

# GROW LOCAL

## Illawarra Native Garden Guide



### Acknowledgements

A joint sustainability initiative by Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama Councils, assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

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Photography by Jemma Lemmon, unless otherwise credited below:

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(p34), Forest Oak (p35), Swamp Mahogany (p36), Coast Grey Box (p38), Wombat Berry (p41); **www.danielhopper.com.au:** Mulching (p9); **Alison Mellor:** Nest box (p14), Yellow Robin (p12), Illawarra Flame Tree (p16 and p35), **Leo Reynolds:** Sugar Glider (p14); **Bethany Bell:** Green and Golden Bell Frog (p13); **Tony Marsh:** Tussock Grass (p17); **John Tann:** Blue Flax-lily (p17 and p20); Black She-oak (p30), Brush Cherry and Brush Muttonwood (p31), Water Gum (p33), Pencil Cedar and Prickly Paperbark (p35); **David Houston:** Fairy Fan Flower (p21); **Stuart Cohen:** Gristle Fern (p21); **Ilena Hach:** Lobelia (p22); **Suzette Hosken:** Striped-Wallaby Grass (p24); **Ian Sutton:** Broad-leaved Hakea (p24); **Brian Myers:** Common Tea-tree (p25), Black Wattle (p30), Two Veined Hickory (p37), Old Man's Beard (p40); **Doug Beckers:** Toothed Daisy Bush (p27); **Byron McGregor:** Plum Pine (p35); **Gary Leonard:** Forest Redgum, Port Jackson Fig and Thin-leaved Stringybark (p38-39).

### Design

Bettina Kaiser art+design  
Printed on Tudor, Australian 100% recycled paper

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## Illawarra Native Garden Guide



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*This resource has been prepared with a companion guide, GROW LOCAL: Illawarra Edible Garden Guide. Together they provide a comprehensive introduction to sustainable gardening in our beautiful region.*

ILLAWARRA BIODIVERSITY AND LOCAL FOOD STRATEGY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust

# Why Grow Local Native Plants?

We live in a spectacular and unique part of Australia. The Illawarra is home to around 2500 species of native plants, which make up our beautiful natural areas and provide food and shelter for native birds and animals.

We all have the opportunity to make sure our homes and lifestyles support the natural ecosystems that make our region so beautiful. One very simple way we can do this is to use more local native plants in our urban and rural gardens.

*A Green Catbird loves to feed on figs, and fleshy fruits of other local native plants.  
Right: Passiflora herbertiana, our local Native Passionfruit.*

Many local native plants are great choices for landscaping, and they can be used for any style of garden. This guide will even help you find alternatives to some of the most popular exotic plants in your garden!

You will find there are many benefits to choosing local native plants for your garden:

They are adapted to local conditions and often require less maintenance, care, water and chemical fertilisers than conventional exotic plants.

They look good and will thrive.

They attract native birds and help deter pest birds such as Common (Indian) Mynas.

You will be helping to provide a stepping stone for local native birds and other local native animals moving across the landscape.

You will be helping to reduce the threat of weeds to the Escarpment and bushland of the Coastal Plain.

Attracting local native birds and other local native animals is fun and educational.

# How to Use this Guide

Many nurseries sell 'Australian native plants', but did you know that many come from interstate or other parts of New South Wales? This means they are not always well adapted to our local soil and climate conditions, and can sometimes even cause trouble by becoming weedy or hybridising with our local native plants.

Another thing to consider with non-local natives is they are often specially bred to produce big, showy flowers – lovely to look at perhaps, but not much use as a food source for birds with smaller beaks! Gardens dominated with these kinds of plants will attract only certain (often raucous) larger birds or pest species.

This Guide will help you find suitable local native plants for urban and rural gardens of the Illawarra. It is by no means an exhaustive list, but will provide an introduction to those local native plants which are most readily available.

*Note: The Guide is intended for use by residents of Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama Council areas. It is not designed to guide revegetation of natural areas such as Bushcare or Landcare sites or riparian zones. Planting in bushland areas should be guided by the naturally occurring suite of native species which occur in that area.*



*A leaf beetle tending her rosette of eggs*



# Planning your Garden

Formal, cottage or more natural 'bush' style gardens can all be achieved using local native plants of the Illawarra. Whichever style you prefer, thoughtful planning will lead to the best results.

When planning a garden you should consider the following:

- The structure of the garden you are planning, and the form and height of the plants which will achieve this 'look'
- Flower colour
- Your location - refer to Planting Zones in the next chapter for the plants which suit your conditions

Consider the specific design elements you might be trying to achieve, for example:

- Screening out a neighbours property
- Attracting native birds or other wildlife
- Shade
- Creating a hedge or border
- Complementing adjoining bushland
- Using native ground covers to reduce your lawn mowing

Also make sure you have thought about how your choice of plants will impact on power lines, easements, plumbing, solar access to your own and neighbouring properties, and property boundaries.

# Planting Zones

Did you know that different soil types and geographical locations determine which plants struggle or thrive? To help you choose plants which are best suited to where you live, we have divided this guide into four 'zones'.

