

Introduction

The eastern suburbs of Sydney once supported a unique variety of native plants which, in turn, supported a variety of native animals. With the growth of the urban environment, large areas of this bushland have been lost along with many of the animals it once supported. Although this process cannot be reversed, private gardens can offer important habitat to many of the remaining native birds and animals.

Woollahra, Waverley, Randwick and Botany Bay Councils are committed to preserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the eastern suburbs and undertake many bush regeneration, revegetation and habitat corridor projects. The councils of the eastern suburbs have joined together to produce this brochure to encourage local residents to be part of this restoration project. By creating your own habitat garden you will contribute to the preservation of our natural heritage.

There are over 500 plant species in the Eastern Suburbs to choose from. This brochure gives examples of easy to grow, attractive natives that are available from native nurseries. But remember, if the plant is grown from a local specimen it will have inherited the ability to survive the coastal conditions and is more likely to survive in your garden. Locally sourced plant stock is referred to as being of local provenance. So ask your nursery for details on the origins of the plant.



create a wildlife habitat garden

Gardens can provide food and shelter, or HABITAT, for native fauna such as birds, lizards, possums, frogs, butterflies, native bees and insects. A few small changes in the way you think about your garden can make all the difference to local species and give endless pleasure to you and your family as birds, lizards, frogs and insects move in.

Fauna species have four basic requirements for survival:

- Food
- Shelter
- Fresh Water
- Nesting Sites



The following guidelines will help you achieve these four basic requirements and get you well on the way to creating your own ECOSYSTEM.

- Plant a mix of trees, shrubs and groundcover plant species to provide a range of habitat for all seasons.
- Retain leaf litter and bark to provide habitat for invertebrates and insects and feeding areas for frogs and lizards.
- Create a small pond to provide habitat for frogs.
- Place a shallow bowl up off the ground, adjacent to shrubs, to provide water for birds.
- Plant local native plant species (local provenance) as these will have inherited the attributes that allow them to survive local weather and soil conditions, and provide the food and shelter that native fauna prefer.
- Plant prickly shrubs and dense hedges for protection for birds against predators such as cats.
- Place logs as shelter for lizards.
- Retain rocks and boulders for natural crevices to serve as habitat for lizards and frogs and to provide shade and sun bathing opportunities.
- Retain older trees with hollows to provide nesting sites for birds and possums.
- Install a possum or bird-nesting box in your larger trees.
- Create depressions and mounds in a level garden to provide visual interest and microclimates for growing a wider variety of plants.
- Replace your lawn with mulched paths and garden beds or create a native grass or groundcover 'lawn'.
- Mulch your garden using either woodchips (available from your local nursery, landscape supply or arborists) or leaf litter. Mulch will suppress weed growth and retain soil moisture, reducing the need to water.

Don't

- Don't leave your cat out at night. Even a well-fed cat with a bell on its collar can stalk and kill.
- Don't leave your pet food bowls outside where feral birds, such as Indian Mynas, can feed from them.
- Don't plant non-native plant species. Only a few non-native plant species provide the same habitat opportunities as native plants.
- Don't tidy up fallen leaves and bark.
- Don't remove older trees just because they are inconvenient to you. Think about what else might be relying on that tree for food or shelter.
- Don't neglect nesting boxes. Check regularly to ensure non-native birds or European bees have not moved in.
- Don't use snail bait as this will kill lizards and frogs. By creating habitat for lizards and frogs this will then deal with any snail problem. One mature Blue-tongue Lizard can maintain a snail free average sized domestic garden.
- Don't use pesticides. They will kill beneficial insects and native bees and can build up in the bodies of native birds that feed on these insects (cats and dogs can become seriously ill if they eat poisoned insects or mice).

Small Shrubs

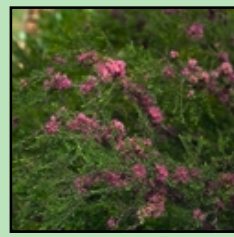


Correa alba
White Correa



This extremely hardy, frontline coastal plant has attractive grey-green foliage and is tolerant of both sandy and sandstone soils. Its four petaled white flowers appear in autumn to spring. It responds well to light tip pruning and is suitable for use as a formal hedge.

Height 1.5m. Width 1.5m.



Melaleuca thymifolia
Thyme Honey Myrtle



A moderately hardy shrub suitable for use in damp places, bearing clusters of curling, mauve flowers in spring to summer. The leaves are blue-green in colour and 5mm-12mm long. This shrub can be tip-pruned after flowering to encourage branching.

