Frankston City Council

Gardens for Wildlife

Lifestyle Capital of Victoria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Frankston City Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners, the Bunurong people, as the custodians of this land. We pay respect to all Aboriginal community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of the region.

Photographs Mary Trigger (all photos unless otherwise attributed)
Special thanks to Neville Bartlett (NB), Ian Moodie (IM), Raf Heriot (RH), Nick Clemann (NC), Wildlife-friendly Fencing (WFF), Lizette Salmon (LS), Jenny Maclean (JM) and Elaine Shallue (ES).

Inaturalist.ala.org.au (CC BY-NC 4.0) photographer credits: Chris Lindorff (CL), Nick Lambert (NL), James Booth (JB), Lorraine Phelan (LP), Wendy Moore (WM), Chris Clarke (CC), stanley8m (ST), experion (EX), reiner (RN), Ian Wheatland (IW), nyoni-pete (NP), nip13 (NI), Robert957 (RB), matthew_constance (MC), andyfrank (AF) and calamanthus (CM).

Cover image: New Holland Honeyeater by Neville Bartlett

This publication is printed on environmentally friendly paper. 2021

Contents

Frankston City

Gardens for Wildlife

Introduction

Gardens provide us with an opportunity to support the unique plants and animals of our local environment.

Frankston City Council has developed this booklet to help our residents to design and plant gardens — or even small patches of gardens — that will benefit local wildlife by providing food and shelter, as well as stepping stones, so they can move freely across our landscapes.

The Frankston City region contains a range of different vegetation types that are important habitats for indigenous (or locally native) species. Maintaining and expanding these habitats is key to sustaining biodiversity, which is key to ensuring ecosystems remain healthy now and into the future.

Development and population growth, farmland clearance, introduced pests and weeds — together with the effects of bushfires and the impacts of a changing climate — are increasing pressure on native wildlife. As these threats increase, native animal habitat becomes more isolated and fragmented. This makes it difficult for wildlife to breed, forage, find shelter, and move across the landscape, resulting in a decline in species diversity and abundance.

Bushland reserves such as Bunarong Park, Studio Park, Frankston Foreshore, Seaford Wetlands, Kananook Creek, Langwarrin and Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve provide valuable sanctuaries for our local plants and animals to survive and are wonderful places to explore. However, wildlife does not understand the concept of a fence and will often venture out of the parks seeking food, water and a mate. Creating wildlife-friendly gardens provides a safe space for our local wildlife to cross our landscape.

Wildlife-friendly gardens are infinitely rewarding. To sit at a window and watch a honeyeater feeding from a grevillea that you've planted, to listen to the chorus of frogs at dusk, or spy a sugar glider soaring between trees are all good for the soul and help connect you to your natural environment.

Magpie Moth on Native Raspberry

Garden design

New Holland Honeyeater feeding on a banksia flower. (NB)

Many native animals depend on indigenous plants for food, shelter (from predators, competitors or the weather), and somewhere to breed safely. Likewise, plants benefit from animals through pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, waste breakdown and soil maintenance.

There are no hard and fast rules with designing a wildlife-friendly garden, other than trying to mimic some natural conditions. Local wildlife will generally benefit most from indigenous plants, but your garden does not need to be exclusively indigenous.

Indigenous plants and biodiversity

Indigenous plants are the original or local plants that occur naturally, in a given location. They have adapted to the conditions within the local environment such as the soil and climate.

These local plant species have also evolved alongside native wildlife, therefore providing the best possible food and shelter for native animals. A greater variety of indigenous plant species means more food and a more diverse habitat for native wildlife. Wildlife corridors connect isolated areas of habitat in a landscape.

Habitat
The environment where an animal naturally lives or occurs.

Habitat along a creek for example, allows wildlife to move through the landscape more easily with greater access to food and shelter. Indigenous gardens act in a similar way, providing a habitat stepping stone to help local wildlife move around the landscape.

Biodiversity is important, as it sustains the natural systems which provide us with clean air and water, regulate climate and maintain healthy soils for food production.

