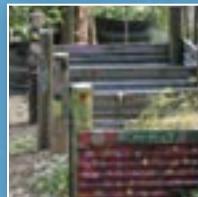




**City of
Whittlesea**

sustainable gardening IN WHITTLESEA





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City of Whittlesea is
committed to contributing
to the achievement of
sustainability within
Whittlesea and promoting
sustainability to others.



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INTRODUCTION

It is easy to create beautiful gardens that suit our local climate and soil and have a low impact on our natural environment. Sustainable gardens are low maintenance as they require less watering, lower application of fertilisers and chemicals, and less mowing and pruning.

Gardening can have a positive benefit to the health of our environment.
When we:

- Use local plants we provide food and shelter for birds and butterflies.
- Conserve water in the garden it helps to maintain water levels in our reservoirs.
- Reduce chemical use in the garden there will be less chemicals in our creeks and streams.
- Compost our household and garden organic waste it reduces the amount of waste going in to landfill and therefore cuts the amount of greenhouse gas produced.
- Purchase renewable resources for the garden instead of non-renewable resources, it can help protect our old growth forests and river ecosystems.

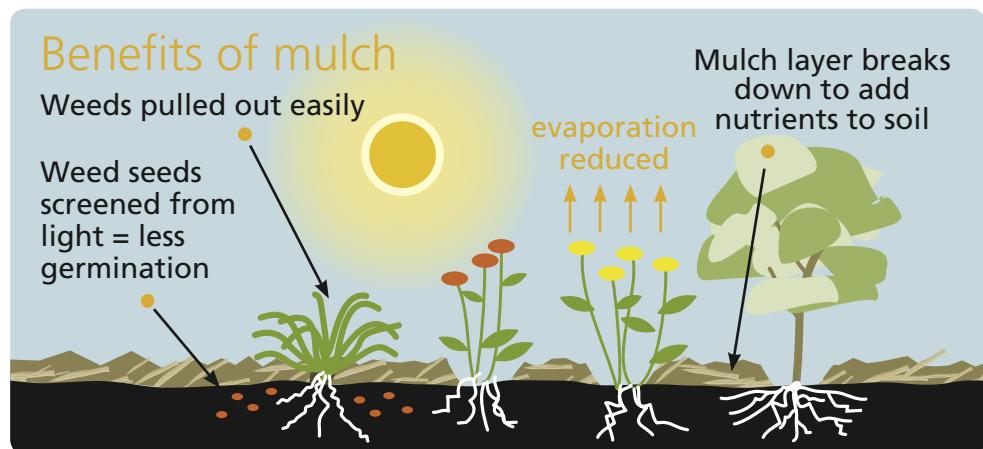


Showing the way to sustainable gardening.

Gardening is all about creating a beautiful environment. It is important that we create diverse and interesting gardens for our family and friends to come together to work, play and socialise. This booklet has been designed to provide information and inspiration to create your own sustainable garden in the City of Whittlesea.

CARING FOR YOUR SOIL

Healthy soil = healthy plants. Soil needs organic matter such as leaf litter, compost, manure and grass clippings. Worms break down organic matter to make food for plants, and worm burrows allow air into the soil so that plant roots can breathe. Organic matter needs to be replaced as plants absorb nutrients. Compost adds nutrients to the soil, improves water holding capacity and needs to be dug in. Mulch is placed on top of the soil to reduce water evaporation and control weed growth. If organic matter is mixed with mulch the material can “cake” up and form an impermeable barrier that rain can’t get through.



SOIL IMPROVEMENT TIPS

1. Mulches made from recycled organics are an excellent choice as they save water, last well and feed the soil when they break down. Locally produced clean greenwaste is taken to the Epping Greenwaste Recycling Facility where it is recycled into quality mulches, soils and composts for purchase. No chemicals are used in the processing or composting of the greenwaste.
For information on Council's greenwaste collection service please call 9401 0555.
2. Soil should be damp before you add mulch. Generally Spring is the best time to apply mulch, once the winter rains have soaked in.

3. Expansive clay soil in the Doreen region would benefit from the addition of gypsum and compost.
4. Pea straw is a good option if you have not mulched the soil for a long time as it breaks down quickly, returning nutrients to the soil.
5. Soil improvement (such as pea straw) is generally only required for exotic plants, vegetables and fruit trees. Most local and native plants like a relatively infertile soil. If you mulch, use a bark mulch on its own without soil improvement, or gravel as a mulch.
6. When buying new soil for your garden, buy a soil that is mixed with recycled organics or compost.



Don't forget to:

- Check mulch levels and replace every year to bring back to a minimum of 2.5cm and maximum of 7.5cm.
- Regularly add organic matter (e.g. compost, manure) to your soil.
- Use the best type of mulch for the plants in your garden.
- Check your garden for worms. Three or more worms found in a spade full of soil is a good indicator of healthy soil.
- Only dig your soil when you need to.

Further Information

Hodges, Jeff (1996) *The Natural Gardener*,
Angus & Robertson, Melbourne, Victoria.

Roads, M.J. (1989) *The Natural Magic of Mulch*,
Greenhouse Publications, Elwood, Victoria.

www.sgaonline.org.au

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

COMPOST AND WORMS – EASY AND FUN!

Composting or worm farming your food scraps, grass and garden clippings (organics) can provide you with an excellent source of free garden food and soil improver. In addition to creating great fertiliser, it reduces greenhouse gases, saves water and dramatically reduces the amount of waste going to landfill.

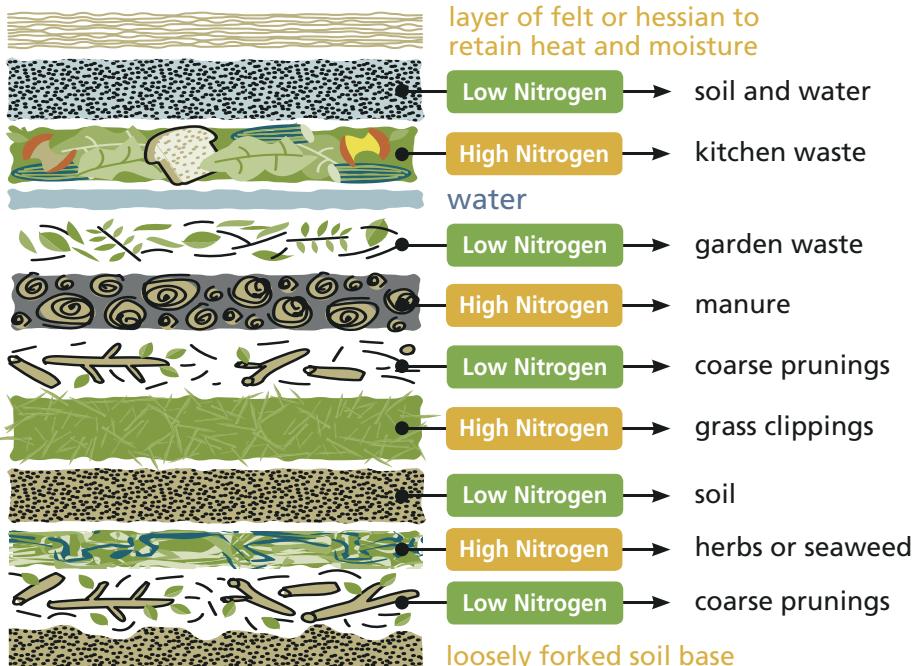
COMPOSTING TIPS

1. Your compost bin or heap should be located on soil, so that it drains well and worms and bacteria can enter the bin to decompose the waste.
2. a) All compost bins or heaps need a balance of materials that:
 - Are high in nitrogen, such as blood and bone, Dynamic Lifter or chicken manure. Kitchen scraps and grass clippings also contain nitrogen.
 - Contain carbon, such as dried leaves or shredded newspapers.
 - Aim for a ratio of 30 parts carbon : 1 part nitrogen.b) In addition, the compost heap or bin needs:
 - Water – enough so that the contents are moist but not wet.
 - Oxygen – added by regularly turning over the contents.
 - Warmth – locate your compost bin in a sunny place, but not with direct sunlight all day.
3. If you are left with half decomposed lumps in your compost add smaller pieces of food to the bin/heap to ensure it all decomposes evenly. Always crush eggshells.
4. Ants and slaters are an indication your heap is too dry. Add a sprinkling of water or less dry matter.
5. Meat scraps or fish bones can be added to compost, but only if its working efficiently and quickly. They are best avoided so not to encourage vermin, especially over summer.



