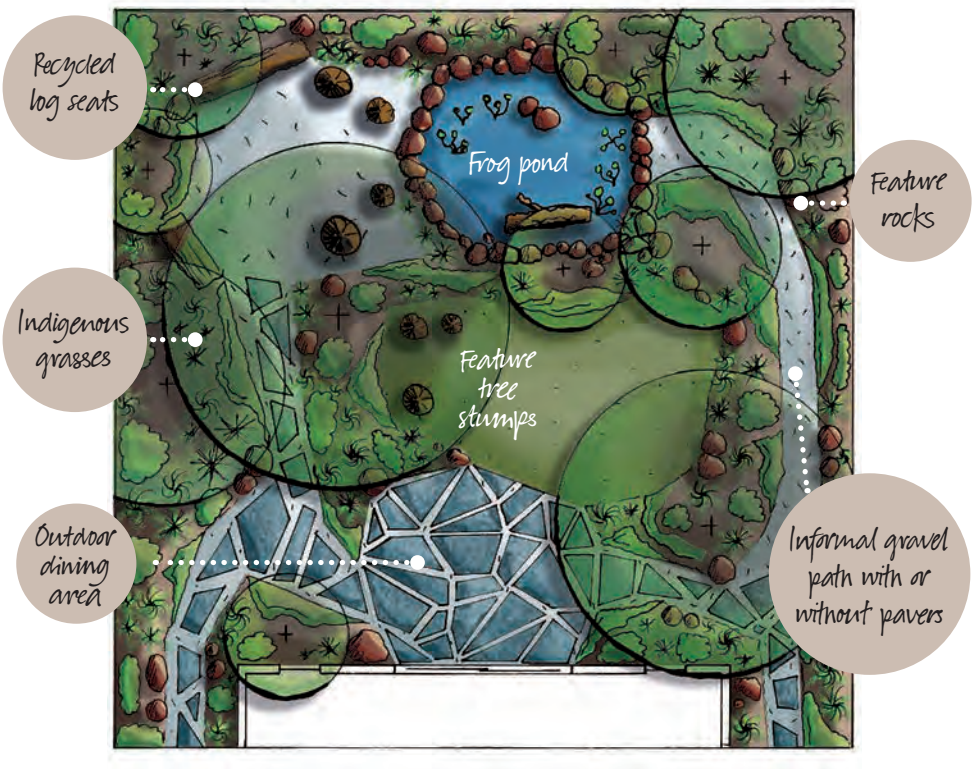
Enchylaena tomentosa
Ruby Saltbush

Prostrate x 1m

Flowers:
November to March

The Bush Garden

The bush garden's goal is to give an informal feel through recycled materials and indigenous grasses, thereby attracting all types of wildlife from birds to frogs by offering them a habitat.



Key items if you have limited space:

- Small indigenous tree
- Recycled timber log or stump
- Native grasses
- Feature rock

TOP TIP **Frog Ponds**

Locate with 70% shade.

Create varying depths.

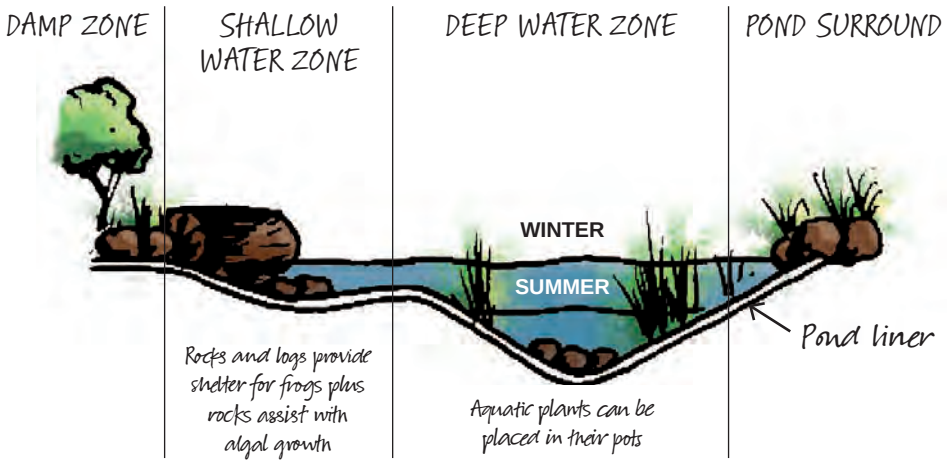
Wait for the frogs to move in, the best results occur when your home is near a wetland.