Height 1m. Width 1m.

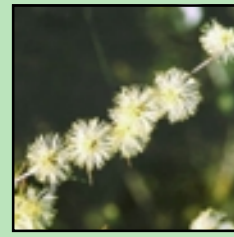


Acacia myrtifolia
Red-stemmed Wattle



This small compact shrub is ideal for residential gardens as it produces abundant, large, pale yellow flowers in spring and displays attractive bronze new leaves most of the year. It can be lightly tip pruned to keep a compact shape. Prefers rocky sandstone soils rather than deep sands. Very hardy and moderately fast growing.

Height 1m. Width 1m.



Melaleuca nodosa
Ball honey Myrtle



This extremely hardy shrub has small, needle-like leaves which make it a suitable small bird habitat particularly for protection from cats. It can be lightly tip-pruned for an informal hedge. Its attractive paper bark and interesting twisted trunk can be exposed by pruning the lower branches of more mature specimens or they can be cut at ground level to produce multiple stems. The perfumed, light yellow, round clusters of flowers appear in spring.

Height 1.5m. Width 1.5m.



Callistemon citrinus
Crimson Bottlebrush



A very hardy, fast growing shrub with rigid narrow leaves which smell of lemon when crushed. The typical brush-shaped, red flowers appear in both spring and autumn. The flowers' nectar is very attractive to honey-eating birds. It prefers moist sites but will tolerate drier areas.

Height 1.5m. Width 1.5m.

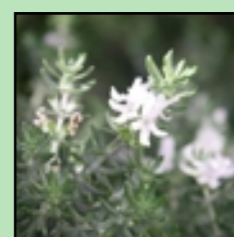


Grevillea speciosa
Red Spider Flower



Although this species is found throughout the Sydney coastal district, the local form is particularly attractive. The 5cm long, grey-green leaves are beautifully offset by the pendulous red flowers, the size of a child's hand. Its spreading form lends itself for use on slopes or as an interesting foreground plant in a mixed bed.

Height 0.5m. Width 1m.



Westringia fruticosa
Coast Rosemary



Probably the most commonly used native shrub in public landscapes, this hardy, fast growing shrub is ideal for pruning into formal and informal hedges and screens. Its small blue-green leaves are salt tolerant, making it ideal for a coastal garden. The white flowers are often present all year round.

Height 1.5m. Width 1.5m.



Pimelea linifolia
Slender Rice Flower



A common, but variable plant in Sydney bushland, this small, compact shrub is ideal for a sunny spot in a cottage garden. The abundant, semi-globular heads of white flowers are borne mainly through winter and spring but often flowers can be seen all year round. To encourage a thickly leaved specimen tip pruning can be carried out at any time. It is fast growing and moderately hardy but can become leggy after a few years.

Height 0.5m. Width 0.5m.

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Plant	Photo Credit	Plant	Photo Credit
Australian National Botanic Gardens	Copyright	City of Botany Bay	
Acacia myrtifolia	Denise Greig	Banksia serrata	Landscape Officer
Banksia integrifolia	Denise Greig	Friends of Malabar Headland	
Eucalyptus haemastoma	Murray Fagg	Eucalyptus obtusiflora	A Hall
Grevillea speciosa	Denise Greig	Banksia robur	M Vazey
Melaleuca linifolia	Denise Greig	Callistemon citrinus	M Vazey
Melaleuca thymifolia	Denise Greig	Melaleuca nodosa	M Vazey
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Key for Symbols

- attracts frogs
- attracts lizards
- attracts birds
- attracts possums
- attracts butterflies/insects



Trees



Callicoma serratifolia
Black Wattle



A tall shrub or small tree suitable for shady, damp positions. Produces clusters of cream ball-shaped flowers in spring. The dark green leaves have an attractive silvery underside.

Height 4m to 6m. Width to 4m.

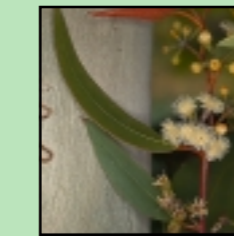


Eucalyptus obtusiflora
Port Jackson Mallee



A small mallee eucalypt found on shallow sandstone soils. The bark is shed in long narrow strips to reveal silvery green trunks. The leaves are short, thick and glossy, the creamy white flowers appear in spring to summer. An excellent small tree for a residential garden. Fast growing.

Height 3m. Width 4m.