Biodiversity
The variety of plant, fungi and animal species in an environment, genetic differences within and between species and differences between the ecological systems in which they live.

A high diversity of plant species improves the resilience of local ecosystems to survive destructive events or processes, such as weed and pest animal invasion and climate change.

The benefits of growing indigenous plants are that they:

- Are perfectly suited to our local soils and climate, and will thrive without fertilisers or sprays
- Can withstand Melbourne's hot, dry summers and long dry periods with little or no watering once established
- Grow quickly and often flower within the first season of being planted
- Have greater resistance to disease when sourced from diverse genetic stock
- Attract and provide food and shelter for local native birds, insects and other animals
- Reflect Frankston's natural character, preserving and enhancing a sense of local identity
- Offer you an opportunity to grow a more sustainable garden
- Contribute to the preservation of Frankston's natural biodiversity
- Can strengthen local wildlife corridors to help wildlife cope with climate change

George Pentland Botanic Gardens

Natureplay

Being outdoors in the garden or a local reserve is fun and exciting for children. Links with nature are fundamental to children's connection with the natural world and a perfect play space!

Gardening is a great activity for children to have fun, learn new skills and spend quality time with family. Garden spaces big and small are a perfect outdoor play space.

Natureplay ideas:

- Make secret places in the garden to hide and watch wildlife
- Explore with a magnifying glass
- Draw pictures or take photos of garden wildlife
- Build a lizard lounge
- Count how many birds visit your birdbath
- Plant native River Mint and Chocolate Lilies for their scent
- Respect animal homes by leaving rocks, logs and vegetation as you find it

Download the Junior explorer/ bush detective activity sheets. See page 60 under Council resources, EnviroActivities.

Go for a discovery walk with a magnifying glass

Key design elements

Wildlife-friendly gardens can be designed in different styles - they can be formal, a riot of colour in a cottage style, or an informal natural look.

Consider how you use your garden and incorporate elements, such as a shady seat where you can sit and watch birds and butterflies.

Include **feature elements,** such as a striking tree, a swathe of tussock grasses or a frog pond to create interest as well as habitat.

Consider the **flowering times** of different plant species and aim to have a year round supply of food for wildlife.

Include **habitat elements,** such as bird baths near prickly shrubs for protection, large flat rocks for lizards to warm up or a pond with refuge logs for frogs.

Consider the **growing requirements** of each plant species and group together those with similar requirements for water and light, to maximise efficiency of water use.

Ensure you are aware of the **mature size of your plants,** to avoid ending up with a 60 metre gum tree towering over your house!

If you are considering changing your garden quite a bit, a **planned approach** is important. Blitzing a garden may result in wildlife abandoning your garden for years or being exposed and preyed upon if the intact vegetation is removed too quickly. Better to adopt a staged approach with patches of intact vegetation progressively replaced with new plants.

The following section sets out some key considerations for maximising the habitat value of your garden.

Layers

A key to creating a wildlife-friendly garden is to create structural diversity – lots of plants and lots of different layers. Aim to create a mix of trees, shrubs of varying height, grasses and groundcovers.

Dead trees and shrubs can also provide habitat for many of our native wildlife. Likewise, a few logs, rocks, sticks, mulch and leaves on the ground can provide habitat for many local insects and lizards.

Note that logs and rocks should not be sourced from local bushland where they are already providing habitat. If you live in a bushfire-prone area, consider locating mulch some distance from your house.

Diversity

A wide variety of indigenous plants helps to provide a range of habitats, shelter and food sources for different wildlife.

A healthy balance of different predator and prey species means that no one type of creature will get out of control and become a pest problem.

Aim to achieve a mixture of different plant heights, foliage densities (including open areas), plant surfaces (i.e. leaves and bark) and a range of species that flower throughout the year to provide a consistent supply of food.

Garden layers

TREES
Provide food and shelter for birds, possums, gliders, bats, goannas and insects.

SMALL TREES AND LARGE SHRUBS
Habitat for birds, possums, gliders, goannas and insects.

