

Species List

The following local plant species are hardy and well suited to the soil and climate conditions in the Hunters Hill and City of Ryde local government areas, and local fauna are adapted to them. Suggested animals benefiting from each species are not exclusive of others.

Council Contact

Bushcare plays a vital role in ensuring the conservation of our local flora and fauna in their ecosystems. As a volunteer you help with the conservation of urban bushland, learn to identify native plant species and threats to the urban bushland, learn new skills, be active, and meet new friends. Local Bushcare volunteer groups in both the City of Ryde and Hunters Hill local government areas meet on both weekends and weekdays usually for 2 hours per month. No experience or prior knowledge is required to join and volunteers can participate as often as they like. Contact Bushcare or websites for locations and times.

For further information contact:

City of Ryde Bushcare Officer: **T: 02 9952 8257**
Hunters Hill Bushcare Co-ordinator: **T: 02 9879 9439**

Useful resources:

Cornucopia Nursery: www.mars-inc.com.au
Birds in Backyards: www.birdsinbackyards.net
Habitat Network: www.habitatnetwork.org
PlantNET: www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au
Sydney Wildlife: **02 9413 4300** www.sydneywildlife.org.au
Sydney Weeds Committee: www.sydneyweeds.org.au
Web Weed Lookup: www.iewf.org
Weed removal techniques: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/WeedRemovalFactsheets.htm



Groundcovers



1. Commelina, Scurvy Herb *Commelina cyanea* (FLCNP)
• Hardy, dense and creeping herb with pointed leaves
• May be confused with weedy, exotic Trad
• Small blue flowers in warmer months
• Needs moisture
• Position: semi-sun / shade
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects (eg native bees), Frogs and Lizards



2. Blue Flax Lily *Dianella caerulea* (G Strid-Nwulaekwe)
• Beautiful strappy leaved plant tufts that spreads
• Pretty blue/purple flower clusters and glossy berries
• Height to 50 cm
• Flowers: early to mid summer
• Position: semi-shade / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects (eg native bees), Frogs, Lizards and Birds



3. Native Kidney Herb *Dichondra repens* (W Cherry)
• Great as a hardy soft groundcover or lawn substitute
• Kidney shaped leaves and few small flowers
• Prefers damp soil
• Position: semi-shade / shade
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Frogs and Lizards



4. Native Geranium *Geranium homeanum* (FLCNP)
• Fine-leaved, scrambling herb or dense groundcover
• Small pretty, pale pink flowers
• Height to 30 cm
• Flowers: November - February
• Position: semi-sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Lizards and Birds



5. Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia* (FLCNP)
• Prominent strappy leaved plant to 1 m tall
• Very hardy tufts and great for edging
• Grows on a variety of soils
• Flowers: September - November
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects (eg native bees), Frogs, Lizards and Birds

Climbers / Scramblers



6. Old Man's Beard *Clematis glycinoides* (or *C. aristata*) (L von Richter)
• Showy scrambling or climbing woody vine
• Large sprays of white flowers
• Seeds in fluffy, beard-like clusters
• Grows on a variety of soils
• Flowers: October - November
• Position: semi-sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds



7. False Sarsaparilla, Purple Coral Pea *Hardenbergia violacea* (FLCNP)
• Attractive scrambling vine with narrow leaves
• Pretty clusters of purple pea flowers
• Great for fence screening or as groundcover
• Grows on variety of soils
• Flowers: mostly in spring
• Position: sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects (eg native bees) and Birds



8. Climbing / Golden Guinea Flower *Hibbertia scandens* (TM Tame)
• Scrambling vine with dense shiny leaves
• Large showy bright yellow flowers
• Prefers richer soils
• Flowers: spring - early summer
• Position: semi-sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds



9. Dusky Coral Pea *Kennedia rubicunda* (FLCNP)
• Robust scrambling vine in sheltered situations
• Leaves 3-parted, can form dense thickets
• Large, red pea flowers in clusters
• Flowers: July - November
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Lizards, Birds and Common Ringtail Possum



10. Wonga Wonga Vine *Pandorea pandorana* (M Fagg)
• Handsome woody climber with glossy 3 to 7 part leaves
• Clusters of tubular white flowers with purple marked 'bells'
• Prefers rich to sandy soils, in a variety of conditions
• Flowers: spring
• Position: semi-shade / shade
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds

Ferns / Grasses



11. Soft / False Bracken Fern *Calochlaena dubia* (R Hill)
• Pleasant fern with lacy soft fronds
• Easy growing, fronds forming dense colonies
• Height to 1.5 m
• Prefers sandy moist soils
• Position: semi-shade / sun
• Great habitat for: Frogs and Small birds



12. Prickly Rasp Fern *Doodia aspera* (FLCNP)
• Short but colourful fern with rough fronds
• Easy to grow and forms dense colonies
• Prefers well drained soil
• Height to 20-40 cm
• Position: semi-shade
• Great habitat for: Lizards and Frogs



13. Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* var *stipoides* (L von Richter)
• Common perennial grass in rich soils
• Slender leaves in fine but hardy tussocks
• Weeping seed heads throughout the year
• Can be used for native lawns, easily re-seeded
• Height to 15-70 cm
• Position: any
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Frogs, Lizards and Birds



14. Australian Basket Grass *Oplismenus aemulus* (L von Richter)
• Ornamental, fine creeping grass with erect seed heads
• Perennial with short, broad and pointed leaves
• Very hardy as a native lawn
• Height to 30 cm
• Flowers: most of the year
• Position: shade / semi-shade
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Frogs and Lizards



15. Kangaroo Grass *Themeda australis* (Eurobodalla Shire Council)
• Showy tufted grass with partly purplish flower heads
• Perennial and wide spread across Australia
• Drought resistant, grows in variety of soils
• Height to 1 m
• Flowers: summer - autumn
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds

Shrubs



16. Flax-leaved / White Wattle *Acacia linifolia* (FLCNP)
• Graceful shrub with soft slender 'leaves'
• Creamy ball flowers form dense clusters
• Frost and drought resistant, grows in variety of soils
• Height to 2 m
• Flowers: December - April
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds



17. Prickly Moses *Acacia ulicifolia* (FLCNP)
• Common small shrub with short prickly 'leaves'
• Solitary and pale creamy flower balls
• Trim to form dense bird habitat
• Prefers dry to sandy soils of low fertility
• Height to 1.5 m
• Flowers: autumn - winter
• Position: sun / semi-shade
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds



18. Pink Spider Flower *Grevillea sericea* ssp *sericea* (T Lenz)
• Attractive common shrub with slender leaves
• Showy pink spider like flowers
• Small green glossy fruits
• Prefers sandy soils in open situations
• Height to 1-2 m
• Flowers: July - November
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds



19. Bushy Needlebush *Hakea sericea* (FLCNP)
• Attractive shrub with spiky 'leaves' and woody fruits
• Small pale yellow/cream flowers with honey or almond scent
• Trim to form dense bird habitat
• Prefers dry sandy or clay soils in open situations
• Height to 2-3 m
• Flowers: June - September
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds



20. Paper Daisy *Ozothamnus diosmifolius* (D Hardin)
• Easy growing pretty shrub on sandy soils
• Thin and short leaves with chamomile scent
• Large top clusters of creamy/white, papery flowers
• Prune in late summer for denser growth
• Height to 2 m
• Flowers: winter - spring
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects and Birds

Shrubs / Trees



21. Lillypilly *Acmena smithii* (J Plaza)
• Attractive shrub or tree with glossy, dense foliage
• Creamy white flowers and white-purple edible berries
• Can be trimmed into dense plant when young
• Great for screening, prefers rich soils and shelter
• Tree can grow to 5-20 m
• Flowers: in summer
• Position: shade / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Birds and Bats (fruits)



22. Coastal Banksia *Banksia integrifolia* (FLCNP)
• Ornamental tree with narrow canopy
• Oblong leaves are silver underneath
• Beautiful yellow flower spikes and woody cones
• Prefers sandy soils
• Height to 5-15 m
• Flowers: mainly January - June
• Position: sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Birds and Small bats (nectar)



23. Blackthorn *Bursaria spinosa* (FLCNP)
• Variable shrub or small tree with light foliage and spines
• Fragrant, creamy coloured flower sprays, papery capsules
• Trim to form dense bird habitat
• Prefers reasonably drained rich soils
• Height to 3-8 m
• Flowers: mainly in summer
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects (eg native bees) and Birds