## Coastal Frontline

The Coastal Frontline Zone is the area within 50 metres or so of the coast. Within this zone there are two main soil types. Most of the low-lying parts of the coast directly behind the beaches are dominated by sandy, free-draining soils.

Some of the headland areas along the coast, especially those south of Windang, have nutrient-rich volcanic soils. These areas support littoral rainforest plants that can cope with harsh coastal winds.

If your property is highly exposed to salt laden winds you can consider yourself within the Coastal Frontline Zone.



## Coastal Plain

The Coastal Plain Zone is made up of the predominantly flat areas in-between the Escarpment and the sea. Once this area was dominated by a tall canopy of Eucalypts, with rainforest species occurring in some of the more sheltered locations and creeklines. For the purposes of this guide, the outlying hills, such as Mount Brown, Mount Drummond (Mangerton), and the Berkeley Hills are all considered part of the Coastal Plain. The Escarpment foothills are also suited to plants selected for this zone.

## Escarpment and Foothills

The Illawarra Escarpment scenically frames the Illawarra Coastal Plain from Stanwell Park in the north to the Shoalhaven River in the south. The Escarpment and Foothills Zone extends upslope from the foothills all the way to the top of the sandstone cliffs.



This is where you will find moist Eucalypt forests, and our spectacular local subtropical and warm temperate rainforests growing on quite different soils to those found closer to the coast.

The Illawarra Escarpment provides an important and continuous north – south corridor for local biodiversity. If you are lucky enough to live in this zone, you have a great opportunity to help protect this unique area from invasive plants and animals by using local native plants.

## Plateau

The Plateau Zone includes the elevated flat lands west of the Escarpment cliffs. The Plateau supports very different plants to the rest of the region below the Escarpment. The mostly shallow, sandstone soils are where you will find shrubby woodlands which are common across the greater Sydney basin. The Plateau also supports more fertile areas of shale and volcanic soils, such as in the Helensburgh and Southern Highlands areas.



# Looking after your Garden

## Preparation

1. Make sure you have your design finalised.
2. Remove weeds and mulch the area prior to planting.

## Planting

3. Dig a hole twice as wide and slightly deeper than the pot.
4. Thoroughly wet the plant in the pot.
5. If the soil is dry, fill the hole with water and allow it to drain before planting.
6. Place a slow release fertiliser for natives in the bottom of the hole (optional).
7. Remove the plant from its pot and place the root ball in the hole. Ensure the top of the root ball is roughly level with ground level.
8. Backfill the hole with topsoil.
9. Firm down the soil, and thoroughly water in the plant.

## Mulching

Mulching your garden looks great and helps to suppress weeds. Mulching also boosts the activity of soil micro-organisms and improves the water holding capacity of the soil. Take care not to use mulch that may contain weed seed. Mulch should be spread to a depth of 5cm, and topped up annually. Try to keep mulch away from plant stems to avoid the risk of fungal infection and insect attack.

## Fertilising

Generally, local native plants do not require fertilising if you have chosen species that will thrive in your area. Mulch and leaf litter will help provide the nutrients they need. You can use fertiliser to help new plants become established, but make sure to choose one made specifically for native plants. Alternatively, just apply light, infrequent applications only.



Red Flowered Paperbark, *Melaleuca hypericifolia*

# Creating a Habitat Garden

## Pruning

Native plants can be pruned to create hedges, promote flowering, and to encourage particular forms. Pruning can also be undertaken to control growth, or to repair damage from wind or pests. It is best to prune after the plant has flowered. Always use sharp secateurs or a pruning saw, and always cut above a growth 'node' to promote branching.

## Watering

Local native plants will naturally require watering, particularly while they become established. But after several months of good growth they should be able to cope without regular watering. Your plants will be much more resilient if they develop deeper roots in this way. It is best to give well spaced, thorough soakings especially in particularly hot, dry or windy conditions.

Watering is always best done in the cooler part of the day, in the morning or evening. Light to moderate pruning can also reduce the demand for water during dry periods. Avoid regular, light watering as it encourages surface root growth.

## When to Plant

In the Illawarra, you can plant throughout most of the year. It is best to avoid planting when the soils are at their coolest over July and August. Use this time of year to prepare your garden; make your plans, and undertake weed control or mulching.

## Improving your Soil

Most soils can be improved by adding well-rotted organic matter such as animal manure, compost or leaf litter. Clay soils may also be improved by adding gypsum to improve the soil structure. Compost improves all types of soils!

Many very beautiful local species of birds, frogs, insects, and reptiles are struggling to find safe haven in our urban landscape. By using local native plants of the Illawarra, you will be taking a great step to improve the habitat features of your garden!

In order to create living spaces for our native fauna, the general principle is to maximise the **diversity** of plant species and habitat features in your garden. A variety of plant species means you are likely to have different things flowering and fruiting throughout the year to provide continuous food sources. Different forms of plants and landscape features provide lots of places to shelter, nest and hide from predators.



Some of the many benefits of attracting local native fauna to your garden with local native plants are:

Lizards can help to control snails, slugs and other garden pests.

Native birds will help compete with exotic pests such as the Common (Indian) Myna.

Small insectivorous birds which love dense shrubs can help control garden pests such as aphids, caterpillars and beetles.