SMALL SHRUBS
Provide food and shelter for birds, possums, gliders, lizards and insects.

GRASSES AND GROUNDCOVERS
Provide food and shelter for birds, lizards, frogs and insects.

LOGS, MULCH AND ROCKS
Provides habitat for lizards, frogs and insects.

Food

Plants that produce nectar, pollen, fruit, seeds, leaves and roots provide food for many of our native animals. Dead plant material can also be a source of food for invertebrates.

Insects that live and feed on the plants, mulch and soil in turn provide food for birds, lizards, frogs and mammals.

Small lizards, frogs, small birds and mammals are a food source for reptiles and large, carnivorous birds such as kookaburras, butcherbirds and owls.

Host plants

Some insects, such as butterflies, only lay their eggs on certain plants known as host plants. Most native caterpillars are small, shy and nocturnal, leaving little evidence of their presence in your garden. If you want butterflies to visit your garden, include host plants such as Wattles (*Acacia species*) for Imperial Blue Butterflies, Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) for Common Brown Butterflies or Everlasting Daisies (*Xerochrysum species)* for Australian Painted Lady Butterflies.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater (NB)

Golden Everlasting

Common Brown Butterfly

Water

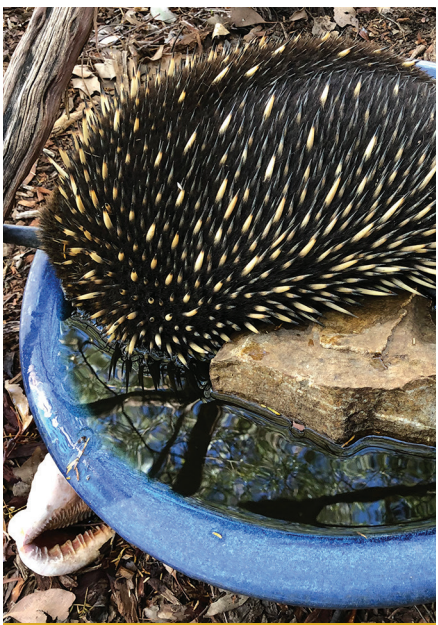
A reliable water source, particularly in summer, will help attract wildlife to your garden. Regularly refresh the water to avoid disease or mosquito's breeding.

A shallow birdbath on a pedestal next to a dense or prickly shrub will help protect birds from predators while they bathe and drink. A shallow dish of water at ground level will provide a much-needed drink for echidnas and lizards on a hot day. Add some branches and rocks to enable access for invertebrates that cannot swim. Frogs need a permanent or semi-permanent water source to keep their skin moist and provide opportunities to breed. Butterflies love to gather on a wide dish of damp sand or a small puddle in the soil. They take in water, essential salts and minerals from the soil.

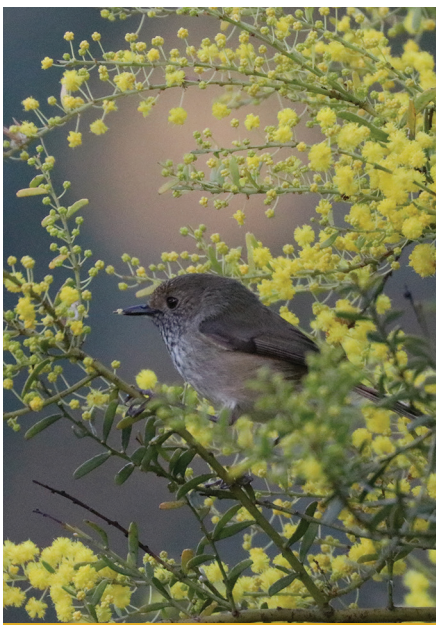
Shelter

Native wildlife needs to find shelter from bad weather, predators and competitors. They need a refuge in which to build their homes and raise their young.