Don't have fish, they'll eat the tadpoles.

Don't install a pump, it will destroy the tadpoles and eggs.

Don't use plants that will reduce light and oxygen levels.

Don't collect frogs from waterways, it is illegal.



Garden Section

Trees

Acacia implexa
Lightwood

5-15m x 4-7m

Flowers:
December to March

Callistemon sieberi
River Bottlebrush

3-10m x 2-6m

Flowers:
November to May

Eucalyptus pauciflora
Snow Gum

9-12m x 6-10m

Flowers:
September to January

Aquatic Species

Brachyscome basaltica
Basalt Daisy

0.3-0.6m x 0.1m

Flowers:
October to February

Craspedia paludicola
Swamp Billy-buttons

0.75m x 10-20m

Flowers:
October to January

Lythrum salicaria
Purple Loosestrife

1m x 0.5m

Flowers: October to April

Suggested Species for a **bush garden**

Tuftings / Grasses

Themeda triandra
Kangaroo Grass

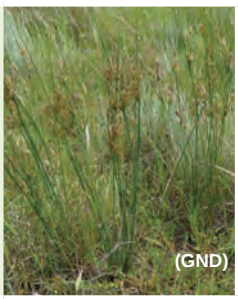
0.3-1m x 0.2-0.6m

Flowers:
September
to March

Juncus subsecundus
Finger Rush

0.6-0.9m x 0.2m

Flowers:
November
to February



Austrostipa elegantissima
Feather Spear-grass

0.5-1m x 2m

Flowers:
September
to November

Shrubs and Groundcovers

Nicotiana suaveolens
Austral Tobacco

1m x 0.6m

Flowers:
September to April