You can enjoy the relaxing benefits of sitting back and observing what comes and goes throughout your garden over the seasons.

Another bonus is that local native plants can also help attract pollinators, which can improve fruit set of other plants, even fruit and vegetables in your vegetable garden!



Top: Woollybutt flower. Below: Orange Thorn, a great shrub for small bird habitat.

## Creating Habitat for Birds

*Below: Providing a mixture of grasses, shrubs, and trees is the best way to feed and attract native birds. Right: A Yellow Robin finds enough shelter to nest.*

- Plant spikey shrubs or dense thickets to encourage small birds
- Plant seed producing shrubs and grasses (e.g. Tea-tree, Tussock Grass, Kangaroo Grass) to feed seed eating birds
- Plant fleshy fruited plants (e.g. Lilly Pillies, Sandpaper Fig, Jasmine Morinda) to feed rainforest bird species
- Plant nectar producing plants (e.g. Banksia, Grevillea, Hakea) to feed honeyeaters
- Provide a complex garden structure: mixture of ground covers, grasses, shrubs, and trees to support a diversity of bird species
- Provide thick leaf litter, compost or mulch to promote insects for insectivorous birds such as Suberb Blue-wrens
- Provide fresh water for drinking and bathing

If you have problems with the Common (Indian) Myna, consider reducing your lawn area, removing exotic palms, and using more local native plants in your garden. Planting local natives encourages native birds and reduces the chances of Common (Indian) Mynas from establishing dominance in your garden.

Use local native plants, rather than hybrids such as cultivar Grevilleas. These large flowering plants often encourage the larger aggressive honeyeaters that can chase away smaller birds.

Avoid feeding birds. Many of the foods we provide (bread, honey, fatty meat) are bad for birds. Providing a mixture of local native plant species is the best way you can feed and attract local native birds.

Learn about our local native birds in "Illawarra Birds: A Photo Guide". Available from Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama Councils.



## Creating Habitat for Lizards

- Provide clusters of rocks in full sun for basking
- Provide hollow logs, boulders, leaf litter and bark for refuge from predators and a place to hibernate in winter
- Provide access to shallow water for drinking e.g. a shallow pot plant dish
- Avoid using chemicals and snails baits
- Plant local native ground covers to provide further shelter



## Creating Habitat for Frogs

- Place frog ponds in sunny locations with partial shade
- Avoid introducing fish to your pond, as most fish eat tadpoles
- Provide lots of leaf litter, or compost near the pond to attract insects for frogs to eat
- Provide gently sloping sides, rocks or submerged logs enable frogs to get in and out of the pond
- Provide shelter with native plants, rocks or logs for refuge from birds or cats



Read more in "Frogs of the Illawarra: Making your Garden Frog Friendly". Available from Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour Councils.



*An old bath tub can be re-used to create great frog habitat. Below left: A Green and Golden Bell Frog basking in the sun.*

## Creating Habitat for Mammals

The main mammals you are likely to see in your Illawarra garden are Brushtail and Ringtail Possums. Because of the lack of tree hollows in urban gardens, possums are often attracted to roof cavities. Providing suitable nest box habitat can be a great alternative to possums in your roof. They also provide opportunities for birds or micro-bats to nest and shelter.

A range of animals are dependent on tree hollows for shelter and nesting; including some species of birds, and arboreal (tree living) mammals. Different animals are attracted to different sizes in nest boxes and entrance holes, so depending on what you are trying to attract, make sure your nest box is suited. See the resources section for more information.

Top: A Ringtail Possum finds a new home in a nest box. Below: Sugar Gliders are most active at night.

Common (Indian) Mynas, Starlings and European bees may also be attracted to nest boxes. So keep a watchful eye on what is using your nest box. A hinged lid will help you to easily remove unwanted animals.

To promote native fauna there are also a few other things to consider:

- Keep cats indoors as much as possible and put three bells on their collar
- Do not not leave pet food out that will attract pest birds
- Keep your garden chemical free to maintain a high diversity of insect and bacterial life to promote food for birds and frogs, as well as promoting healthy soils
- Keep a compost bin in you garden to recycle your kitchen waste – insects attracted to the compost are great food for native birds and frogs

Above all, using local native plants will provide the perfect habitat for local native fauna!

## Garden Styles

People often think of native gardens being 'natural bush style' or informal gardens. However, native plants can also be planted or pruned in ways to keep a more formal or cottage style garden.

Some examples of local gardens using local species are shown to the right.

Low growing shrubs such as White Correa (1), and Coastal Rosemary (2) are tidy, low maintenance plants for an open garden.



**Cottage Garden**  
This garden uses a mixture of flowering shrubs and small trees, such as Coast Banksia, Hairpin Banksia, and Coastal Rosemary.



**Low Maintenance**  
Tussock forming plants such as Carex, Mat Rush and Tussock Grass make for a no fuss, low and tidy native garden.



**Natural Bush Style**  
You can also complement existing native trees by planting local native shrubs and ground covers.



## Colourful Gardens

If you like colourful gardens, consider planting Waratah (1), Australian Indigo (2), Illawarra Flame tree (3), Pigface, Blue Flax-lily, False Sarsparilla, or Brush Cherry.