Building a layered compost heap

This diagram is an example of the different layers (each 3-10 cm). Alternating kitchen and garden waste layers with an occasional layer of manure works well.



Add to your compost ✓

- fruit and vegetable scraps
- coffee grounds and tea bags
- egg shells and animal fur
- onions and cut up citrus fruit
- pizza and egg cartons
- vacuum cleaner dust
- pure cotton articles (cut up)
- grass clippings (3-4cm layers)
- cut up prunings
- weeds without seed heads
- blood and bone
- shredded newspaper
- small amounts of wood ash

Keep out of your compost ✗

- fish and meat
- cat and dog droppings; consider a pet poo worm farm instead
- big woody prunings
- bulbous weeds e.g. oxalis spp.
- weeds with runners e.g. couch grass
- bleached or glossy office paper
- pineapple tops
- avocado seeds

WORM FARMING

Keeping earthworms in containers and feeding them fruit and vegetable scraps is an excellent way to reduce your garbage. Worms produce a rich inexpensive garden fertiliser, called worm castings, that is great for your garden. Worm farms are ideal for people living in flats or houses with small backyards.

The City of Whittlesea offers residents subsidised compost bins and worm farms. Compost and worm farm workshops are also available through Council's Environment Events Program. Workshops aim to provide an introduction to the concept of composting and equip participants with the necessary skills to maintain their own compost or worm farm whilst learning about its environmental benefits.

Compost bins and worm farms can be purchased at the Council Offices or the Works Depot.



Further Information

Handrek, K. (2001) *Gardening Down Under*, CSIRO Publishing, East Melbourne, Victoria.

Taylor, D. (1999) *The Compost Book*, New Holland Publications, UK.

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au www.sgaonline.org.au

For more information regarding composting or worm farming, contact Council on 9401 0555 or email info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

CHEMICALS

Pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers can be transferred from our home gardens to the natural environment. Sprays can drift in the wind and powders wash into waterways. Strong pesticides and herbicides can kill native insects, plants and animals, while the application of too much fertiliser may lead to extra nutrients in our waterways, contributing to blue-green algae outbreaks harmful to animals and sometimes people.

CHEMICAL TIPS

1. Many insects in the garden such as ladybirds are good guys that will eat pests such as aphids. If you overuse chemicals you may also kill beneficial insects and make your pest problem harder to control.
2. Use natural alternatives such as pyrethrum and garlic spray to control pests (refer to the SGA website for recipes). Even natural alternatives should be used with care in controlled doses.
3. It is very rare that a pesticide or natural product will only target one bug/disease and can often effect other organisms.
4. Too much fertiliser makes plants produce a lot of leafy growth that often becomes a target for pests. This excessive growth also increases your greenwaste due to additional pruning.
5. Organic fertilisers such as compost, manures, seaweed and fish emulsion break down more slowly than synthetic (chemical) fertilisers and generally match the rate at which plants need the nutrients. Synthetic fertilisers break down quickly and can burn plant roots.
6. Organic fertilisers improve soil structure while synthetic fertilisers add nothing to the soil structure and tend to move easily from the soil after heavy rain or watering.
7. If a plant is sick do not add fertilisers as overfeeding can often put additional stress on it.



A local pond suffering from algae due to a high nutrient load from stormwater runoff.

Do you:

- Check your garden regularly for pest outbreaks?
- Know exactly what pest or disease you are trying to control?
- Use chemicals that have a low toxic level?
- Avoid using chemicals before it rains or on windy days?
- Use chemical alternatives (e.g. garlic sprays) or if you do use chemical sprays, target only the affected plant/s?
- Use organic fertilisers (compost, manure, seaweed and fish emulsions)?

**Further Information**

French, Jackie (1990) *Natural Control of Garden Pests*, Arid Books, Australia.

McMaugh, Judy (2000) *What Garden Pest or Disease Is That?*, New Holland Publications, Australia.

www.sgaonline.org.au

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au – Free Household Chemical Collection Program

SGA LOW ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CHEMICALS

Sustainable Gardening Australia, in conjunction with the University of Melbourne (Burnley), has rated all horticultural chemicals into three categories: low, medium and high environmental damage. SGA advocates non-chemical prevention such as monitoring for early outbreaks, good air circulation between plants and alternative home remedies such as garlic sprays. If you must use a chemical, please consider products that have a low environmental impact. Refer to the SGA website for a list of low environmental damage chemical products.



VEGETABLE GARDENING

Growing fruit and vegetables commercially uses a large amount of energy and chemicals for heating, cooling, spraying weeds and pests, and transporting produce. Fruit and vegetables begin to lose their vitamins as soon as they're picked. After five days some have lost 40–50% of the vitamins. Growing your own vegetables is so easy, and even easier if you've improved your soil. They're healthier, convenient and children love to watch them grow.



'NO DIG' VEGIE GARDENS

A 'no dig' garden is easy to set up and requires very low on-going maintenance. It can be built as a garden bed or in any container to any shape or size, save on water and fertiliser, and potentially recycle kitchen and garden waste.

HOW TO BUILD A NO DIG GARDEN ON EXISTING LAWN OR ONTO SOIL:

1. Mark out and form the walls. These should be at least 20cm high. You can use anything including old rocks, sleepers, bricks, blocks or pavers.
2. Line the base with a 3–5mm thickness of newspaper to suppress weeds; and wet thoroughly.
3. Then stack alternating layers of fine and coarse compostable materials. For example, start with a layer of pea straw, then a thin layer of cow manure, a layer of compost, and repeat the layers finishing with a thick compost layer.
4. Planting can be done into the top compost layer. Trowel a small hole to fit the seedlings in and plant. Water in well. The plant will eventually establish a strong root system in its nutritional base.
5. As the seedlings grow and the layers rot down, top up with more layers of manure and compost.
6. Mulch around your seedlings well with a pea straw and dig this into the soil as it rots down, before topping the mulch up.

You can also build a no dig garden in a large container, simply do the same as above, but omit step 1.

HOW TO BUILD A NO DIG GARDEN ON A SEALED SURFACE:

1. Mark out the size of the beds and construct the sides. If using bricks, sleepers or other rectangular shaped materials, make sure you leave some gaps for drainage. The walls should be at least 50 cm high.
2. Place a 7–10mm layer of coarse screenings or scoria at the base for drainage.
3. Layer the materials as listed above.
4. Plant the bed.
5. Top up layers as they rot down.