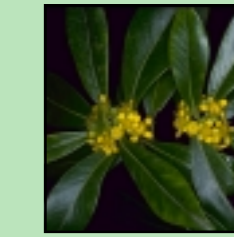


Eucalyptus haemastoma
Scribbly Gum



White flowers in autumn to spring. A very hardy, straight trunked tree with smooth pink to grey bark punctuated with scribbly patterns created by a bark dwelling insect. These patterns resemble scribbly writing and were featured in May Gibbs' classic stories of Gumnut Babies.

Height to 15m. Width to 5m.

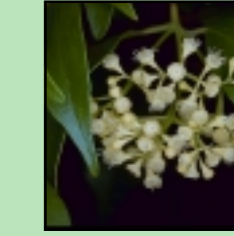


Tristaniopsis laurina
Water Gum



A small, compact tree with interesting bark and attractive yellow flowers in summer. Moderately hardy and reasonably fast growing. Found naturally in creek lines and gullies so is tolerant of damp, shady areas.

Height 4m to 10m. Width to 3m.

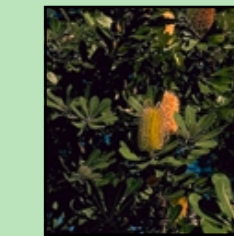


Acmena smithii
Lilly Pilly



Evergreen shrub or tree with small creamy white flowers in spring followed by cream to crimson berries in summer to autumn. Glossy, deep green foliage which can be pruned to form a hedge. Moderately hardy, grows well in shade. A good screening species.

Height to 8m. Width to 5m.



Banksia integrifolia
Coast Banksia



A slender tree with attractive foliage with silver undersides. Young flowers are green, maturing to cream in autumn and winter. Very hardy in coastal conditions and a fast grower particularly in sandy soils. Prefers a sunny aspect. Very attractive to nectar feeding birds such as Lorikeets and Honeyeaters. A member of the Proteaceae family and is therefore sensitive to phosphorus. Use only native plant fertilisers and avoid exposure to dog faeces.

Height 5m. Width 3m.

Climbers



Kennedia rubicunda
Dusky Coral Pea



This hardy, fast growing vine is tolerant of coastal positions and is useful on sloping banks as a groundcover. It will twine through other plants or can be trained over a structure. It produces many large red flowers in spring to summer which are followed by 10cm long furry, rust-coloured peas. Its dense foliage and stems create habitat for small birds.



Hibbertia scandens
Climbing Guinea Flower



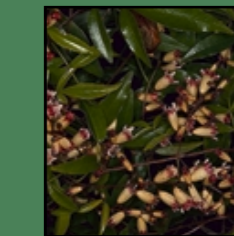
This vigorous scrambler prefers to spread across the ground but produces twining stems that climb through other plants. The large bright yellow five petalled flowers are borne all year round and provide a bright splash of colour.



Hardenbergia violacea
False Sarsaparilla



This attractive twining vine has 10cm long spear-shaped leaves and bears clusters of purple flowers in late winter to spring. It is tolerant of shade, preferring to twist through other plants, its vibrant flowers providing a sudden shock of colour amongst the green. It is tolerant of most soil types but prefers deep soil moisture.



Pandorea pandorana
Wonga Wonga Vine



A vigorous, woody climber which has soft, pendulous compound leaves. The clusters of tubular flowers are borne in spring and are usually cream with crimson or mauve speckled throats. The spent flowers fall to the ground forming a soft carpet. This plant is tolerant of most eastern suburbs soil types provided sufficient moisture is available. It prefers a sheltered position.

Groundcovers



Adiantum aethiopicum
Maidenhair Fern



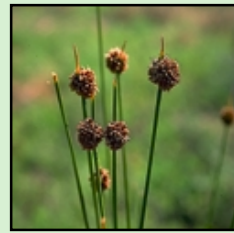
A long-cultivated soft leaved fern, this plant is an ideal groundcover in shaded or partly shaded damp areas. It can also be grown in the crevices of rock outcrops or cliffs. Although the leaves may die back during extended periods without water, its hardy rhizomes remain alive to produce delicate, curled leaf fronds after the first rain. Susceptible to snails - encourage a Blue-tongue Lizard for biological control.
Height 0.3m. Width expanding.



Carpobrotus glaucescens
Pig Face



This ground hugging succulent occurs naturally on coastal sand dunes and rocks near the sea, making it very salt and heat tolerant. It has thick, fleshy, triangular leaves, 4 to 10cm long and bears numerous large, hot pink to purple, shiny petalled flowers mostly through spring and summer. Suitable for hot, dry exposed areas especially on slopes or where soil erosion is a problem. Also useful for creating a cooler soil environment and microclimate for other shrub species.
Height 0.1m. Width 3m.



