

Plants for Darebin's Wildlife

Attracting butterflies, birds, native bees, moths and more to your garden!

Introduction

We encourage Darebin gardeners to select plants from this list to provide habitat for wildlife. Insect attracting plants have an essential role in pollination and are a major food source for birds, bats, reptiles, mammals, frogs and predatory insects. A large diversity of plant species is important for wildlife and indigenous plants provide the best habitat. Water, chunky mulch, rocks and logs are also essential for providing habitat - whilst insecticides should never be used in a garden for wildlife. This list includes bird and insect food and shelter plants, nectar plants and structural trees. The plants are available at two local indigenous nurseries: the Victorian Indigenous Nursery Co-operative in Fairfield and the Nangak Tamboree Wildlife Sanctuary Indigenous Nursery at La Trobe University, Bundoora.



Grasses

Indigenous grasses were a core component of our grasslands and grassy woodlands in Darebin and they are critical habitat and food plants for many seed eating birds, butterflies, moths and other insects.

Name	Common Name	Form and size	Cultivation	Habitat value
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass	Delicate grass for mass planting - 0.4m	Prefers sheltered position in good soil	Excellent food plant for many local butterflies
<i>Poa labillardierei</i>	Large Tussock Grass	Large Tussock Grass - 1.2m	Needs some moisture and cutting back every 2-3 years	Excellent food plant for seed eating birds, insect larvae and shelter for insects and lizards
<i>Poa morrisii</i>	Velvet Tussock Grass	Small tussock grass - 0.4m	Likes some moisture but hardy under trees – mass plant	Food plant for seed eating birds and caterpillars
<i>Poa sieberiana</i>	Grey Tussock Grass	Medium tussocks – 0.6m	Hardier and more modest grass – mass plant	Butterfly (caterpillar) host and shelter plant
<i>Rytidosperma species</i>	Wallaby Grasses	Wallaby Grass – several species - 0.4m to 1.2m with fluffy seed heads	Tough grass that is best mass planted and cut back each year	Excellent food plants for caterpillars and seed-eating birds
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Kangaroo Grass	Medium clumping grass to 1m	Prefers full sun and some water – mass plant. Cut back every 2-3 years	Key food and habitat plant in Darebin for Common Brown Butterfly and many insects and lizards



Kangaroo Grass



Wallaby Grass



Tussock Grass

Groundcovers, herbs and strappy plants

Groundcovers serve a vital function protecting soil life and smaller plants can be mass planted or used as container plants.

Name	Common Name	Form and size	Cultivation	Habitat value
<i>Arthropodium milleflorum</i> and <i>strictum</i>	Vanilla lily and Chocolate Lily	Scented flowers along arching stems to 1.0m in late Spring	Hardy – dies down in Autumn	Native bees and other pollinators attracted to the flowers
<i>Brachycome multifida</i>	Cut-leaf Daisy	Small plant with lots of purple daisies - 0.3m X 0.4m	Prefers some summer water	Native bees, butterflies and hoverflies
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Bulbine Lily	Yellow flowering stems to 1.0m tall. Dies back in Autumn	Hardy lily for mass planting – will self-seed	Insect pollinated over a long period – bees and hover flies
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i> and <i>C. semipapposum</i>	Common and Clustered Everlastings	Lovely groundcovers with bright yellow “paper daisy” flowers in Spring/Summer - 0.4m to 0.8m	Prefer some watering in a sunny position.	Food plant for Australian Painted Lady butterfly and lots of flowers for pollinators
<i>Cullen tenax</i>	Tough Scurf Pea	Stems to 0.6m with upright pink pea flowers	Endangered plant that prefers clay soils and twines through shrubs or grasses	Important host plant for at least three local butterflies
<i>Dianella longifolia</i> or <i>amoena</i>	Flax lillies	Strappy leaves with flowers held to 1.0m	Tough plant for group planting	Blue-banded Bee and other native bees.
<i>Disphyma crassifolium</i>	Rounded Noon Flower	Spreading succulent with masses of pink flowers Spring / Summer - 0.3m X 1.0m	Hardy for in full sun in clay soils.	Butterflies and native bees
<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i>	Ruby Saltbush	Ruby or yellow berries on grey low shrub - 0.5m X 1.0m	Very hardy for dry positions	Shelter and food for lizards and insects
<i>Glycine clandestina</i> or <i>microphylla</i>	Twining or Small-leaved Glycines	Light scrambling pea mauve flowers - 0.5m to 1.0m	Creeps over other plants or climbs supports	Insect pollinated; pea foliage a food source of caterpillar food
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny Headed Mat Rush	Clumping dense strappy plant to 1.0m	Very tough – good block to foot traffic	Food plant for Splendid Ochre Butterfly and dense shelter
<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	Creeping Boobiella	Prostrate plant to 1.5m covered in white flowers in Spring/Summer	Hardy ground cover in a sunny position	Butterflies, beetles and bees attracted to the flowers
<i>Pelargonium australe</i>	Austral Storks Bill	Soft foliage spreading plant - 0.6m X 1.2m with pink flowers	Long flowering prefers some shade and watering but hardy	Butterflies and native bees
<i>Pimelea species</i>	Rice Flowers	Small plants to 0.5m, best planted in groups	Hardy in sunny spot	Butterflies very attracted to flowers
<i>Senecio pinnatifolius</i>	Variable Groundsel	Large herb to 1.2m - Bright yellow daisy flowers	Hardy for planting in groups in sheltered position	Food plants for butterfly and moth larvae and attracts pollinators
<i>Veronica gracilis</i>	Slender Speedwell	Dainty herb to 0.3m with small blue flowers	Plant in groups and amongst other plants give additional water	Excellent for butterflies and other pollinators
<i>Wahlenbergia species (stricta or communis)</i>	Bluebells	Suckering herb with bluebell flowers to 50cm	Summer moisture extends flowering	Native bees and hoverflies attracted to flowers
<i>Xerochrysum bracteatum</i>	Paper daisy – forms such as “Dargon Hill Monarch”	Various forms from 0.5 to 1.2 m.	Prefers regular water in dry periods. Plants often last only 2-3 years	Best butterfly, and native bee attracting flowers most of the year round
<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	Sticky Everlasting	Yellow paper daisy to 1.0m	Hardy for dry clay soils but longer flowering period if watered	Excellent tough butterfly and bee attracting daisy