Grasses, climbers, dense and prickly shrubs and mature trees can provide protection for a large range of insect, reptile, frog, bird and mammal species. Small lizards, microbats and invertebrates shelter in crevices under bark. Logs on the ground provide shelter for small mammals, lizards, frogs and invertebrates. Likewise, rocks, particularly a small pile of rocks, provide shelter for lizards, frogs, invertebrates and the Lesser Long-eared Bat.



Echidna in birdbath



Striated Thornbill in Gold-dust Wattle

The importance of tree hollows

Trees with hollows and the animals that depend on them are disappearing. Natural tree hollows are valuable and essential for the survival of many wildlife species. They provide refuge from the weather and predators, and safe sites for roosting and breeding. Destroying living or dead hollow-bearing trees displaces or kills wildlife dependant on those hollows.

Most eucalyptus species produce natural tree hollows, although only old trees develop hollows. As they fall and die or are cleared, they cannot be replaced without 100 or more years of growth.

Avoid removing any established trees that contain hollows. They are essential for shelter and breeding for many birds such as parrots, treecreepers, kingfishers and owls. Mammals such as microbats, sugar gliders, antechinus and phascogales also need hollows to survive. If you are concerned about the safety of a dead tree consult with an arborist and see if they can habitat prune the tree or salvage any hollows to be relocated on your property.

An effective way of providing an alternative to a natural tree hollow is by providing a nest box. Frankston Council has created a number of Instructional Sheets on how to create different types of habitat boxes suited to our local fauna and where to locate and how to maintain them. See page 60 under Council resources.

Rainbow Lorikeet

Southern Boobook Owl (IM)

Brush-tailed Phascogale nest box

Site analysis

If you are starting from scratch or redesigning a garden, one of the best things you can do is observe your garden for a year. This will give you an accurate picture of your garden through all the seasons when light and shade and moisture can vary enormously. Regardless of whether you have the patience to do this or not, the starting point with garden design is to do a site analysis of your garden. It allows you to identify the pros and cons, limitations and possibilities for your garden. It is also important to work with your site. If you know a section of your garden is shady and damp, select plants that are suited to those conditions rather than trying to change the site.

Step 1
What exists?

Create a scaled drawing of your property. Mark in the main structural and environmental features. Fences, shed, outdoor taps, clothesline, patio, rainwater tank, overhead powerlines, any views to be retained or areas to screen.

Take note of the sun path that creates sunny and shady areas in summer and winter. Do you have a large paved area near the windows that face the north side of your house that reflects the hot summer sun into your house? Do you have areas that are in constant shade all year long? Do you have any drainage issues where the ground if often too wet or dry?

If you are ensure of the location of underground pipes and cables of utilities services on your property, lodge an enquiry with Dial Before You Dig to obtain an asset plan.

1100.com.au/safety-information/guide-to-lodging-an-enquiry/

Example of a site analysis

Step 2
What are your needs?

Create a wish list. Do you need to keep aside a kickabout space for the kids and an area for outdoor dining? A sunny spot for a herb garden near the back door? What wildlife have you seen visiting your garden and what would you like to attract? Is there a damp area that would be suited to a frog bog? Do you need a deciduous tree to provide summer shade and winter warmth to your house? Does your compost bin receive enough sun? Do you need screening to provide more privacy? Do you want to reduce or remove your lawn? Do you want to include a chicken run or a pet enclosure? Make a note of the initial major work that would need to be done with each option e.g. garden bed edges curved out; relocate clothesline; break up concrete slab.

Step 3
Look at your plants

Remember to work with your site. If you know a section of your garden is shady and damp, select plants that are suited to those conditions. What are the existing plants in your garden? Are they Indigenous, Native or exotic? Are there weed species that need to be replaced with an indigenous alternative? What mature trees do you have in the upper layer? Are there any hollows? Is there room to nominate a space for a large tree that will have room to grow away from the house, any neighbours or overhead powerlines? What layers are missing in your gardens? What key elements are missing e.g. a water source or shelter, such as a log or rocks?

Step 4
What is your style?