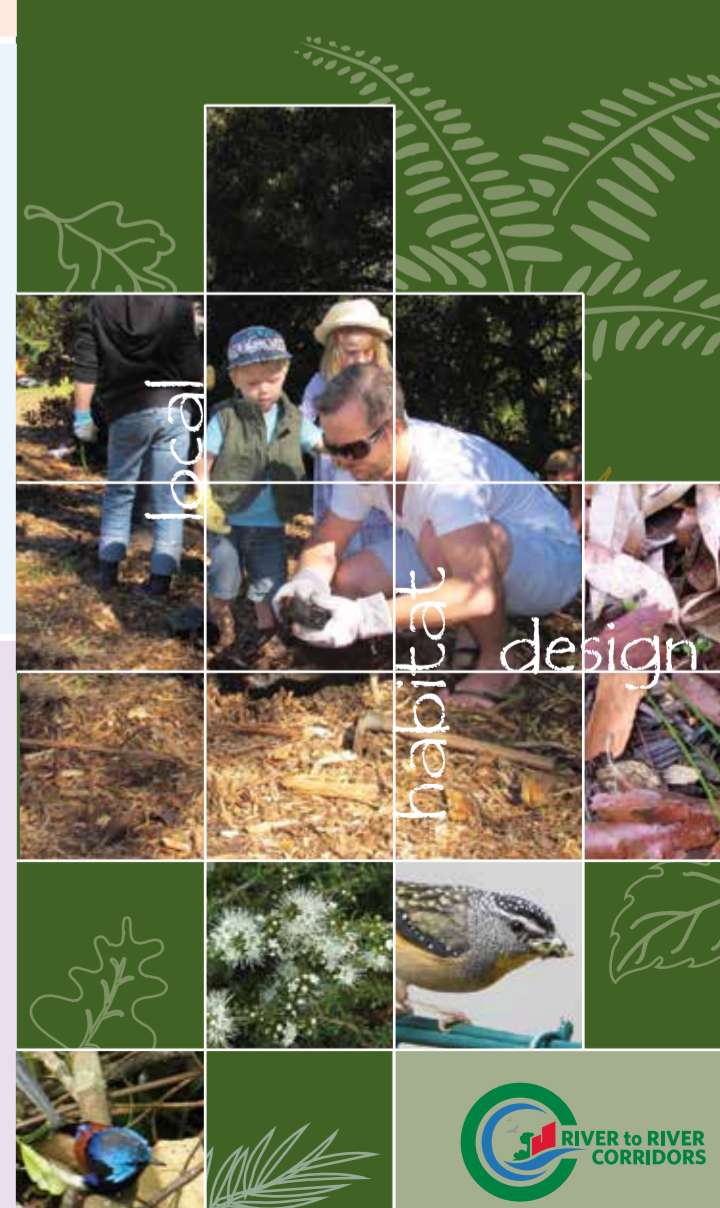


24. Tick Bush *Kunzea ambigua* (M Fagg)
• Common tall spreading shrub with small leaves
• Sprays of honey scented, fluffy white flowers
• Light pruning for best habitat
• Prefers sandy well drained soils
• Height to 2-5 m
• Flowering: October - December
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Birds and Common Ringtail Possum (nesting)



25. Snow in Summer / Flax-leaved Paperbark *Melaleuca linariifolia* (C Green)
• Small tree with paperbark and slender soft leaves
• Dense, feathery and perfumed cream flowers
• Excellent frost hardy screening / windbreak
• Grows in rich and moist to wet soils
• Height to 8 m
• Flowers: spring - summer
• Position: semi-sun / sun
• Great as food/habitat for: Insects, Birds and Small bats (nectar)

Habitat-friendly Gardens



Habitat-friendly Gardens



Creating habitat in the garden



Gardens provide vital habitat for continued survival of fauna such as birds, lizards, possums, frogs and beneficial insects in the urban environment. They provide shelter, food, nesting sites, and link corridor areas necessary for survival of species.

Tips for best garden design include recreating an ecosystem using original layers of vegetation to appropriate height including small trees, shrubs and groundcovers, and also providing rocks, logs and mulch. The more you add, the more likely you are to attract more species.