Small shrubs and climbers

Understory shrubs provide food and shelter for birds. Multi-layered plantings are important for biodiversity and create important habitat.

Name	Common Name	Form and size	Cultivation	Habitat value
<i>Acacia genistifolia</i>	Spreading Wattle	Lovely prickly spreading shrub to 2.0m Lovely pale lemon flowers in late winter	Hardy for sun or part shade	Dense shelter for birds. Insect pollinated
<i>Clematis microphylla</i>	Small-leaved Clematis	Lovely light climber to 2.0m with masses of white star flowers in early Spring	Hardy in full-sun or part shade – can scramble over shrubs or support structures	Fluffy seed heads provide bird nesting material and flowers attract insects
<i>Correa glabra</i>	Rock Correa	Shrub to 2.5m with green/yellow flowers in Autumn/Winter	Hardy for all positions	Shelter and food for bees and nectar for honeyeating birds at a critical time of year
<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	Hop Goodenia	Yellow flowers and bright green foliage. Around 1.2m or groundcover	Needs some moisture in summer	Top insect attracting plant with flowers all year round
<i>Goodia lotifolia</i>	Golden Tip	A hardy upright plant to 1.4m	best planted in groups to show off the lovely racemes of yellow pea flowers	Bee attracting plant
<i>Grevillea rosmarinifolia</i>	Rosemary Grevillea	Spider flowers in winter	Resents fertiliser with phosphate	Dense garden habitat and nectar for honeyeating birds
<i>Hakea decurrens</i>	Bushy Needlewood	Large shrub 3.5m X 2.0m Very prickly foliage and masses of white flowers	Well-drained soils with some water in summer to establish. Plant away from paths	Protection and nesting sites for small birds. Bees attracted to the flowers
<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Purple Coral Pea "Happy Wanderer"	Light pea climber 2m massed purple, white or pink flowers	Hardy in sunny place	Insect pollinated and attracts native bees
<i>Indigofera australis</i>	Austral Indigo	Arching loose shrub to 2m with purple/mauve pea flowers in late winter	Enjoys some shelter and water in summer	Bees, nectar and pollen source for many insects, leaves for caterpillars
<i>Olearia lirata</i>	Snowy Daisy-bush	Large Shrub to 3m. Masses of 10 cent sized white daisy flowers in Spring	Sheltered part shade – needs summer moisture. Prune after flowering	Food plant for caterpillars and it attracts butterflies and other pollinators
<i>Olearia ramulosa</i> var. <i>ramulosa</i>	Twiggy Daisy-bush	Small shrub 1m X 1m with masses of small irregular cream daisy flowers in late Spring and Summer	Hardy for a sunny well-drained situation	Attracts hoverflies and butterflies
<i>Ozothamnus obcordatus</i>	Grey Paper Daisy	1.5m shrub with heads of massed yellow daisy flowers	Tough for sunny dry position	Attract hoverflies and small pollinators
<i>Rhagodia parabolica</i>	Fragrant Saltbush	Grey dense shrub to 2.0m	Handles hot dry conditions	Attracts saltbush blue butterfly and provides dense shelter
<i>Senna artemisioides</i>	Desert Cassia	Larger shrub to 3.0m X 3.0m masses of yellow flowers	Tough in sunny well-drained position. Tip prune to keep compact	Food plant for Small Yellow Butterfly and a variety of pollinators
<i>Westringia fruticosa</i> forms	Coast Westringia	Dense small shrubs 1.5m suitable for hedging	Hardy in sunny spot	Flowers attract butterflies and bees