ORGANIC PRODUCE TIPS

1. Most fruit and vegetables grow well in the full sun with plenty of water, organic fertiliser and compost.
2. Don't use treated pine in vegetable gardens as the chemicals in the timber can leach into the soil.
3. Use recycled plastic sleepers or recycled bricks to make raised beds. These will not rot.
4. Rotate the position of vegetables in your garden every year to stop diseases from spreading.
5. You will need to apply water regularly to your vegetable garden, so consider installing a rain water tank.
6. Regularly check for pests, especially snails on new seedlings.
7. Use low impact alternatives (such as pyrethrum and garlic sprays) at recommended doses to control pests.
8. Use heritage seeds for more variety and often superior flavour.
9. You can plant early, mid and late season tomatoes.



VEGETABLE AND HERB PLANTING GUIDE:

Warm season vegetables and herbs are generally planted out in spring, cool season in autumn. The following is a planting guide for some of the most popular vegetables and herbs.

Warm season: Basil, Beans, Capsicum, Carrots, Cauliflower, Chilli, Chives, Cucumber, Eggplant, Lettuce, Parsley, Potato, Pumpkin, Spinach, Strawberry, Sweet Corn, Tomato and Zucchini.

Cool season: Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Coriander, Garlic, Leek, Lettuce, Onions, Peas and Spinach.

Further Information

Blazey, Clive (1999) *The Australian Vegetable Book: What's New Is Old*, New Holland Publications, Australia.

French, Jackie (1993) *Backyard Self-Sufficiency*, Arid Books, Australia.

www.sgaonline.org.au



WATER IN THE GARDEN

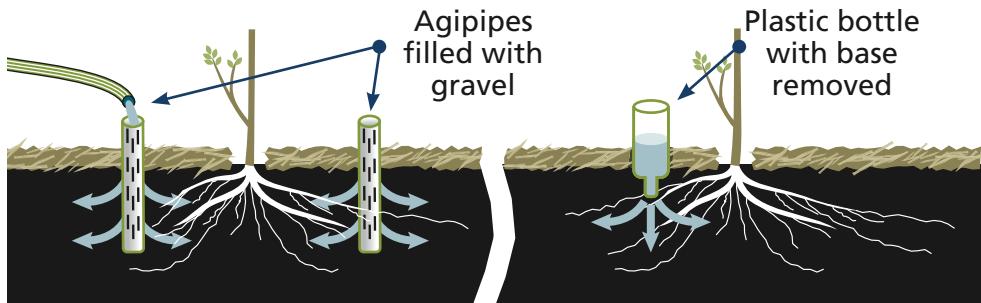
Australia is one of the driest continents on earth and each year our fresh water storages are depleted due to reduced annual rainfalls and increased per capita water consumption. In Melbourne, it has been predicted that our water demands will exceed our supply within 15 years. Water use in the garden is a major contributor to high water consumption levels throughout the City of Whittlesea. By improving the soil and using alternative water sources for the garden such as rain water collected in tanks, storm water directed into the garden, grey water, installing efficient irrigation systems and good garden design, significant water savings can be made.



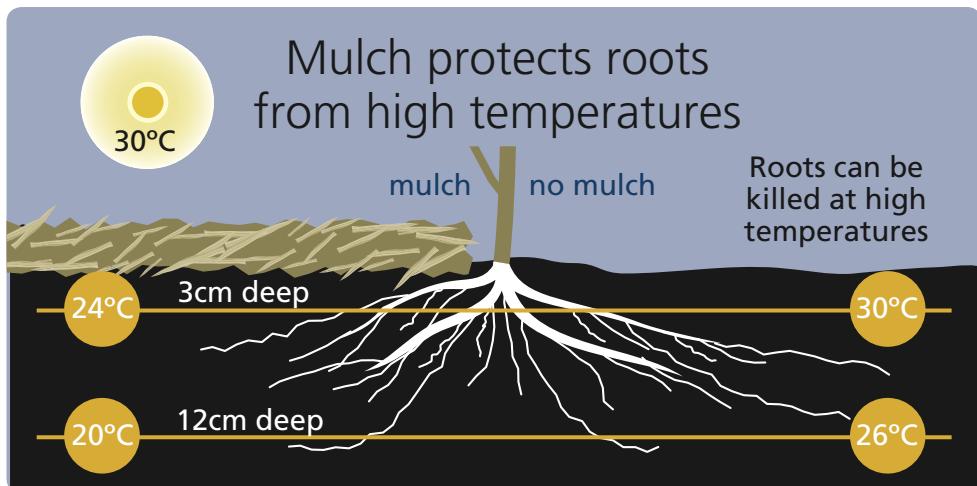
WATER TIPS

1. Plant local native indigenous plants or other non weed, drought tolerant species and lawn to reduce water use and maintenance.
2. Water the base of plants, not the leaves and use mulch to reduce evaporation and run-off.
3. Use a drip watering system or porous hose which cuts wastage by ensuring that the water only goes where it is needed.
4. Avoid micro-sprays. They waste up to 70% water through drift and evaporation and if the soil is mulched, water will not penetrate the soil.

Watering: Deep watering of trees/large shrubs delivers water slowly to the roots and encourages deep roots.



5. Check and clean your irrigation system every Spring. An efficient irrigation system can save up to 46,000 litres of water in your garden a year.
6. Position irrigation systems so that water isn't wasted on paths, patios, driveways and buildings.
7. Install garden tap timers to reduce over-watering.
8. Use a rain sensor in your garden so that watering doesn't occur automatically when it is wet.
9. Check the weather forecast to avoid watering before rain.
10. Stop water evaporating before it reaches your plant roots by watering in the late evening.
11. Use a trigger hose to ensure you don't waste water while moving around the garden. Always turn it off at the tap when you have finished in case the hose starts to leak.
12. Don't over water your garden and lawn – train it to use less water by watering less often but more thoroughly. This will encourage the roots to grow deeper.
13. Set your mower level higher during summer and let the lawn grow longer.
14. Use soil wetting agents to hold water in the soil longer and closer to the plants.



15. Install a grey water system or a rainwater tank for garden watering. Use an inverted soft drink bottle to give slow constant watering to annuals, ferns and roses.
16. Plant wind breaks to reduce the wind's drying effects on your garden and group together plants with similar watering needs.
17. Remove weeds regularly as they compete for water with your plants and lawns.

BE INFORMED ABOUT WATER RESTRICTIONS

Details on current Water Restrictions and Permanent Water Saving Rules can be found at www.yvw.com.au/ or call Yarra Valley Water on 131 721

RAINWATER TANKS

A rainwater tank is a good way to reduce the amount of mains (drinking) water used on your garden. Collecting rainwater from the roof will provide water for the garden that is not subject to the same restrictions as mains water.

Rainwater tanks can also be used to directly supply water to the bathroom, laundry and kitchen. If mains water is connected to a rainwater tank the water must be used in compliance with current water restrictions for garden use.

The ideal tank size will depend on what the water will be used for, the size of your roof and local rainfall patterns. The larger the tank the more expensive it will be, and obviously the more room it needs.

A smaller tank might be enough to provide 'opportunity' water for occasional use, but is not likely to last through the summer. For greater certainty of supply, and to reduce your water use overall, a larger tank is needed. A tank holding 3000 litres or more is ideal for summer watering. Also consider whether a pump will be needed to move water around your garden, as there will be less water pressure coming from a rainwater tank.



Reducing your garden's overall water demand through mulching, careful species selection, and only watering plants according to their needs is still essential. These actions will help to reduce the watering needed, ensuring that the water you collect lasts longer.

Council encourages residents to install rainwater tanks, provided they meet plumbing, building and safety regulations, and comply with any planning controls. If you would like to install a rainwater tank, it is always best to contact your local Council to determine whether a building or planning permit is required. Requirements may vary between Councils.