Low shrubs such as Coastal Rosemary, White Correa, Mintbush, Coastal Saltbush or Hop Goodenia are great if you want to create habitat but do not want to lose sunlight.

## Vines and Climbers

Vines can be used to soften fences, brick walls and pergolas. They can also be used to add additional height to a fence for screening or habitat purposes.

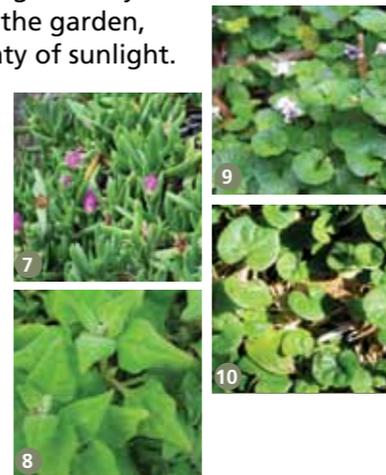
Some of our local attractive vines include False Sarsparilla (4), Dusky Coral Pea (5), Jasmine Morinda (6), Golden Guinea Flower, and Wonga Wonga Vine.



## Ground Covers

If there are sections of your garden you would rather not mow, such as between steps or garden edges, try using some local ground cover species such as; Pigface (7), Warrigal Spinach (8), Native Violet (9), or Kidney Weed (10).

Using areas of native ground covers in your garden is also a great way to create relief in the garden, and retain plenty of sunlight.



## Edges

There are many local plants that can be effective at creating a soft edge to a garden.

Some of these are tussock forming plants such as Carex (12), Tussock Grass (14), Kangaroo Grass or Mat Rush.

A fern edge could also be created with Jungle Brake (11), Gristle Fern or Maidenhair Fern. Blue Flax-lily (13) also creates a great edge with vibrant displays of purple berries.



## Hedges and Screening

Plant	Short hedge (1-3m)	Tall hedge (3-6m)
White Correa ( <i>Correa alba</i> )	●	
Coastal Rosemary ( <i>Westringia fruticosa</i> )	●	
Lilly Pilly ( <i>Acmena smithii</i> )	with pruning	●
Brush Cherry ( <i>Syzygium australe</i> )	with pruning	●
Blueberry Ash ( <i>Elaeocarpus reticulatus</i> )		●
Willow Hakea ( <i>Hakea salicifolia</i> )		●
Hop Bush ( <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> )		●
Crimson Bottlebrush ( <i>Callistemon citrinus</i> )	●	●
Coastal Tea Tree ( <i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i> )		●
Grey Myrtle ( <i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i> )		●
Red Flowered Paperbark ( <i>Melaleuca hypericifolia</i> )	●	●

Hedges or screening effects can be achieved by using a mixture of low and mid-story species, or with one row of the same species. The table to the left shows a selection of species that are naturally suitable for hedging due to their bushy habit.

To keep a hedge, you will need to prune at least annually. If you just want to achieve a natural screening effect without pruning, try planting a mixture of species relatively densely (approximately 1-1.5m apart). Most shrub and small tree species listed in the guide can be used to form a screen.



**Multiple heights**  
This example shows how species can be selected to achieve a layered effect with different heights.



**Mixed species screening**  
Dense thickets of multiple species also make attractive nesting and shelter sites for small birds. Most shrubs and small trees can be used to create a screen.



**Single species**  
If you prefer a uniform look, use one single species and prune to keep a consistent height.

## Recommended Plants

### Average Height

Heights are estimates of average size of mature plants based on knowledge of the listed plants in cultivation, where they usually do not reach their maximum size. The sizes provided are a general guide only, as plant growth will ultimately be dependent upon the conditions in which it is planted.

### Zones

The Illawarra has four distinctive planting zones. Find out in which zone you are located on page 7 of this guide.

### Sunlight Preferences

If a recommended plant is known to have a preference for shade, partial shade or full sun, this is indicated by symbols.

### Bush Food Plant

This indicates that the plant is known to be used as a food resource by Australian Aboriginals. Please exercise caution as some

parts of the plants may be poisonous. Please do your research before trying bush foods.

### Low Fuel Plants LOW

For those residents seeking to minimise their bushfire risks, low fuel plants can help reduce the intensity of fire. In the right conditions any plant will burn – this guide provides a key to those species which have low flammability.

Low flammability is usually indicated by the following features:

- High moisture or salt content in the leaves
- Low volatile oil content in the leaves
- Smooth bark

### Tolerate Wet Areas

This symbol indicates that the plant can tolerate 'wet feet' for lengthy periods, or occasional waterlogging.