Small-leaved Clematis



Purple Coral Pea



Rosemary Grevillea

Large Shrubs and Trees

Birds and insects rely on our key structural plants in the landscape, particularly Acacia and Eucalypts and the dense prickly large shrubs.

Name	Common Name	Form and size	Cultivation	Habitat value
<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	Gold Dust Wattle	Massed golden yellow flowers 2.0m X 2.0m	Very hardy in a dry position	Blossom and seeds attract insects, pollinators and caterpillars eat foliage
<i>Acacia implexa</i>	Lightwood	Tree to 8.0m. Cream flowers in summer	Long-lived and hardy	Seed eating birds. Insect pollinated; pollen source, mid-summer flowering
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black Wattle	Fast small tree to 5.0m Massed lemon flowers	Very hardy prune to keep in shape	Seed eating birds. Pollen and food source for Imperial Hairstreak Butterfly
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	Golden Wattle	Fast growing beautiful small tree 5.0m	Hardy in sunny position	Seed eating birds. Food plant for moth larvae and many insects are pollinators
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses	Large shrub or small tree o 4.0 to 5.0m with weeping form	Likes some moisture in first years	Great dense small bird habitat and pollen for insects
<i>Allocasuarina verticillata</i>	Drooping Sheoak	6.0m-8.0m Tree with weeping form	Very hardy in all positions	Cones and seeds attract finches, parrots and small flowers attract pollinators
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	Neat small tree 3.0-4.0m covered in yellow banksia flowers	Well-drained spot	Vital nectar source for honeyeating birds in Autumn/Winter
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria	Large spreading shrub or small tree 3.0-4.0m white flowers in summer	Very tough; plant away from paths as prickly	Great dense foliage for birds and massed white flowers attract lots of pollinators – bees, beetles and butterflies
<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	River Bottlebrush "Injune" form pink flowers	Lovely weeping small tree 3.0-4.0m Pink or white flowered forms	Responds to summer water and can flower again in Autumn	Top performing honeyeater, butterfly, bee and beetle attracting plant
<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>	Sticky Hop Bush	3.0-5.0m shrub with distinctive hop like wings on seed pods	Very hardy – tip prune to keep dense	Native bees and many insects love the small flowers
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i> various forms	Yellow Gum	Small forms or the local sub species connata – 8.0m to-25.0m. Autumn winter cream or red flowers.	Very hardy; massed flowers with nectar	Wonderful bird habitat. Eucalypt foliage is used by many caterpillars and bees, beetles and other insects are attracted to flowers
<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemos</i>	Red Box	Large tree to 25.0m with massed cream insect-pollinated flowers	Handles hot dry spot	Attracts huge numbers of insect pollinators for pollen and nectar and the birds that go with them
<i>Eucalyptus tricarpa</i>	Red Ironbark	Large tree to 20.0m with cream flowers in winter to early summer	Very tough in a well-drained position but only for large gardens	Flocks of Lorikeets and Honeyeaters are attracted to the nectar producing flowers, as are bees
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	Woolly Tea Tree	Tea tree to 4.0m with weeping form and massed white flowers	Needs some watering in summers	Attracts many insect pollinators
<i>Melicytus dentatus</i>	Tree Violet	Rounded shrub 3.0m X 3.0m, Scented bell flowers along stems in Spring	Needs some moisture in early years and responds well to pruning	Shelter for birds and the berries are important food for skinks