A licensed plumber is needed to alter downpipes and gutters, install pumps and fixtures, and connect the tank overflow to the stormwater drainage system. If the rainwater tank connects with the mains water supply, properly fitted backflow devices must also be installed by a plumber. Seek clarification of regulations from the Plumbing Industry Commission if unsure. Visit www.pic.vic.gov.au for more information.

Victorian Government rebates are available to cover some of the costs of installing rainwater tanks. Conditions apply. Contact your local water retailer for further information or visit www.yvw.com.au (search for water rebates).

Further Information

*Van Dok, Wendy, (2002) *The Water Efficient Garden: A Guide to Sustainable Landscaping in Australia*, Water-efficient Gardenscapes, Glen Waverley, Victoria.*

*Walsh, Kevin (2004) *Waterwise Gardening*, Reed Books, Melbourne, Victoria.*

www.sgaonline.org.au

www.savewater.com.au

www.epa.vic.gov.au

www.yvw.com.au

www.ourwater.vic.gov.au

www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

www.greenplumbers.com.au

www.pic.vic.gov.au

www.buildingcommission.com.au,



GREYWATER

Greywater is domestic wastewater, excluding toilet waste. Providing care is taken with the products used (eg. Low phosphorous and sodium washing powders) grey water from the laundry (rinse cycles) and bathroom can be used directly in the garden. Untreated greywater can be diverted on a temporary basis to sites within your garden. It can contain a number of micro-organisms such as bacteria and viruses, as well as chemicals from cleaning agents. The continual discharge of greywater can potentially cause problems for your garden.

A subsurface trench is one option for applying diverted greywater. Slotted stormwater pipe placed in the trench, and covered with gravel assists in conveying the water along the length of the trench. An alternative is to collect greywater in a bucket and apply the water to areas of greatest need.

By carefully choosing products you use inside the house such as soaps, detergents and shampoo, you will increase your opportunities for using greywater. Detailed information on laundry product research can be found at www.lanfaxlabs.com.au. To avoid potential health risks greywater from the bathroom and laundry must be collected and used according to EPA and Council regulations.

For further information on greywater recycling contact Council's Health Department on 9217 2298 or email publichealth@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Do:

- ✓ Only use wastewater from baths, showers, hand basins and washing machines (final rinse water).
- ✓ Only use greywater on the garden and rotate the areas you water.
- ✓ Only apply water that the soil can absorb.
- ✓ Wash your hands after watering with greywater.

Don't:

- ✗ Water vegetable gardens if the crop is to be eaten raw.
- ✗ Use greywater that has any faecal contamination, for example wastewater used to launder nappies.
- ✗ Use kitchen wastewater (including dishwashers) due to high concentration of food wastes and chemicals.
- ✗ Store greywater for more than 24 hours.
- ✗ Let children or pets drink or play with greywater.
- ✗ Allow greywater to flow from your property or enter stormwater systems.

STOP:

- ✗ Using greywater during wet periods.
- ✗ Using greywater if odours are generated and plants do not appear to be healthy.

Further Information

- www.epa.vic.gov.au
- www.sgaonline.org.au
- www.lanfaxlabs.com.au
- www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

GARDEN DESIGN

Many gardens still maintain the traditional layout which came from English gardens many years ago. This includes a paved sitting area, large open lawn and flowerbeds of exotic plants around the outside. Today, our busy lifestyles often prevent us from spending time in the garden. They are also becoming smaller with children tending to spend more time inside. Interior design, architecture, cars and fashion change to suit new lifestyles. It's time gardens did too.

To design a sustainable garden you need to take time to work out how to create a space you feel comfortable with, enjoy and suits your local soil and climate.

GARDEN DESIGN TIPS

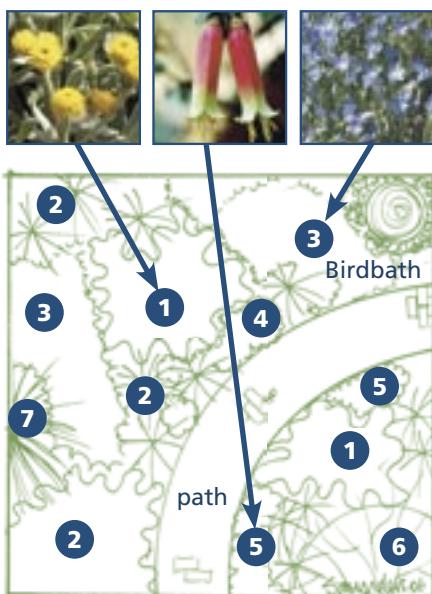
1. Find a style you like which suits your garden so all the paving, pots, water features and plants match, especially in a courtyard garden.
2. Do a site analysis. Focus on soil quality, sun, shade, privacy and fire risk potential. This will tell you what your site will let you do.
3. List what you need (shed, washing line, kids' swings, entertainment area) and what you want (vegie garden, shade area, pond, fruit tree/s).
4. Develop a scaled plan or mark out in the garden what will go where. Consider locations that are practical and look good.
5. If your block is on a slope consider building a retaining wall or contouring your garden to prevent water and mulch runoff.
6. Make garden beds bigger and lawns smaller.
7. If you have a fine lawn grass such as fescue you can mow the lawn low, cover with 8–10 sheets of newspaper (overlapping), add 10–15cm of pea straw on top, wait 3–4 months and then plant directly into it. This must be done when the soil is moist and all the grass has died.

Running grasses such as Couch or Kikuyu will not be eliminated by newspaper and mulch. They are very tough grasses to remove and you can try one of three methods:

- Cover with a sheet of clear plastic for several weeks in hot weather so that the grass effectively cooks.
- Mow the lawn area you wish to remove on the lowest mower setting and then dig out the remaining root system.
- Apply herbicide.

COTTAGE GARDEN

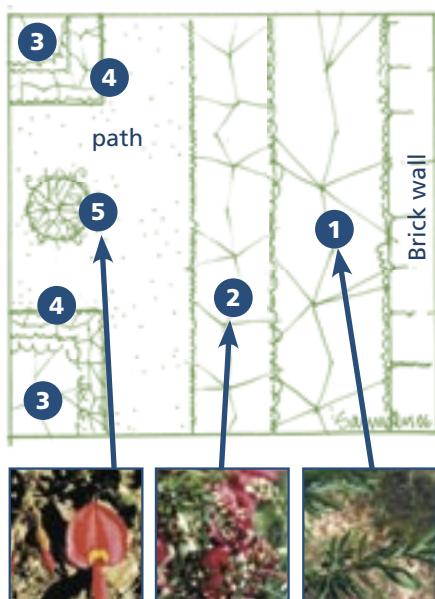
The cottage garden look is easily achieved with local plants and the addition of a few other native plants. Unlike the traditional cottage garden, this garden can look interesting and colourful all year round, and it's drought tolerant. Tufted Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia communis*) looks delightful growing with the grey-leaved Common Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*).



- 1 Yellow Buttons (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)
- 2 Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*)
- 3 Tufted Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia communis*)
- 4 Cut-leaf Daisy (*Brachyscome multifida*)
- 5 Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*)
- 6 Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*)
- 7 Common Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*)

FORMAL GARDEN

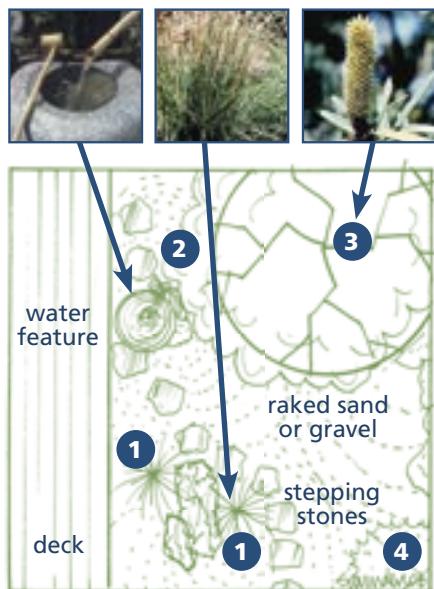
Some local plants can be grown into neat clipped hedges and shapes to complement the straight lines of a formal garden. These gardens require a bit more maintenance but at least the plants chosen can be drought tolerant. The local shrub Tree Violet (*Hymenanthera dentata*), for example, can be pruned to create a formal hedge. In front, Rosemary Grevillea (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*) forms a lower hedge, to create a tiered effect.