Isolepis nodosa
Knobby Club-rush

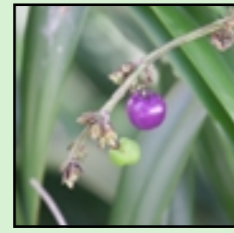


An erect, tufted plant suitable for wet, damp or dry areas. Very hardy and fast growing, requiring no maintenance. The flowers are a brown, globular cluster towards the end of the stems. This plant gradually expands from rhizomes and therefore provides good erosion control. Useful strong sculptural interest especially if planted en masse. Can be cut back to ground level to invigorate growth.
Height 0.7m. Width expanding.



Dichondra repens
Kidney Weed

A small creeping herb with kidney-shaped leaves suitable for use as a lawn substitute requiring no mowing or as a groundcover between pavers. Small white flowers appear in spring to summer. It prefers semi shaded moist areas but will grow in sandy areas. Seed can often be obtained from nurseries for sowing large areas. Quickly expands from original plant.
Height 5cm. Width expanding.



Dianella congesta
Coastal Flax Lilly



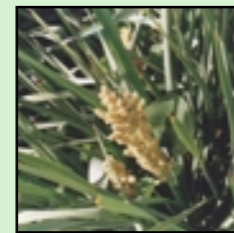
A glossy, green tufted plant found in exposed coastal areas and is very tolerant of salt winds and dry sandy soils. Grows well in sunny areas or under trees and shrubs. Clumps gradually expand from rhizomes so useful for filling bare spaces. Produces rich blue flowers with yellow stamens in spring and summer on a curved 'walking stick' stem, followed by many succulent blue-purple berries.
Height 0.75m. Width expanding.



Actinotus helianthi
Flannel Flower



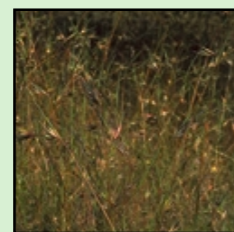
A much-loved cut flower, this plant is extremely easy to grow provided it has a sunny spot with deep soil moisture. It is a short-lived plant, needing replacement every couple of years. Its long, white, flannel 'petals', tipped in green, surround the true flowers in the centre. The much divided, grey flannel leaves make this an interesting contrast plant. Interestingly, this plant is in the same family as carrots and parsley.
Height 0.3m. Width 0.5m.



Lomandra longifolia
Spiny Headed Mat-rush



A common tufted plant with 1cm wide leaf blades, frequently used in public landscapes. It is hardy, fast growing and adaptable to most conditions. The local eastern suburbs coastal form has stiff, grey-green leaves and is very tolerant of salt winds. This plant provides strong vertical interest in a garden and has a male and female plant, distinguished by their different flowers.
Height 1m. Width 1m.



Themeda triandra
Kangaroo Grass



A widespread species of Australian grass, this tufted grass has many forms. The coastal form, tolerant of salt winds, has a prostrate habit and blue-grey leaves, making it a very attractive contrast plant. The most common form is a light green, upright clump bearing clusters of rust-coloured spikelets on slender stalks in spring and summer. Like most Australian grasses this species attracts butterflies. Height 0.3m. Width 0.2m.
Height 0.3m. Width 0.2m.

handy hints for growing Local native plants

Preparation

The key to long-term success with your native garden is thorough preparation. There is no substitute for good weed control. Carry out a number of weed control sessions allowing a few months in between each one to allow weeds to re-emerge before planting. The simplest way to convert your garden to natives is to divide it into sections and just do one section at a time. Alternatively, remove species you don't like and replace with suitable native species, converting your garden gradually.

Weeding

A weed is a plant out of place. Weeds are categorised as 'noxious' or 'environmental'. Noxious weeds are those identified by the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993*, because they pose a problem to human health or the environment. By law, these must be removed. Environmental weed species are those that pose a problem due their invasiveness and/or difficulty to control. It is best to eradicate these species from your garden before you start as future control amongst your growing plants may be time consuming and tedious. Contact your local council for information on the control of particular species.