Why should you choose local native plants in your garden?

- Assist in pollinating native plants in the area
- Attract beneficial insects including pollinators and pest-eating insects
- Exchange fruits and seeds with nearby bushland
- Keeps soils healthy through aeration, and balanced nutrients from leaf litter
- Supports wildlife in local area

Preparation, plant selection and planting

Even a small corner of dense shrubs and other vegetation can encourage native species and in the long term ensure their survival by enabling them to breed. For example, small birds, skinks and lizards feel safe in spikey dense shrubs protecting them from larger predators including aggressive birds, dogs and cats. The following provide conceptual and practical information towards a habitat-friendly garden.

Preparation

- Plan and prepare before planting, and consider that existing, exotic plants may be useful unless they are noxious or weedy, so check with your local government. Existing plants provide much needed shade for other species beneath them, and they may also provide habitat at the present time.
- Look and listen for what fauna are already in your garden so that nesting birds and ringtailed possums are not disturbed.
- Identify existing habitat in your garden such as rock walls, hollow logs, bricks, natural ponds, old PVC or clay pipe pieces, log piles, tree hollows, dead trees, and natural sandstone crevices. These places provide shelter, protection and food sources for native fauna.



Plant selection

- Try to choose indigenous or preferably local, native plants.
- Pea flowers in local native plants are good at attracting native and beneficial insects.
- Shrubs, when densely planted, attract small birds and other small animals.
- Groundcovers such as native grasses attract for example lizards.
- Please note that many of the hybrid grevilleas and the bottlebrush have large, showy flowers that are rich in nectar, but whilst these are promoted as being excellent for attracting honeyeaters to the garden, they will also encourage the larger more aggressive honeyeaters such as Noisy Miner.

Planting

- Always dig a hole twice the size of the pot that the plant came in. This enables space for loosening up the soil for the newly developing roots of the plant. Plant the plant level with the existing soil surface, and do not create a mound around the base of it.
- If you have sandy soils, for those plants that are not sand-loving, adding organic matter around the roots will assist in strengthening the soil base.
- Consider the height of the plant at maturity compared to other plants and structures, or the impact on the views of others.
- Build a vegetation structure utilising groundcovers, grasses, small shrubs up to larger species and plant densely at least in some spots.
- Avoid large open areas of concrete and lawn which encourage pest birds such as Common (Indian) Mynas and also Noisy Miners.

Mulching

- Mulching your garden is very beneficial in many ways, for example to imitate nature and also make gardening easier and more economical.
- Decaying mulch replaces the natural groundcover consisting of leaf litter and coarse organic material.
- Repeated mulching assists in nutrient retention and extraction needed for growth promotion, and promotes structure of the topsoil. Please note that some native plants are sand-loving and need less mulch or fertilisers.
- Mulch provides organic material for vital microorganisms, insects and other invertebrates that keeps the soil and therefore vegetation in a healthy balance.
- Mulching is economic as it retains moisture for plants, reducing the need for watering, and also suppresses many garden weeds.
- Pine, Casuarina or Camphor Laurel mulch should be avoided as these suppress plant growth.
- Do not wash down mulch and other garden materials into drains as it contains nutrients, and seeds and other plant parts, which are easily dispersed through waterways and promote weeds.

Pruning

- Pruning and trimming shrubs assists positive regrowth and increases density of the plant. The process emulates what would usually occur in the wild by leaf eaters and physical damage, and denser foliage is perfect as protective habitat for small birds.

Simple guide to useful habitats

A diversity of native plants creates more opportunities for native fauna to find food and shelter suitable to their needs.

Vegetation layers

Canopy (trees, for example with hollows): provide food or protection for example insects, larger birds, possums and bats.

Mid-storey (small trees, large shrubs, tree-ferns): when planted densely, provide food or protection for example insects, birds, possums and tree-frogs.

Under-storey/ground covers (eg small shrubs, climbers, scramblers, ferns, herbs, grasses): provide food or protection for example insects and other invertebrates, frogs, lizards, small marsupials, and small birds.

Structural

Mulch (layer of leaf litter and twigs): provide food or protection for example insects and other invertebrates, frogs and lizards (which in turn provide food or protection for example birds and promotes healthy soil).