- 1 Tree Violet (*Hymenanthera dentata*)
- 2 Rosemary Grevillea (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*)
- 3 Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*)
- 4 Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*)
- 5 Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*), growing in an urn

JAPANESE-STYLED GARDEN

The sculptural and minimal look of a Japanese Garden creates a quiet, thoughtful place. There are many local and native plants that work very well and sit beautifully with Japanese sculptural elements. Clumps of the Common Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*), for example, look dramatic in a gravel garden with feature rocks, such as shown here. Whilst a Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) growing in a lawn of Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) can be a sculptural element.



1 Common Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*)

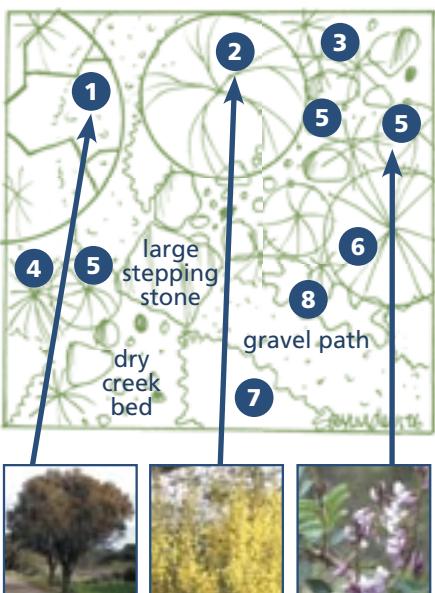
2 Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) lawn

3 Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*)

4 Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*)

INFORMAL NATURAL GARDENS

The famous Australian bush garden has a relaxed easy-care feel about it. Here a meandering path crosses a dry creek bed. These gardens are a haven for wildlife and a great refuge for humans. With a bit of planning, you can ensure there is something in flower almost all year round.



1 Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*)

2 Gold Dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*)

3 Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*)

4 Common Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*)

5 Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*)

6 River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*)

7 Tufted Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia communis*)

8 Yellow Buttons (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)

Have you:

- Planned for sun / shade, slope and soil variation of your property?
- Developed a rough planting plan that groups plants according to their water, sun and soil needs?
- Designed your garden for low water use?
- Thought about the amount of waste (e.g. lawn clippings and prunings) generated by your garden and identified ways for managing it on site (composting or mulching)?
- Replaced concrete with gravel to allow more water to soak in (creating a permeable surface) to the ground?
- Thought about how you want to use your garden (ie. playspace, socialising) and designed for these uses?

Further Information

Patrick, John (1994) *Beautiful Gardens with Less Water*, Lothian Books, Melbourne.

Snape, Diana (2002) *The Australian Garden*, Bloomings Books, Melbourne

Browse through the library.



HABITAT GARDENING

Attracting native animals to your garden can add extra colour and interest. It can assist pest control by attracting insect predators and contribute to keeping native animal populations viable by providing a pathway for them to commute between bushland areas. All you have to do is provide your garden visitors with food, water and shelter.

BIRDS

Birds are beautiful creatures that are a joy to watch in any garden. In addition, many birds feed on plant pests such as aphids and scale, contributing to non-chemical pest control in the garden! To attract birds to your garden consider the following points.

Shelter: birds need shelter from predators such as cats and predatory birds. Help protect your feathered visitors by providing prickly or dense plants at various levels in your garden.

Water: a reliable water source, particularly in summer will attract birds to your garden. If you install a birdbath, place it near dense or prickly plants to provide birds with protection from predators.

Food: Small birds – Silvereyes, Blue Wrens, Finches, Fantails and Thornbills forage in the lower levels of the garden. They feed on insects and help to keep plant pest numbers down. Native grasses such as Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardierei*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) and Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia* spp.) provide an important source of food for grass seed eating birds such as Red-browed Finches and Crested Pigeons.



Adult male Superb Fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*).



Pale Everlasting (*Helichrysum rutidolepis*).

Honey Eating birds – Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds and Spinebills are specialist nectar feeders. They use their brush-like tongues to collect nectar from the flowers of Melaleucas, Correas (*Correa reflexa* or *C.glabra*), and Silver Banksias (*Banksia marginata*). They also like to eat insects as a source of protein.

Parrots – Crimson and Eastern Rosellas feed on Eucalypt flowers and seeds, while Cockatoos and Galahs prefer the seeds of Hakeas (*Hakea nodosa*), Callistemon (*Callistemon sieberi*) and Eucalypts (*Eucalyptus radiata* or *E.ovata*). Red-rump grass parrots feed on grass seeds.

Large birds – Magpies, Kookaburras and Butcherbirds feed on larger insects, small lizards and skinks.



Crimson Rosella (Platycercus elegans).

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies are a welcome addition to any garden and with a few simple design principles are easily attracted.

Nectar traps: Colourful, massed flower beds draw butterflies in and keep them happily moving through the garden. They are attracted to a large range of coloured flowers, in particular blue, yellow and red.

Flowers: Simple, flat flowers make it easier for butterflies to extract nectar. Double flowers (multiple layers of petals) are difficult for butterflies to feed from, but simple flowers like Daisies, Pelargoniums (*Pelargonium australe*), Bluebells (*Wahlenbergia communis*), Saltbush plants (*Atriplex cincinnata*), and Pea flowers (*Bossiaea prostrata*) are more suitable.



*Common Brown Butterfly
(Heteronympha merope).*

Position: Butterflies use the early morning sun to warm themselves and retreat to cooler, shadier places during the heat of the day. Providing a sheltered position that combines warmth and protection is ideal. Also consider adding flat rocks for butterflies to bask and to court each other. Mud puddles or a dish of damp sand can provide them with water and salts.

Host plants: Incorporate host plants for butterflies to lay eggs. Caterpillars are generally small and shy, and won't devastate the garden. Popular indigenous plants include Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Mat rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), and grasses such as Kangaroo Grass, Wallaby Grass and Tussock Grass.

LIZARDS

Most lizards found in the garden are little Grass Skinks that feed on insects and larvae. You may be fortunate enough to encounter a larger lizard such as a Blue-tongue or Shingleback, but these beautiful creatures are not as common as they used to be.

To create lizard habitat in your garden, provide the following:

- Tussock grass and hiding spots between rocks and logs for protection.
- A protected sunny spot on a rock, log or brick path.
- Natural leaf mulch to support the insects and larvae they feed on.



Common Blue-tongue Lizard (*Tiliqua scincoides*).

Where possible avoid using snail bait as Blue-tongue lizards will eat the poisoned snails.

FROGS

What could be more interesting than a frog garden? Watching tadpoles grow into frogs and then being serenaded by their calls at night. Frogs also help control pests in your garden as they eat flies, mosquitoes, slugs, snails and even spiders.

In order to enjoy frogs in your garden you will need to provide a pond with certain features, but you'll also need to live near a frog population to attract them from.



Juvenile Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*).