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Bird's Nest Fern <i>Asplenium australasicum</i>	2m	Large epiphytic fern.	●	●	●				
 Blue Flax-lily <i>Dianella caerulea</i>	0.8m	Sprays of purple flowers. Edible, blue-purple fruits.	●	●	●	●			
 Carex <i>Carex appressa</i>	1m	Tussock forming, attractive grass-like sedge.	●	●	●				
 Crinum Lily <i>Crinum pedunculatum</i>	1.5m	Upright, large, herb with large clusters of white flowers.	●	●	●			 	
 Dampiera <i>Dampiera purpurea</i>	1m	Perennial plant with mauve fan flowers.	●	●	●				
 Dune Fan Flower <i>Scaevola calendulacea</i>	0.4m	Prefers sandy or well drained soils. Blue, fan flowers.	●	●					

Zones

# GROUND COVERS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Fairy Fan Flower <i>Scaevola aemula</i>	0.5m	Sprawling herb with mauve blue fan shaped flowers.	●	●	●				
 Grey Tussock Grass <i>Poa sieberiana</i>	1m	Tufted perennial grass. Tolerates dry sites.		●					
 Gristle Fern <i>Blechnum cartilagineum</i>	0.8m	Robust, low growing fern.	●	●	●				
 Jungle Brake <i>Pteris umbrosa</i>	1m	Attractive glossy fern forming large colonies. Good for use as a border.		●	●				
 Kangaroo Grass <i>Themeda australis</i>	1.2m	Tufted grass. Bluish green, with purple and red tinges. Prefers clay soils.	●	●	●				
 Kidney Weed <i>Dichondra repens</i>	0.1m	Perennial herb, may be used as lawn alternative.		●	●				

Zones

# GROUND COVERS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills Coastal Plain	Plateau	Plateau				
 Lobelia <i>Lobelia anceps</i> [ <i>L. alata</i> ]	0.5m	Vigorous ground cover, preferring damp location in full sun.		●	●					
 Maidenhair Fern <i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	0.4m	Delicate, low growing fern. Prefers sheltered sites.		●	●					
 Mat Rush <i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	0.8m	Tufted perennial grasslike plant, with strap-like leaves.	●	●	●	●				
 Native Violet <i>Viola hederacea</i>	0.1m	Flowers for most of the year. Forms dense mats in damp areas.		●	●					
 Pigface <i>Carpobrotus glaucescens</i>	0.2m	Prostrate perennial with bright pink showy flowers.	●	●						
 Stout Bamboo Grass <i>Austrostipa ramosissima</i> [ <i>Stipa ramosissima</i> ]	1.5m	Upright, branching grass.		●	●					

# GROUND COVERS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills Coastal Plain	Plateau	Plateau				
 Striped Wallaby Grass <i>Austrodanthonia</i> var. <i>racemosa</i>	0.6m	Variable tufted perennial grass.		●	●					
 Tussock Grass <i>Poa labillardieri</i> var. <i>labillardieri</i>	1.2m	Tufted perennial grass with slender leaves. Prefers moist sites.		●	●					
 Warrigal Spinach <i>Tetragonia tetragonioides</i>	0.2m	Prostrate, spreading edible plant.	●	●	●					
 Weeping Grass <i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	0.7m	Slender, tufted perennial grass.	●	●	●					

# GROUND COVERS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Australian Indigo <i>Indigofera australis</i>	1.5m	Spreading shrub with showy pink/purple flowers.	●	●	●	●				
 Boobialla <i>Myoporum boninense</i> subsp. <i>australis</i>	3m	Bushy shrub, tolerates coastal exposure. Prefers well drained soils.	●	●					 LOW	
 Brisbane Laurel <i>Pittosporum revolutum</i>	3m	Shrub with bushy brown-felted young stems. Showy orange fruit.	●	●	●				 LOW	
 Broad-leaved Hakea <i>Hakea dactyloides</i>	4m	Vigorous, rounded shrub with creamy white flowers.		●		●			 LOW	
 Coast Beard-heath <i>Leucopogon parviflorus</i>	1.5m	Small shrub with fringed white flowers. Prefers sandy, coastal sites.	●			●				
 Coastal Rosemary <i>Westringia fruticosa</i>	1.5m	Rounded shrub with grey foliage and white flowers. Very hardy.	●	●						

# SHRUBS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Coastal Saltbush <i>Rhagodia candolleana</i>	1m	Low spreading plant, bird attracting red berries. Hardy on the coast.	●	●					 LOW	
 Coastal Tea-tree <i>Leptospermum laevigatum</i>	3m	White flowers in spring. Prefers sandy soils.	●	●						
 Coastal Wattle <i>Acacia longifolia</i> var. <i>sophorae</i>	2m	Spreading shrub with yellow flower spikes.	●	●						
 Common Tea-tree <i>Leptospermum polygalifolium</i>	2.5m	Shrub or tree with lemon-scented leaves.		●		●				
 Daisy Bush <i>Olearia viscidula</i>	1.5m	Shrub with small white daisy flowers.		●	●					
 Hop Goodenia <i>Goodenia ovata</i>	2m	Upright, ascending or prostrate shrub.		●	●	●				

# SHRUBS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 <b>Crimson Bottlebrush</b> <i>Callistemon citrinus</i>	3m	Bushy shrub, lemon scented leaves. Profuse crimson flower spikes.	●	●	●				
 <b>Cut-leaf Mintbush</b> <i>Prostanthera incisa</i>	2m	Upright, openly branching, scented shrub.		●	●				
 <b>Native Broom</b> <i>Viminaria juncea</i>	3m	Slender shrub or small tree. Showy yellow flowers.		●	●			 	
 <b>Native Raspberry</b> <i>Rubus rosifolius</i>	2m	Shrub with trailing stems and edible raspberry fruit.		●	●				
 <b>Orange Thorn</b> <i>Pittosporum multiflorum</i> [ <i>Citriobatus pauciflorus</i> ]	2m	Dense, spiny, shrub with bright orange berries. Habitat for small birds.		●	●				
 <b>Red Flowered Paperbark</b> <i>Melaleuca hypericifolia</i>	3m	Dense, bushy shrub with red flowers. Tolerates severe coastal exposure.	●	●	●				