Teucrium racemosum
Grey Germander

0.4-0.6m x 0.5-1m

Flowers:
September to May

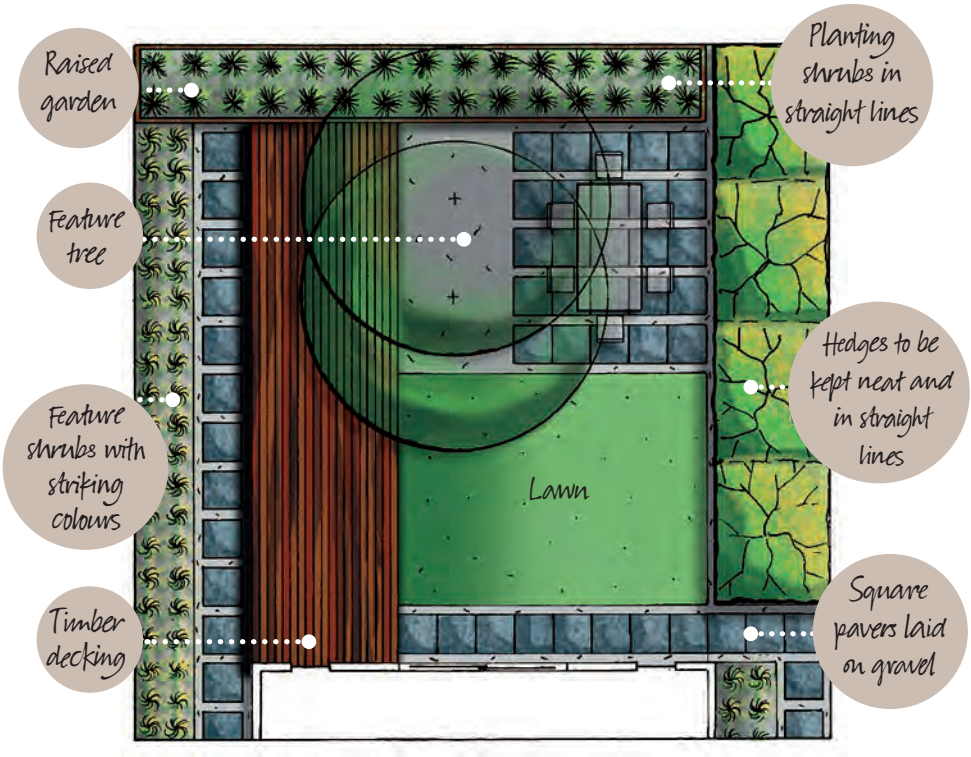
Myoporum parvifolium
Creeping Boobialla

0.1m x 1m

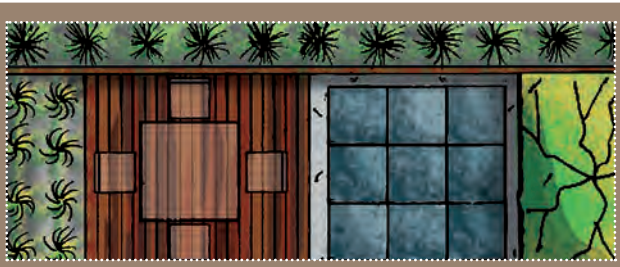
Flowers:
October to
February

The Contemporary Garden

Architectural feel with striking colour and form. The key to a contemporary garden is minimal components that have interesting qualities. Choose plant species with an interesting form that look good all year round. The areas should be well defined with a balance between soft and hard landscaping.



- **Key items if you have limited space:**
  - Rows of tufting plants in flat/raised garden beds.
  - Gravel path with square pavers
  - Small timber deck for outdoor seating



TOP TIP **Site Analysis**

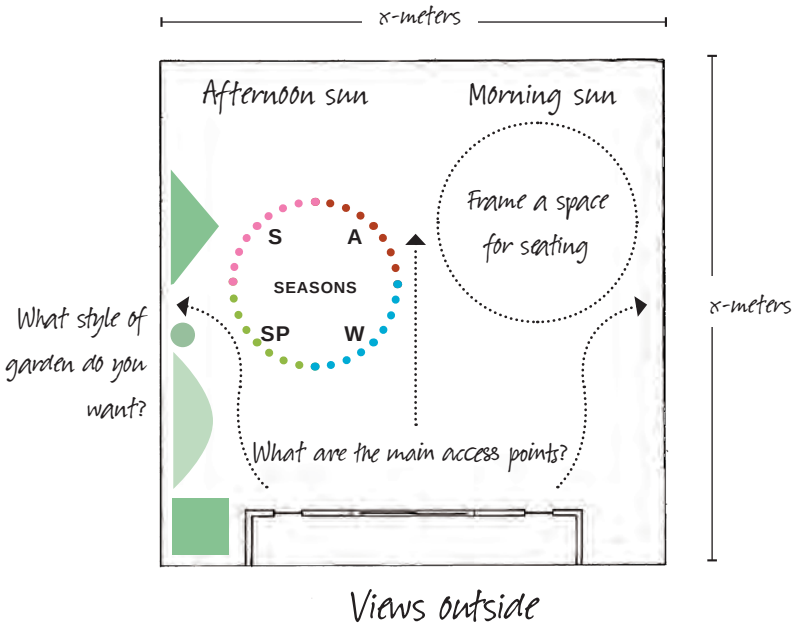
What style of garden do you desire and what level of care are you able to maintain?

What paths are required for access throughout?

For dining areas, select a position that will allow morning light but shade from afternoon sun.

Remember you are going to view the garden from inside your home as well. What view do you want?

How will it look in each of the four seasons?