Logs, rocks and crevices: provide food or protection for example insects and other invertebrates, frogs, lizards.

Pond, dam: provide food or protection for example aquatic insects and other invertebrates, fish, frogs, lizards and also drinking water for birds and other fauna.

Weeds

A weed is an introduced plant out of place, and a noxious weed is one that legally must be controlled. Invasion of exotic weeds that have escaped from gardens into bushland is a huge problem. Weeds should be removed to prevent the spread through wind or bird dispersal, or through waterways establishing them into bushland areas and other property.

Introduced vegetation disturbs or displaces natural vegetation and upset original ecosystems, and may also disturb the cycle of nutrients and change the soil so that native plants may suffer. Weeds therefore alter landscapes, and disrupt and displace habitats and need gradual replacement to keep habitats in the garden etc.

In the garden, removal of weeds will also assist with removing nutrient and space competition with wanted plants. Once established, weeds are very difficult and costly to permanently remove.

If you are having difficulty removing weeds it may be that the removal method is not suited to that plant type. Assistance for techniques for removal can be found on: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/WeedRemovalFactsheets.htm> or the Sydney Weeds Committee website.

Other ways to encourage native fauna

Shelter and nesting

- Tree hollows are important habitats for fauna and can provide a landscaping feature in your garden.
- Assisting wildlife with built habitats such as nesting boxes is important as many animals have had their natural habitats for example tall trees removed or destroyed.
- Nesting boxes lessen the need for example possums to entering your roof!
- Do not over clear your garden.
- Leaf litter, twigs, fallen branches and logs left on the ground provide valuable habitat and shelter for fauna. This material also provides great mulch for keeping weeds down and helping with water retention.