Zones

## SHRUBS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 <b>Red Spider Flower</b> <i>Grevillea oleoides</i>	1.5m	Upright shrub, bright red flowers. Prefers well drained soils.		●	●			 	
 <b>Red-fruited Saw Sedge</b> <i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>	1.5m	Tufted, perennial sedge, bearing red fruit on long spikes.		●	●			 	
 <b>Small Leaved Bleeding Heart</b> <i>Homalanthus stillingiifolius</i>	1.5m	Small rounded shrub, with heart shaped leaves. Older leaves turn red.		●	●				
 <b>Sticky Hop Bush</b> <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> subsp. <i>angustifolia</i>	3m	Upright shrub with linear leaves. Fruit is green, turning purple.	●	●	●				
 <b>Sydney Golden Wattle</b> <i>Acacia longifolia</i> subsp. <i>longifolia</i>	3m	Upright or spreading shrub or tree.		●	●				
 <b>Toothed Daisy Bush</b> <i>Olearia tomentosa</i>	0.6m	A small shrub with white daisy like flowers.		●					

Zones

## SHRUBS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 <b>Waratah</b> <i>Telopea speciosissima</i>	1.5m	Upright shrub with striking red flowers. Prefers well drained soils.		●	●	●	☀️		
 <b>Wedding Bush</b> <i>Ricinocarpus pinifolius</i>	2m	Mass displays of white, showy flowers. Prefers sandy soils.	●	●		●	☀️		
 <b>Whalebone</b> <i>Streblus brunonianus</i>	6m	Small tree, bird attracting small fruit. Hardy on exposed sites.	●	●	●		☀️	🔥 LOW	

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 <b>White Correa</b> <i>Correa alba</i>	1.5m	Attractive rounded shrub with attractive white flowers in winter.	●	●			☀️		
 <b>Willow Hakea</b> <i>Hakea salicifolia</i>	8m	Small tree, fast growing screen plant.		●		●			🔥 LOW
 <b>Yellow Elderberry</b> <i>Sambucus australasica</i>	4m	Attractive tall shrub, prefers sheltered sites.		●	●		☁️		🔥 LOW

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Acronychia <i>Acronychia oblongifolia</i>	8m	Bushy shrub to small tree.		●	●			●	LOW
 Black Plum <i>Diospyros australis</i>	10m	Small rainforest tree with fleshy black fruits.	●	●	●		●	●	LOW
 Black She-oak <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>	6m	Small tree, prefers sandy, poor soils.		●	●				LOW
 Black Wattle <i>Callicoma serratifolia</i>	8m	Tall shrub or small tree. Wattle-like cream flowers.		●	●			●	LOW
 Blueberry Ash <i>Elaeocarpus reticulatus</i>	4m	Attractive blue fruit, and showy white, fringed flowers.		●	●		●	●	LOW
 Boobialla <i>Myoporum acuminatum</i>	4m	Attractive corky bark when mature. Tolerates coastal sites.	●	●			●	●	LOW

## SMALL TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Brush Cherry <i>Syzygium australe</i>	8m	Dense, bushy, striking crimson edible fruit in summer.		●	●			●	LOW
 Brush Muttonwood <i>Myrsine howittiana [Rapanea]</i>	8m	Shrub or small tree. Rusty, hairy new growth.	●	●	●			●	LOW
 Cheese Tree <i>Glochidion ferdinandi</i>	8m	Bushy habit. Interesting cheese shaped fruit.	●	●	●			●	LOW
 Coast Banksia <i>Banksia integrifolia</i>	8m	Bird attracting yellow flowers. Hardy on the coast. Edible nectar.	●	●	●		●		
 Grey Myrtle <i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i>	8m	Bushy shrub or small tree. Scented leaves, long flowering period.		●	●			●	LOW
 Guioa <i>Guioa semiglauca</i>	8m	Attractive small tree with panicles of white flowers. Bird attracting fruit.	●	●				●	LOW

## SMALL TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Escarpment/Foothills	Plateau				
 Lilly Pilly <i>Acmena smithii</i>	8m	Glossy leaves with red autumn growth, cream flower masses in summer.	●	●	●					
 Native Quince <i>Alectryon subcinereus</i>	8m	Small tree. Attractive black and red fruit.		●	●					
 Christmas Bush <i>Ceratopetalum gummiferum</i>	4m	Decorative tree or shrub with mass displays of red sepals at Christmas time.		●		●				
 Old Man Banksia <i>Banksia serrata</i>	6m	Gnarled, twisted branches. Gold flower spikes in summer.	●	●		●				
 Red Olive Plum <i>Elaeodendron australe</i> [ <i>Cassine australis</i> ]	6m	Shrub or small tree to 8m high. Attractive, bright orange-red fleshy fruit.	●	●	●					