Garden Section

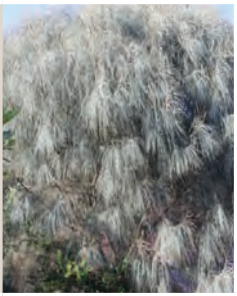
Suggested Species for a **contemporary garden**

Trees

Allocasuarina verticillata
Drooping She-oak

4-11m x 3-6m

Male flowers:
March to December



Viminaria juncea
Golden Spray

3-4m x 2-3m

Flowers:
October to February

Banksia marginata
Silver Banksia

1-6m x 1-4m

Flowers:
February to June

Shrubs

Solanum laciniatum
Kangaroo Apple

2-3m x 2-3m

Flowers:
September to March

Grevillea rosmarinifolia
Rosemary Grevillea

1.5m x 2m

Flowers:
June to November

Eryngium ovinum
Blue Devil

0.1-0.6m x 0.3-0.5m

Flowers:
November to February

Suggested Species for a **contemporary garden**

Shrubs and Groundcovers

Acacia paradoxa
Hedge Wattle

2m x 2-3m

Flowers:
August to November

Pelargonium rodneyanum
Magenta Stork's-bill

0.3m x 0.5m
Flowers:
November to February

Ptilotus spathulatus
Pussy Tails

Prostrate 0.1-0.4m W

Flowers: August to January

Tuftings / Grasses

Lomandra longifolia
Spiny-headed Mat-rush

1m x 1m

Flowers:
September to February

Bulbine bulbosa
Bulbine Lily

0.25m x 0.3m

Flowers:
September to January

Stylidium graminifolium
Grass Triggerplant

0.3-0.6m x 0.2-0.3m

Flowers:
September to January

Reference & advice

Restoration of Council's conservation areas involves revegetation with indigenous species. Every year over 36,000 locally indigenous plants are planted throughout Council owned or managed reserves and approximately 1,000 ha of natural areas, wetlands and open space native gardens are designated for conservation.

If you would like to help our environment, there are a number of local environmental groups operating in the City of Melton that can help you get involved.

Australian Plant Society – Melton and Bacchus Marsh
www.runningpostman.org.au

Eynesbury Environment Group
see facebook page

Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden
www.fmbg.org.au

Friends of Toolern Creek
see facebook page

Landcare Groups
- Parwan Landcare Group
- Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group
- Toolern Vale Landcare Group
- Truganina Landcare

www.landcarevic.org.au/groups

Melton Environment Group
www.meltonenvironmentgroup.org.au

Trees for Life (The Ridge Kororoit Creek - Utsav Malayalee Samaj)
www.utsav.com.au

Useful websites

Sustainable Gardening Australia
www.sgaonline.org.au

Indigenous Flora & Fauna Association
www.iffa.org.au

Australian Plant Society, Victoria
www.apsvic.org.au

Weeds Australia
www.weeds.org.au

The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria
www.fncv.org.au

Wildlife Victoria
www.wildlifevictoria.org.au

Indigenous plant nurseries

Newport Lakes Nursery
2 Lakes Drive, Newport
Monday-Saturday 11-4,
Sundays 12-4
Ph: 9391 0044

Greybox & Grasslands Indigenous Nursery and Newport Lakes Native Nursery Balliang
Open by appointment only
Ph: 5369 5221

Western Plains Flora
628 Wildwood Rd, Wildwood
Wholesale only
Ph: 9740 3178

Geelong Indigenous Nurseries
50 Coppards Rd, Newcomb
Open by appointment only
Ph: 0429 315 928

gardens for Wildlife

Connect with us

Melton Council Civic Centre
232 High Street
Melton Victoria 3337

Melton Library and Learning Hub
31 McKenzie Street
Melton, Victoria 3337

Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub
193 Caroline Springs Boulevard
Caroline Springs, Victoria 3023

Telephone: 9747 7200
Website: melton.vic.gov.au
Facebook: facebook.com/cityofmelton

CITY OF MELTON

melton.com.au