A frog pond can incorporate one or all of the requirements for each part of the frogs' lifecycle:

- Damp bog zone for adult frogs.
- Shallow water zone for laying eggs.
- Deep zone of at least 30cm for tadpoles.

Your frog garden should also have:

- Soft, thick vegetation that droops into the water, for shelter and protection.
- Rocks, logs, bark and leaf litter.
- Mostly shade.
- Sloping sides for frogs to crawl out.
- Been made from non-toxic materials (concrete ponds will need to be sealed and plastic ponds be made of food-grade plastic).
- Food plants for tadpoles (and they will eat them, so don't put your prize waterlily in there).

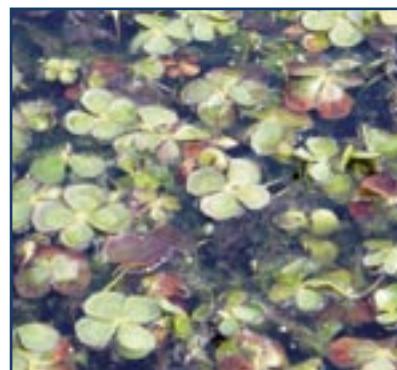
Frog-friendly plants:

Grasses – Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), Weeping Grass (*Microleana stipoides*) or Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia* spp.).

Tufting plants – Pale Rush (*Juncus pallidus*) or Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*).

Bog plants – Soft Water Fern (*Blechnum minus*), Thatch Saw-sedge (*Gahnia radula*), Knobby Club-rush (*Isolepis nodosa*), Grassy Mat-rush (*Lomandra confertifolia*), Tassel Cord Rush (*Restio tetraphyllum*), Blue Devil (*Eryngium ovinum*) and Milky-beauty Heads (*Leucocephalus lacteus*).

Water plants – Common Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Tassel Sedge (*Carex fascicularis*), Jointed Twig-rush (*Baumea articulata*) and Water Ribbons (*Triglochin procerum*).



Common Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*).

Things to avoid:

- Fish – most fish will eat tadpoles.
- Fountain pumps – tadpoles and eggs can be killed by them.
- Cats and dogs – protect the frog area of your garden with sharp, spiky plants.
- Chemicals – frogs eat insects, so you don't want to spray them. Frogs are very sensitive to chemicals which can be absorbed through their thin skin.
- Allowing floating plants such as Duckweed or Azolla to cover the top of the pond. This can result in reduced oxygen levels for tadpoles.
- Cleaning out the pond too often – tadpoles need some material to be breaking down in the pond water to provide food for them.
- Collecting tadpoles from the wild is illegal in most parts of Australia.



*Striped Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes peronii*).*

MAMMALS

As the human population grows urban development has replaced natural habitat. Our unique native animals have either adapted or suffered a dramatic decline due to loss of habitat, traditional food, disruption of breeding cycles or become victims of road kill. While you may be incredibly lucky to encounter a koala or echidna, you are more likely to have possums and bats as regular visitors.

Possums: Common Brush Tail and Ringtail Possum populations have adapted magnificently to the urban environment. With an abundance of highly nutritious food and great nesting sites in the roofs of buildings, their populations are higher in the urban areas than in the bush.

If possums are becoming a problem you may try the following techniques recommended by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE):



*Common Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*).*

- Build a floppy fence around the garden. Use 80cm wide, heavily galvanised chicken wire, bury the bottom 20cm and support the remainder on vertical lengths of flexible, high-tensile fencing wire. Bend the wire to curve the upper section outwards. When the possum attempts to climb the fence it will bend over and then spring back.
- Use collars to protect fruit trees.
- Repellents – recent tests showed none of 15 repellent compounds effectively prevented possums damaging ornamental trees or fruit (further information on repellents available on the DSE website).

If on the other hand you would like to attract possums, or particularly the more vulnerable animals such as the Sugar Glider to your garden, you could plant Banksias, Callistemons, Wattles, Teatrees and Eucalypts. Put in some appropriate nesting boxes to provide a safe, warm haven. It is important not to feed wildlife as human food can be dangerous and cause serious dietary imbalance.

Bats: Although the fruit eating Grey-headed Flying-fox is less than welcome in some areas, there are many beautiful little insectivorous bats in the Whittlesea area. Bats such as the Chocolate Wattled bat, Lesser Long-eared bat and the White-striped Freetail bat. These are about the size of a mouse and eat enormous quantities of insects each night. They hunt near the ground and can often be seen at night swooping around street lights catching insects. They roost in tree hollows with narrow openings, tree stumps, under eaves and in roofs.

Have you:

- Provided a reliable source of water for wildlife?
- Planted a few prickly or dense plants to provide shelter?
- Planted a selection of butterfly attracting plants?
- Reduced the use of pesticides in the garden to provide birds and small bats with a safe food source?
- Secured domestic pets (cats and dogs) especially at night, so they don't prey on native animals?
- Got the telephone number of a wildlife rescue service in the glove box of your car?

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit www.dse.vic.gov.au for fact sheets on 'Swooping Birds', 'Living with Possums' and 'Possum Repellents'

Help for Wildlife

www.pearcedale.com/helpforwildlife/ Ph: 0417 380 687

Wildlife Victoria

www.wildlifevictoria.org.au Ph: 0500 540 000

Flora for Fauna

www.floraforfauna.com.au

Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~iffa/>

Birds in Backyards

www.birdsinbackyards.net/

Nesting boxes

Keelbundoora Indigenous Nursery: Ph: 9479 2871



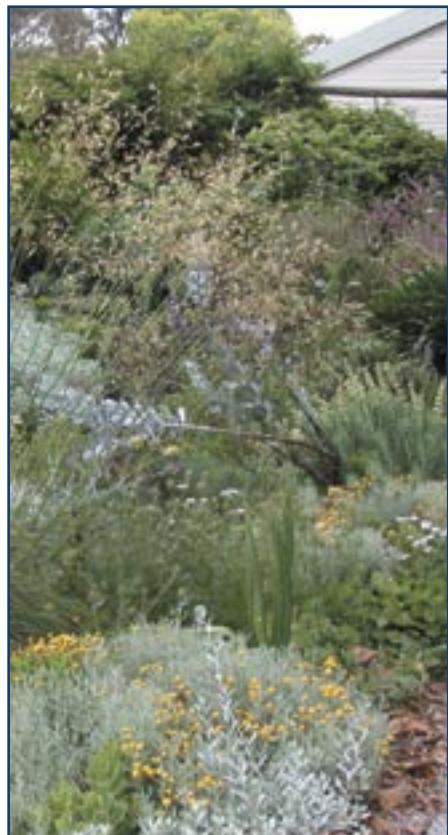
PLANT SELECTION

Factors that will guide plant selection for your garden include soil type, drainage patterns, aspect (i.e. full sun, part shade, and shade) and local climate. Plants need to be grouped together according to their sun/shade, water and fertiliser needs. If you mix your plants you can be forever replacing dead plants. Visit a garden centre to find a plant to suit the position you have in mind, not the other way round.

It is best to use local (indigenous) plants wherever possible because they are well suited to the local soil and climate. They do not require large amounts of nutrients and, once established, little water. There are many beautiful plants local to the City of Whittlesea. Many of these offer shelter and are important food sources for local birds, insects, reptiles and animals (refer to the *Whittlesea Local Plants* section of this booklet).

You should always avoid using plants that are known environmental weeds. Two thirds of the weeds found in Victoria's natural environment (parks, and along waterways and coasts) are actually 'garden escapees'. Their seeds are spread from gardens by the wind, birds and animals or by people dumping garden cuttings into the bush and waterways. Weeds compete with our local plants for light, nutrients and water. Before too long they can replace local plants, leaving native animals without food or habitat.