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Escarpment/Foothills	Plateau				
 Rough Tree-fern <i>Cyathea australis</i>	8m	A rough barked tree-fern, growing tall with maturity.		●	●					
 Sandpaper Fig <i>Ficus coronata</i>	6m	Small tree with sandpaper-like leaves. Edible fruit.	●	●	●					
 Snow in Summer <i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i>	8m	White papery bark. Abundant showy white flowers in summer. Hardy.		●						
 Water Gum <i>Tristaniopsis laurina</i>	6m	Attractive spotted bark, glossy leaves and yellow flowers.	●	●	●	●				
 Willow Bottlebrush <i>Callistemon salignus</i>	8m	Dense shrub or small tree with papery bark, young growth is pink.		●	●	●				

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 <b>Bangalay</b> <i>Eucalyptus botryoides</i>	12m	Rough barked tree. Tolerates saline soils on the coast.	●	●						
 <b>Bangalow Palm</b> <i>Archontophoenix cunninghamiana</i>	10m	Fast growing palm, large bunches of lilac flowers followed by red fruit.	●	●	●					
 <b>Blackwood</b> <i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	10m	Long lived tree preferring rich, moist soils. Pale yellow flowers.		●	●					
 <b>Cabbage Tree Palm</b> <i>Livistona australis</i>	10m	Rainforest palm, with fan like leaves.	●	●	●					
 <b>Celery Wood</b> <i>Polyscias elegans</i>	8m	Rainforest tree, palm like habit. Tiny flowers in large spray.	●	●	●					
 <b>Coachwood</b> <i>Ceratopetalum apetalum</i>	10m	Rainforest tree. Large clusters of white flowers and red new growth.		●	●					

# TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 <b>Forest Oak</b> <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i>	10m	Slender, graceful tree with weeping branchlets.		●	●					
 <b>Illawarra Flame Tree</b> <i>Brachychiton acerifolius</i>	12m	Deciduous tree with brilliant masses of red flowers in spring.		●	●					
 <b>Maidens Wattle</b> <i>Acacia maidenii</i>	8m	Small tree to 12m. Long, cream flowers. Fine, narrow leaves.		●	●					
 <b>Pencil Cedar</b> <i>Polyscias murrayi</i>	12m	Attractive slender tree, forming an umbrella shaped canopy when mature.		●	●					
 <b>Plum Pine</b> <i>Podocarpus elatus</i>	12m	Attractive yellow-green new growth. Edible bluish-black fruits.		●	●					
 <b>Prickly Paperbark</b> <i>Melaleuca styphelioides</i>	12m	Hardy tree with papery bark. Tolerates wet soils.	●	●	●					

# TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Red Ash <i>Alphitonia excelsa</i>	10m	Shiny, green leaves, silver underneath. Profuse, cream flowers.		●	●					
 Red Cedar <i>Toona ciliata</i> [ <i>T. australis</i> ]	15m	Deciduous, medium sized tree in cultivation. New pink growth in spring.	●	●	●					
 Sassafras <i>Doryphora sassafras</i>	12m	Medium sized rainforest tree. Scented, glossy green foliage.		●	●					
 Scrub Beefwood <i>Stenocarpus salignus</i>	8m	Hardy rainforest tree with bushy habit. Sweet scented white flowers.		●	●					
 Swamp Mahogany <i>Eucalyptus robusta</i>	12m	Dark furrowed bark. Prefers wet, swampy conditions, on sandy soils.	●	●						
 Swamp Oak <i>Casuarina glauca</i>	12m	Hardy tree. Tolerates saline soils, very hardy.	●	●						

Zones

# TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Zones				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Escarpment/Foothills	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Two Veined Hickory <i>Acacia binervata</i>	10m	Hardy, fast growing tree. Pale yellow flowers.		●	●					
 Woollybutt <i>Eucalyptus longifolia</i>	15m	Medium sized tree, preferring clay soils.		●						

Zones

You can also use the **Illawarra Bushland Database** to find out what other local native plants are growing in your area at [www.southerncouncils.nsw.gov.au](http://www.southerncouncils.nsw.gov.au)

Here you can search by suburb, maps, or location to find flora survey information for bushland in your neighbourhood.

# TREES



Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Blackbutt <i>Eucalyptus pilularis</i>	20m	Flaky black bark on the bottom of trunk, with white upper limbs.		●	●	●	☀️		
 Blue Gum - Bangalay hybrid <i>Eucalyptus saligna x E. botryoides hybrid</i>	20m	Rough collar at base of trunk with smooth barked, white upper limbs.		●	●		☀️		
 Coast Grey Box <i>Eucalyptus bosistoana</i>	20m	Bark rough at base, becoming smooth higher up. Prefers clay soils.		●			☀️		
 Forest Red Gum <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i>	20m	Attractive, smooth grey - white bark. Prefers clay soils.	●	●			☀️		
 Grey Ironbark <i>Eucalyptus paniculata</i>	20m	Deeply furrowed grey/black bark. Attractive clusters of white flowers.		●	●		☀️		
 Port Jackson Fig <i>Ficus rubiginosa</i>	30m	Spreading large tree, leaves rusty below.		●	●			🍃	🔥 LOW