Planting

- Always dig a hole approximately twice the size of the pot the plant is in. This ensures that the soil you are planting into is loosened up for the newly developing roots of your plant.
- You can dig in organic matter to make sandy soils richer and more water retentive and to make clay soil more open, however avoid digging organic matter deeper than 200mm. Below this depth organic matter has trouble breaking down and can actually retard plant growth.
- Place the plant level with the existing soil surface. Do not have the trunk covered with soil as this may lead to rot. Do not leave roots exposed as this may lead to drying out of the root ball.
- It is a good idea to build up a raised ring of earth around the plant using left over soil. This directs water on to the rootzone when being watered, and avoids wastage.
- Mulching around the base of the plant is an effective method of reducing water evaporation and helps to keep the rootzone cool in summer.

Mulching

If you keep your garden well mulched, weeding can be kept to a minimum. If weeds are removed before they can set seed on top of the mulch, many weeds can be totally eliminated in time. Mulch will also reduce the need for watering. Mulch can be obtained from your local nursery, landscape supplier or arborist and should be spread to a depth of about 100mm. At this depth it need only be replaced every year or as required. It is important to make sure mulch does not build up against the plant stem as this can lead to fungal infection and insect attack.

Fertilising

Local native plants do not require fertilising as they have evolved adaptations to extract the nutrients they need from local soils. Decaying mulch and leaf litter will provide most of the required nutrients. An application of blood and bone in the hole at planting or over the soil surface once a year can be beneficial. Use a fertiliser specifically designed for use on native plants. Do not use regular garden fertilisers as they contain phosphorus levels that can damage native plants.



Pruning

Contrary to popular belief many native plant species respond to regular pruning. Pruning emulates the type of leaf and twig loss many shrub species would have experienced as they were browsed by kangaroos and wallabies. The rule of thumb is to prune only green or current year's growth. This will encourage branching and create a bushier specimen.

Watering

One of the main problems associated with the Eastern Sydney region is the water repellent sandy soils, where the water beads and rolls along the surface of the soil. This occurs during long periods of dry weather when the sandy soil completely dries. To prevent this happening there are two options:

- Firstly, you can mulch around the plants with organic matter to boost the activity of micro-organisms in the soil and increase the soil's water holding capacity. Mulch the surface with leaf litter, wood chips or compost and allow the earth worms to do all the hard work. This is an excellent way of recycling your garden waste, improving your plants drought resistance and inhibiting weeds.
- Secondly, you can apply a wetting agent to the soil. Wetting agents are also known as surfactants and help water spread more easily through the soil surface. A good wetting agent will breakdown the water repellence of the soil, increase its water holding capacity and will remain active in the soil for up to a year.

Be careful not to over water your newly planted seedlings. Over watering leads to the plant establishing a shallow root system. This reduces the plant's ability to survive dry periods and as the plant grows older it will be susceptible to blowing over in windy conditions.

Choosing species

- Choose the plant according to its expected size at maturity and suitability for the location.
- What appears to be a large space may appear very much smaller with a few plants in it.
- Plant tall species to the back and smaller to the front along fencelines and paths.
- Large leaved plants will appear bolder and come forward in your design so use them as feature plants in the foreground.
- If you live in a front line coastal environment choose species which appear to be greyish green in colour. These species have fine hairs on their leaves and are able to withstand salt laden winds.

Co-existing with nature

- Outdoor living spaces can be accommodated on patios, decks and in clearings.
- Children gain endless pleasure from winding paths and hidden corners and learn to live with nature.
- Traffic and other noises can be disguised with closer, more natural, soothing sounds such as the wind in trees, running water or frog calls.
- Fruit trees, vegetable and herb gardens can be incorporated into your native garden design or can be allocated to one area.

Large Shrubs



Banksia robur
Swamp Banksia



An upright shrub with large toothed leaves and bronze new growth that is found naturally in poorly drained shallow soils overlying rock. A useful feature plant which bears grey-green flower spikes in summer and autumn.
Height to 2m. Width to 1.5m.



Melaleuca linariifolia
Snow in Summer



A small tree with papery bark and masses of white flowers over the canopy in summer. It is attractive to honey-eating birds and the dense foliage provides small bird habitat. This fast growing shrub is especially suitable for damp areas in a sheltered position.
Height 8m. Width 4m.



Banksia entolifolia
Heath Banksia



Banksia serrata
Old Man Banksia



Perhaps the best known of Sydney's Banksia species with its gnarled bark, serrated leaves and 'Big Bad Banksia Man' flower spikes. Soft grey flowers maturing to cream are produced in summer through to winter. Prefers a sunny position and is tolerant of coastal conditions.
Height to 4m. Width to 4m.