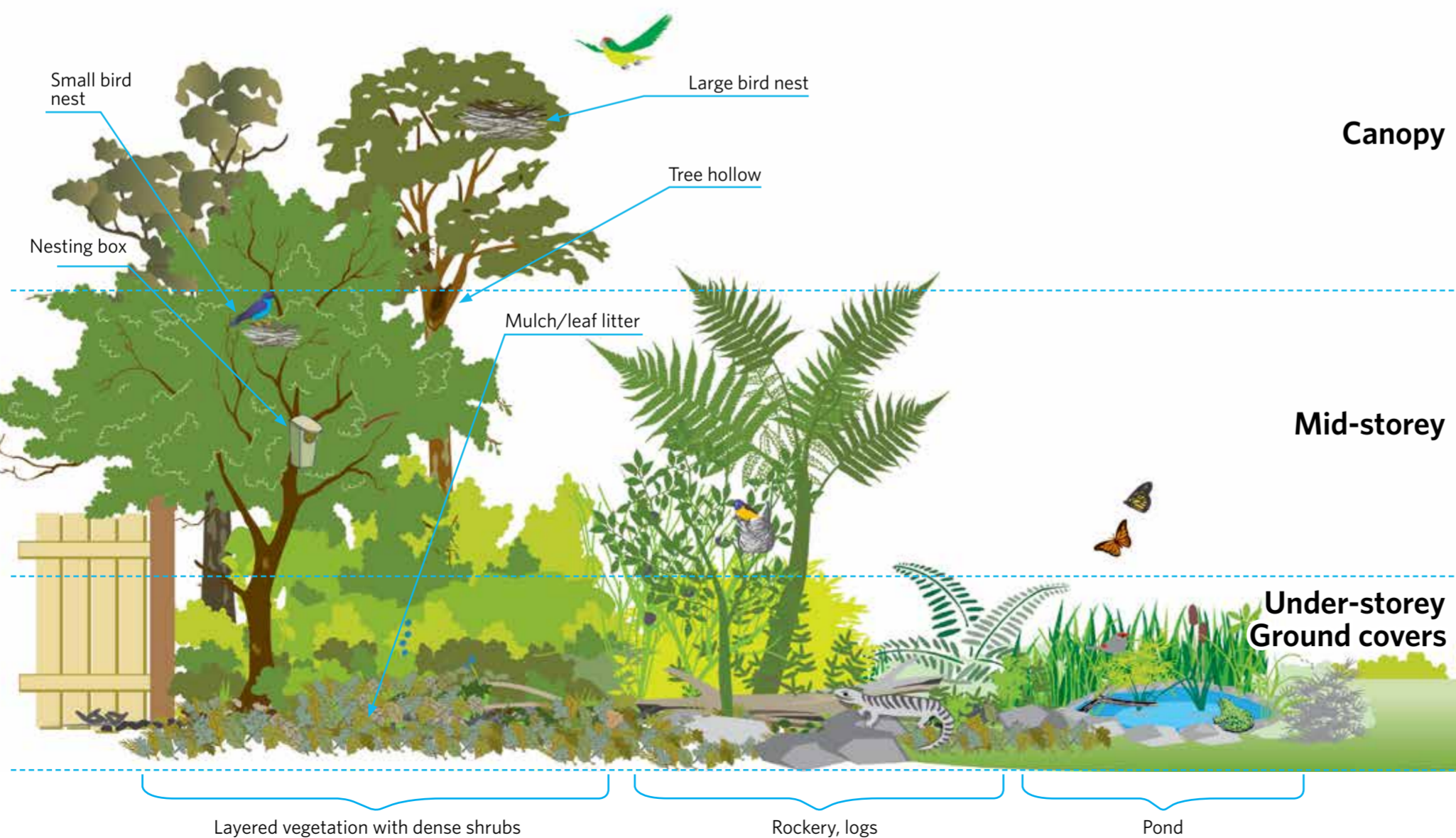
Installing a pond in your garden

- Let tap water sit for at least one week in the open before adding plants or fauna.
- Create an island in the pond from which wildlife can drink safe from predators.
- Vary the depth and add a branch at the edge into the pond to assist wildlife to get in and out.
- Ensure there is some shading from the sun. Shrubs planted in close proximity to the pond further assist with protection.
- Position away from windows - frogs can get noisy!

Healthy fauna

- Do not feed wildlife processed or non-native foods. Processed (or man made foods) such as bread contain for example high levels of cane sugar which leave wildlife susceptible to many deadly diseases, and do not provide a balanced diet. Plant native plants within the garden which provide native foods instead.
- Minimise the use of man-made pesticides. Fauna that eat poisoned insects build up fatty reserves of these chemicals internally, which can kill or severely harm these animals. Snail baits also kill Blue-tongue Lizards. Choose natural or organic fertilisers over chemicals.
- Put a bell-collar on your cats and keep them indoors from just before dark to mid-morning as these are the times that cats are most likely to be active hunting native animals such as birds, lizards and frogs. Also consider installing an enclosed cat run in your backyard to responsibly manage the cat threat to native wildlife. Ensure your dog is also responsibly managed to prevent it hunting and/or disturbing wildlife such as wild ducklings.
- Do not leave pet bowls with food outside. This encourages feral birds and animals such as Common (Indian) Mynas, feral and domestic cats, foxes and rodents.
- Noisy Miners and Currawongs are in unnaturally high numbers and should be discouraged from gardens. They are aggressive species that attack other bird species in their territory. To discourage these species, avoid planting hybrid grevilleas, which provide nectar for the Noisy Miner, and avoid planting too many berry producing plants, which provide berries for Currawongs.

Diverse habitat garden



Urban development in the Ryde and Hunters Hill local government areas has seen local flora and fauna species becoming severely depleted. Habitat loss and fragmentation makes it difficult or impossible for many native animals to move between different habitats to feed and reproduce and also create barriers for plant pollination. The resulting lack of genetic diversity may over time lead to extinction of local species and depletion of originally healthy ecosystems.

The River to River Corridors Project aims to create new and enhance existing habitats for native fauna such as birds of the under-storey by re-connecting previously isolated bushland between Lane Cove and Parramatta Rivers. Community participation is vital in this reconnection process, as private gardens play an important role. Private gardens, school and business grounds, parks and other open spaces can provide islands of habitat to allow fauna to move between bushland areas.

What is a wildlife corridor?

A wildlife corridor is a mostly continuous strip of vegetation that allows animals to move between otherwise isolated patches of bushland or aquatic habitat to disperse and reproduce as well as forage for food and seek shelter.



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References

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PlantNET, The Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust (RBGDT), Sydney <http://plantnet.rbgsydney.nsw.gov.au> (26/03/2012)

Photo credits

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