Zones

# LARGE TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills			Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau				
 Small Leaved Fig <i>Ficus obliqua</i>	30m	Medium-sized to large strangling tree.		●	●			🍃	🔥 LOW
 Thin-leaved Stringybark <i>Eucalyptus eugenioides</i>	20m	Attractive brown stringy bark, prefers clay soils.		●			☀️		
 White Topped Box <i>Eucalyptus quadrangulata</i>	20m	Grey, box bark. Common on the Escarpment south from Bulli.			●		☀️		

Zones

**Large trees are recommended for large or rural properties only. They are only recommended where they can be planted away from any structures or property boundaries.**

# LARGE TREES

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau	Plateau				
 Dusky Coral Pea <i>Kennedia rubicunda</i>		Climbing or prostrate herb with red pea flowers.	●	●	●	●				
 False Sarsparilla <i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>		Showy purple flowers with long flowering period.	●	●	●	●			 LOW	
 Golden Guinea Flower <i>Hibbertia scandens</i>		Climber or prostrate vine with large yellow flowers.	●	●	●	●			 LOW	
 Jasmine Morinda <i>Morinda jasminoides</i>		Attractive, glossy climber, bearing orange berries.		●	●				 LOW	
 Kangaroo Grape <i>Cissus antarctica</i>		Fast growing, glossy green climber. Edible black grape like fruit.		●	●				 LOW	
 Old Man's Beard <i>Clematis aristata</i>		Vigorous climber with showy white flowers.	●	●	●				 LOW	
			Zones							

# VINES & CLIMBERS

Plant Name	Average Height	Description	Escarpment/Foothills				Sunlight Preferences	Bush Food Plant	Low Fuel Plant	Tolerate Wet Areas
			Coastal Frontline	Coastal Plain	Plateau	Plateau				
 Headache Vine <i>Clematis glycinoides</i>		Woody climber with masses of white flowers, sometimes becoming purple.	●	●	●	●			 LOW	
 Twining Guinea Flower <i>Hibbertia dentata</i>		Twiner with large, yellow flowers.	●	●	●	●			 LOW	
 Wombat Berry <i>Eustrephus latifolius</i>		Vine with orange, fleshy berries.	●	●					 LOW	
 Wonga Wonga Vine <i>Pandorea pandorana</i>		Vigorous, glossy climber. Masses of white tubular flowers with purple spots.	●	●	●				 LOW	
			Zones							

# VINES & CLIMBERS

# Resources

## Where to Find Local Native Plants?

The local native plants listed in this guide are those which are most readily available. Not all nurseries will have all of the species listed, all of the time. Ask your local nursery to source the plants if you are unable to find them.

The nurseries listed here provide locally propagated, local native plants.

### Wollongong Botanic Garden Nursery - Greenplan

Plants can be purchased from the Botanic Garden nursery, on Northfields Avenue, Keiraville, on the third Friday of every month from 7.30am until 2.30pm (except public holidays). Available to Wollongong City Council ratepayers.

[www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/botanicgarden](http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/botanicgarden)  
Call 4227 7111 for enquiries.

### Shellharbour City Council Wholesale Nursery

Located at 132 Industrial Road, Oak Flats and open to the public (not restricted to Shellharbour ratepayers) from 7:30am until 3:45pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays). The nursery is able to order in stock if you cannot find what you need in the nursery.

Call 4221 6191 for enquiries.

There are also other nurseries in the Illawarra and southern Sydney which sell native plants.

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Lowe, T. (1991) Wild Food Plants of Australia.  
Harper Collins Publishers.

## Web Resources

Australian Native Plant Society.  
For guidance on growing native plants.  
<http://anpsa.org.au>

Bush Foods of NSW.  
A botanic record and an Aboriginal oral history.  
[www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au)

Birds in Backyards – Birds Australia.  
Resources for creating bird habitat.  
[www.birdsinbackyards.net](http://www.birdsinbackyards.net)

Grow Me Instead: A Guide for Gardeners on the NSW South Coast.  
[www.esc.nsw.gov.au/weeds/](http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/weeds/)

Common Coastal Weeds of the Illawarra – A Guide to Management and Control.  
Available from Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority or online at [www.southern.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.southern.cma.nsw.gov.au)

South Coast Weeds.  
[www.esc.nsw.gov.au/weeds](http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/weeds)

Frogs Australia Network.  
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## Books

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New Holland Publishers.

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Franks, A. and Franks, S. (2003) Nest Boxes for Wildlife: a Practical Guide. Bloomings Books.

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# How you can Assist in Protecting Local Native Flora and Fauna

- 🌱 Plant local native plants in your garden as much as possible
- 🌱 Remove environmental and noxious weeds from your garden
- 🌱 Don't feed native wildlife
- 🌱 Don't dump garden weeds in the bush or on road edges
- 🐈 Keep your cat indoors at night
- 🍲 Don't leave pet food outdoors
- 👤 Become a Bushcare or Landcare volunteer
- ♻️ Compost your garden waste at home
- ✂️ Prune off spent flowers on potential weeds before they set seed



*Inspired?! This booklet has a companion - check out the **GROW LOCAL: Illawarra Edible Garden Guide**, also available through Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong Councils.*