Leptospermum laevis
Coast Teatree



A hardy frontline coastal shrub which responds well to a light foliage pruning can also be pruned to create twisted shapes from its multiple trunks. It has soft small grey green leaves and produces abundant white flowers in spring. It prefers a sunny position in drier deep sand.
Height to 4m. Width to 4m.

A member of the Proteaceae family which bears large orange cylindrical brush-like flowers in autumn to winter. A small leaved hardy shrub, fast growing, will tolerate damp conditions but prefers a sunny position. A preferred nesting plant for small native birds. Sensitive to phosphorus in the soil.
Height to 3m. Width to 3m.

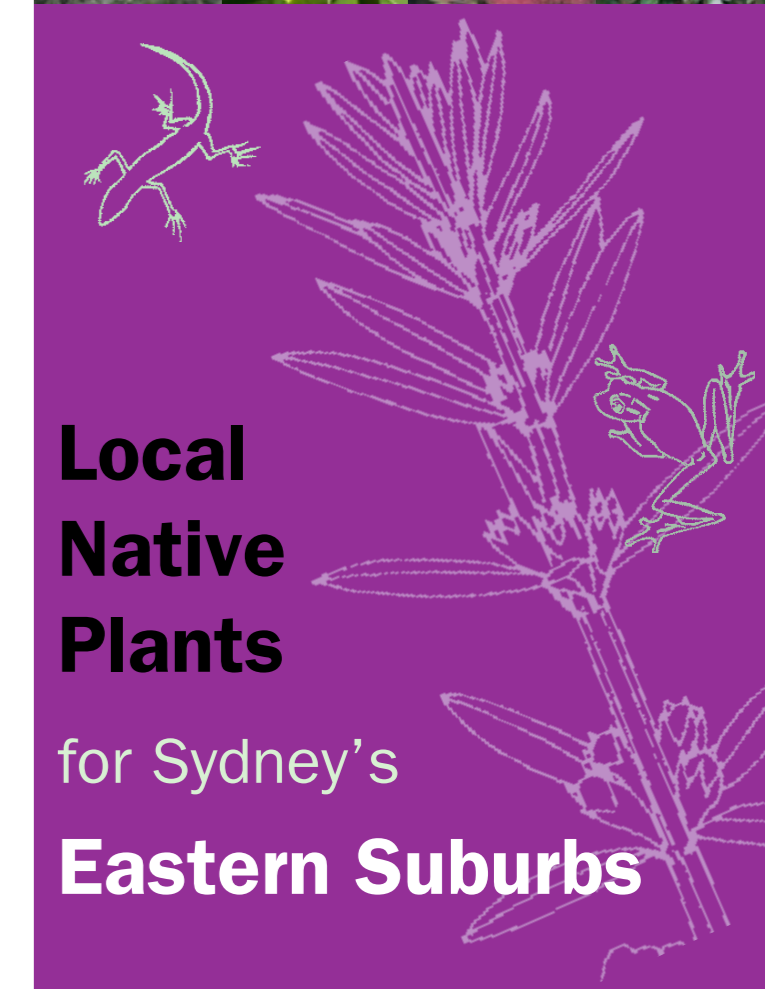
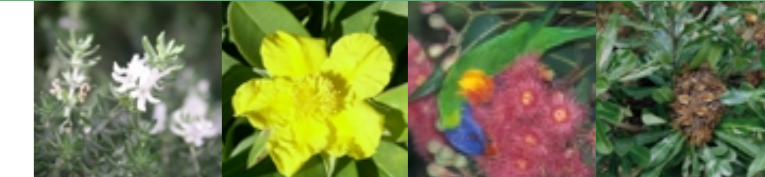
Contacts

Woollahra Municipal Council
Public Open Space 9391 7000
www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au

Waverley Council
Bushcare Projects Coordinator 9369 8041
www.waverley.nsw.gov.au

Randwick City Council
Bushland Management 9399 0683
Noxious Weeds 9399 0686
Randwick Council Community Nursery 9399 0933
www.randwick.nsw.gov.au

City of Botany Bay
Parks Department 9366 3521
www.botanybay.nsw.gov.au



This brochure has been funded by the Green Web Sydney project, an initiative of the Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils.

Key for Symbols

- attracts lizards
- attracts possums
- attracts frogs
- attracts birds
- attracts butterflies/insects

References

Field Guide to the Native plants of Sydney, Les Robinson, Kangaroo Press, Roseville, 1991.

Native Plants of the Sydney District, An Identification Guide, Alan Fairley & Philip Moore, Kangaroo Press, Roseville, 1989.

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