As gardeners we need to know which plants can escape. Consider removing and replacing potential garden escapees as there are many beautiful local plants that make great alternatives. For more information on noxious and environmental weeds, contact the City's Sustainability Planning Department on 9217 2493 or visit the Sustainable Gardening Australia website.



PLANT TIPS

1. The ideal time to plant is autumn, followed by early spring. Avoid planting in summer.
2. Fast growing plants (e.g. jasmine, variegated pittosporum) are appealing at first as screening plants because they grow very quickly and fill a space. However, they keep on growing and become high maintenance plants producing large amounts of green waste from regular pruning. It's better to wait for slower growing plants to reach the height you want.
3. There is a native or indigenous tree to suite gardens of all sizes. They provide shade, can provide fruit, leaves for mulch, habitat for wildlife, produce oxygen and use up carbon dioxide.
4. Native, indigenous and exotics can be used together to create successful gardens, but care is needed at the planning stage.
5. Mulch prunings or take them to the Greenplanet Epping Greenwaste Recycling Facility.

Refer to the list of nurseries stocking indigenous plants suitable for the City of Whittlesea on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Have you thought about:

- Grouping your plants according to their water, sun and nutrient needs?
- Introducing indigenous vegetation to your garden (see Whittlesea Local Plants section pp 32-37)?
- Reducing your lawn area to less than 50% of your total garden area?
- Establishing at least one shade tree of suitable size for your garden?
- Attracting native birds, reptiles, insects and animals to your garden?

Further Information

Blood, Kate (2001), *Environmental Weeds: A Field Guide for SE Australia*, Bloomings Books, Victoria.

Costermans, L.F (1933) *Native Trees and Shrubs of South-eastern Australia*, Lansdowne Publishing Pty Ltd, Sydney.

Scott, Rob et al. (2002) *Indigenous Plants of the Sandbelt: A Gardening Guide for South-east Melbourne*, Bloomings Books, Melbourne.

Society for Growing Australian Plants, Maroondah Inc. (2001) *Flora of Melbourne: A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area*, Hyland House, Melbourne.

For a copy of the following Council publications please contact the Sustainability Planning Unit on 9217 2195 or email sustainability@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

- *List of Indigenous Plant Species*
- *Indigenous Greening*

www.sgaonline.org.au

www.weeds.org.au

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/weeds

www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*)



WHITTLESEA LOCAL PLANTS

The following list of species make great plants for gardens in the City of Whittlesea as they grow within the municipality naturally and provide habitat for native wildlife. See the list of nurseries stocking plants indigenous to Whittlesea on the back cover of this booklet. For further indigenous plant species, please refer to City of Whittlesea publications *Indigenous Greening* and *List of Indigenous Plants found in the City of Whittlesea*.

☀️ = Full Sun
 ☀️☁️ = Part Shade
 ☁️ = Shade
💧 = Drought Tolerant
 💧💧 = Needs seasonal water
 ↑ = Height
 ↔ = Width
HHH = Suitable as hedge

GROUNDCOVERS and WILDFLOWERS



Black Anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⬤ ↑80cm ↔ 50 cm.
Well-drained soil.

Features: Hardy, easily maintained plant. Ideal for growing close to trees. Butterfly attracting.



Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⬤ ↑40cm ↔ 30cm.
Well-drained soil.

Features: Beautiful in mass plantings.
Plants die back to tuberous rootstock in dry weather to re-shoot in autumn.



Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⬤ ↑70cm ↔ 50cm.
Well-drained soil. Adaptable to most soils.

Features: Chocolate-scented flowers brighten a rockery. Beautiful in mass plantings. Can be planted as bedding plants.



Common Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)

Requirements: ☀️ 💧 ↓ 20cm ↔ 1m.

Well-drained soil.

Features: An excellent rockery plant with contrasting silver foliage. Prune regularly to encourage new growth.



Creeping Bossiaea (*Bossiaea prostrata*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ prostrate ↔ 1.5m.

Well-drained soil.

Features: Matting groundcover. Grows well under other plants.



Kidney Plant (*Dichondra repens*)

Requirements: ☁️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ prostrate ↔ 30cm.

Well-drained soil.

Features: An excellent lawn substitute in moist shady areas where traffic is light.



Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ prostrate ↔ 2m.

Accepts most soils, but avoid poor drainage.

Features: Attractive as a groundcover, in tubs, hanging baskets, cascading over rocks, walls and under trees. Insect and bird attracting.



Tufted Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia communis*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ 30cm ↔ 15cm.

Moist, well-drained soil.

Features: Looks great in containers or when planted amongst grasses. Butterfly attracting.





CLIMBERS



Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☔️ ↓ prostrate or climber ↔ 3m
Well-drained soil.

Features: Climbing plant useful as a screening plant.
Grows well in pots.



GRASSES, RUSHES & SEDGES



Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☔️ ↓ 50cm ↔ 40cm
Adaptable to most soils.

Features: Habitat for insects, lizards and birds.
Butterfly attracting.



Common Tussock (*Poa labillardieri*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☔️ ↓ 50cm ↔ 30cm
Adapts to moist or slightly dry soil.

Features: Fast-growing grass. Lawn alternative. Attractive contrasting plant.



Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☔️ ☔️ ↓ 80cm ↔ 50cm
Well-drained soil, tolerating dry shade.

Features: Excellent contrasting plant with its bright green strappy leaves. Grows well under established trees.



Wallaby Grasses (*Austrodanthonia* spp.)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☔️ ↓ 30-80cm ↔ 80cm
Well-drained soil.

Features: Excellent contrast plant in landscaping.
Can make an excellent lawn if mown infrequently.



AQUATIC & SEMI-AQUATIC ✓

Tall Sedge

(*Carex appressa*)

Requirements: ☀️ ⚡ ⚡ ⚡ ↓ 70cm ↔ 50cm

Moist to wet soils.

Features: Slow-growing, tough sedge with attractive leaves.



Common Nardoo

(*Marsilea drummondii*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ↓ 5cm ↔ 30cm

Boggy soil, subject to inundation.

Shallow water no deeper than 30cm.

Features: Attractive in a pond.



Water Milfoil

(*Myriophyllum crispatum*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ↓ 25cm ↔ 50cm

Moist to wet soils.

Features: Robust plant particularly attractive when submerged.



SHRUBS (up to 4m) ✓

Austral Indigo

(*Indigofera australis*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ☁️ ⚡ ↓ 2m ↔ 2m

Well-drained soil. Lime tolerant.

Features: Responds well to regular pruning. Butterfly attracting.



Gold Dust Wattle

(*Acacia acinacea*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⚡ HHH ↓ 2m ↔ 2m

Adaptable to most soils.

Features: A good low screening plant. Suitable for large pots/tubs. Bird attracting.





Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⚡ HHH ↓ 2m ↔ 1m

Prefers damp soil.

Features: Fast-growing.
Responds well to pruning.



River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⚡ HHH ↓ 3m+ ↔ 2m

Adaptable to many soils.

Excellent choice for heavy clay soil.

Features: Excellent screening shrub.
Pruning encourages flowering.
Butterfly and bird attracting.



Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⚡ HHH ↓ 1.5m ↔ 2m

Well-drained soil.

Features: Attractive small shrub that establishes well under existing trees. Bird attracting.



Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⚡ HHH ↓ 4m+ ↔ 2m

Moist to wet soil.

Features: An attractive shrub responding well to pruning. Useful in wet garden areas.



Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*)

Requirements: ☀️ ☁️ ⚡ ↓ 3m+ ↔ 2m

Well-drained soil.

Features: Clusters of attractive bronze seed capsules follow flowering. Easily grown.
Butterfly food plant.



**Tree Violet****(*Hymenanthera dentata*)****Requirements:** ☀️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ 3m ↔ 1.5m

Well-drained soil.

Features: Violet coloured berries that are bird and possum attracting.**TREES (over 4m)****Blackwood****(*Acacia melanoxylon*)****Requirements:** ☀️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ 7m+ ↔ 5m

Prefers deep moist soil, but adaptable.

Will tolerate dry conditions once established.

Features: A long-lived tree providing good screening and shade.**Drooping Sheoak****(*Allocasuarina verticillata*)****Requirements:** ☀️ 💧 ↓ 7m+ ↔ 4m

Well-drained soil.

Features: A graceful tree, excellent as a screening plant. The golden effect of the small flowers is an attractive feature of this tree.**Silver Banksia****(*Banksia marginata*)****Requirements:** ☀️ ☁️ 💧 ↓ 1-10m+ ↔ 1-5m

Well-drained soil.

Features: Bushy forms make excellent screening plants.

NATIVE PLANT LIST



These plants are all low water users.

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	FORM	CONDITIONS
Common Maidenhair Fern	<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Fern	
Cranberry Heath	<i>Astroloma humifusum</i>	Groundcover	
Creeping Saltbush	<i>Atriplex semibaccata</i>	Groundcover	
Common Apple Berry	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>	Climber	
Basalt Daisy	<i>Brachyscome basaltica</i>	Wildflower	
Blue Pincushions	<i>Brunonia australis</i>	Wildflower	
Milkmaids	<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	Wildflower	
Blue Grass-lily	<i>Caesia calliantha</i>	Wildflower	
Lemon Beauty-heads	<i>Calocephalus (Leucocephalus) citreus</i>	Wildflower	
Rock Fern	<i>Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia</i>	Fern	
Clustered Everlasting	<i>Chrysocephalum semipapposum</i>	Wildflower	
Small-leaved Clematis	<i>Clematis microphylla</i>	Climber	
Blushing Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus erubescens</i>	Groundcover	
Pale Flax-lily	<i>Dianella longifolia</i>	Strap Foliage	
Long-hair Plume grass	<i>Dichelachne crinita</i>	Tussock	
Nodding Saltbush	<i>Einadia nutans</i>	Groundcover	
Common Wheat Grass	<i>Elymus scabrus</i>	Alternative Lawn	
Ruby Saltbush	<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i>	Groundcover	
Blue Devil	<i>Eryngium ovinum</i>	Wildflower	
Pale Everlasting	<i>Helichrysum rutidolepis</i>	Wildflower	
Rush	<i>Juncus species</i>	Tussock	
Wattle Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra filiformis</i>	Strap Foliage	
Pale Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra nana</i>	Tussock	
Weeping Grass	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	Alternative Lawn	
Magenta Stork's-bill	<i>Pelargonium rodneyanum</i>	Wildflower	
Grass Trigger Plant	<i>Stylium graminifolium</i>	Wildflower	
Yellowish Bluebell	<i>Wahlenbergia luteola</i>	Wildflower	

LEGEND:

Full Sun =

Part Shade =

Shade =

LAWNS

TRADITIONAL

Many traditional turf lawns are often high water users and can look unsightly during water restrictions. They can also be invasive species that can escape into bushland and destroy native habitat and flora. To combat these problems avoid using invasive species such as Kikuyu, and ask your local turf suppliers about drought tolerant traditional lawn varieties.

ALTERNATIVES

If you are looking for an attractive lawn alternative, you may want to consider these options:

Native grasses – one of the most successful native grasses for creating the look of a traditional lawn is the native Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*). It can be mown regularly and will grow well in a wide range of soils. Weeping Grass is drought, frost and shade tolerant, but does not cope with heavy traffic or dog urine. Excellent for a front lawn. Can be grown from seed or plugs.

If you like clumps of tussocky grasses then Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia spp.*) and Tussock Grass (*Poa spp.*) are great alternatives.



Weeping grass.

Use groundcover plants that form dense mats, don't require mowing and perform well in shade. Examples include: Kidney Plant (*Dichondra repens*), Creeping Boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolia*).

LAWN CARE TIPS

1. Naturally fertilise your lawn by mowing and distributing clippings evenly throughout the lawn area.
2. Use a higher level setting when mowing in the warmer months to minimise moisture evaporation from the soil.
3. Allow your lawn to naturally brown off during warmer months as most lawns are capable of bouncing back, alternatively, consider using greywater (refer to p. 17 of this booklet) to keep your lawn lush.

Further Information

www.nativeseeds.com.au

www.sgaonline.org.au

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT SELECTION

When buying products for the garden we often don't think about where they have come from, for example, red gum trees grow in woodlands which are part of an intricate ecosystem that supports native fauna. Red gum timber is used to produce items such as bark chips, tomato stakes and railway sleepers – harvesting this product is unsustainable. With some thought we can support more environmentally sound practices through the products we choose for our gardens and homes.

ALTERNATIVE PRODUCT TIPS

1. Visit www.timbershop.org to find out which timbers are sustainable. While some outdoor furniture companies claim teak is plantation-harvested in Asia, this magnificent tree is a rainforest plant that cannot be grown in plantations.
2. Grass trees, tree ferns and native orchids may have been sourced illegally from the forest. Plants should be sold with a government tag stating they have been legally collected.
3. Make sure you ask where mulch has come from as some are sourced from the logging of old growth forests or contain weed seeds.
4. Ceramic pots fired using gas and produced locally have a lower environmental impact than those fired using coal or wood and transported from overseas.

When shopping do you:

- Ask where a product comes from and avoid buying unsustainable products?
- Use sustainable products such as secondhand bricks, recycled timbers, or plastic sleepers?
- Take your own plastic bag or canvas bag to a garden centre to carry home products and plants?
- Reuse your plastic plant pots or return them to a garden centre pot recycling bin?

Further information

The Wilderness Society (1998) *Forest Friendly Building Timbers*, Earthgarden Publication, Australia.

www.sgaonline.org.au

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

FOR FURTHER ADVICE

For free sustainable gardening information and advice go to:

www.sgaonline.org.au

Or visit the following environmentally certified Sustainable Garden Centres for advice on sustainable gardening:

Diamond Valley Garden Centre

170 Yan Yean Road, Plenty
Ph: 9432 5113

Hurstbridge Nursery

1075 Heidelberg-Kinglake Road,
Hurstbridge
Ph: 9718 2938

Keelbundoora Indigenous Nursery

Ring Road, Latrobe University,
Bundoora
Ph: 9479 2871

Rivers Garden & Home

28 Kurra Road, Yarrambat
Ph: 9436 1004

Victorian Indigenous Nursery Co-operative

Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield
Ph: 9482 1710

Indigenous Nurseries and Garden Supplies;

Greenplanet Epping Greenwaste Recycling Facility
480 Cooper Street, Epping
Ph: 9408 4555

Merriang District Landcare Nursery

Visit the nursery by appointment.
Ph: 9715 1577
www.merriang.org.au/

Western Plains Flora

628 Wildwood Road, Wildwood
Ph: 9740 3178

Wyeena Nursery

950 Kangaroo Ground,
St. Andrews Road, Smiths Gully
Ph: 9710 1340

Further reading:

Australian Plants Society Maroondah (2001) *Flora of Melbourne*, Hyland House, Melbourne.

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Local Conservation & Environment Groups

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or contact the Sustainability Planning Unit.

Multilingual Telephone Service (This is a free service)



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