Native gardens can be created in many styles. They do not all need to be unruly but can be manicured if that is more your style. Wildlife does not mind. Visit your local natural reserve and have a look at the plants and how they are structured.

CREATE A WISH LIST

HERB GARDEN

ATTRACT BIRDS

SPACE FOR KIDS

PRIVACY

COMPOST AREA

SUMMER SHADE

INDIGENOUS

VEGIE BEDS

LOCATION OF CLOTHESLINE

Step 5

The research

Create a list of the plants you need to create the style of garden you desire. Find out what Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) you live in and what indigenous plants naturally grow in your area. To find your EVC visit frankston.pozi.com and enter your address in the search bar. Look at the Frankston Indigenous Plant Guide for plant growing requirements, flowering times and plant sizes. Head down to the local Indigenous Nursery for advice on what plants are suited to your site conditions and space. Make an estimate of the number of plants and the cost of purchase. Make an estimate of the cost of materials such as pavers, rainwater tanks, raised vegie beds. Can you afford to install and maintain your garden or do you need to look at alternatives or a staged approach?

Step 6

Develop a plan

Once you have decided on what you want and what you can realistically achieve and afford, you can play with your garden plan exploring different options. Tracing paper overlays can work well at this stage. Decide what needs to be done first i.e. the big jobs such as reworking your garden bed edges or breaking up a slab of concrete. Focus on one area at a time so you are not overwhelmed. Remember, it doesn't all have to be done immediately and it can be beneficial to complete changes over time, to avoid displacing any existing wildlife.

Example of a garden plan

Fire and CFA guidelines

With careful garden design and plant selection you can provide wildlife habitat and reduce the risk of bushfire or grassfire impacting your assets.

If you live in a bushfire prone area, you may wish to consider siting your habitat garden away from buildings – with separation such as a managed lawn, a non-flammable gravel pathway or a paved or stone area.

Features conducive to wildlife habitat, such as continuity and complexity of vegetation, need to be modified near your house and other infrastructure to reduce the risk of fire.

Consider designing this area with;

- reduced leaf litter and fine fuels,
- low connectivity of vegetation – clumps rather than continuous plants,
- fewer 'middle storey' plants,
- less flammable species,
- no vegetation touching or overhanging your house.

This area may still provide some habitat and food for wildlife. Strategically placed trees can provide shelter and food, and rocky features can be habitat for reptiles and small creatures. There are bushfire design requirements for your garden garden if you build your home within a Bushfire Management Overlay.

If you live in a high bushfire risk area, we recommend you download the CFA publication *Landscaping for Bushfire* from **cfa.vic.gov.au.**

The document contains detailed information on garden design, maintenance and plant selection to reduce the risk of losing your house or life.

Tips for gardening up to a waterway

If you have a garden that includes a waterway such as a river or creek, or even a drain that flows into a waterway, here are some tips to protect the banks, the water quality and the aquatic life.

- Avoid bare areas of banks and wide paths right to the water's edge.
- Before manually removing weeds from the bank, plant replacement plants to reduce exposing the bank to erosion risk.
- Young seedlings may require staking and guarding to protect them from browsing wildlife, however any type of plastic guards should be avoided to minimise the chance of plastic entering the waterway.
- Plant a deep buffer of plants beside the waterway (10-20m recommended) to provide a natural filter for runoff water before it enters the waterway.
- Do not use chemicals such as herbicides within 10m of the bank to avoid polluting the waterway.

You may be eligable for a Melbourne Water Stream Frontage Grant. Visit **melbournewater.com.au**

Planting for nature strips

Frankston residents are permitted to plant out their nature strips with indigenous grasses, groundcovers and low growing shrubs listed in the Frankston Naturestrip planting guidelines. You will need to apply for a Nature Strip Planting Permit. The purpose of this permit is to ensure that Nature Strip designs do not interfere with underground assets or access, so public safety is protected as well as ensuring that any development enhances the overall character of the neighbourhood.

The basic guidelines are as follows;

- A minimum footpath width of 1.5m must be retained and kept clear at all times, which may be incorporated in and form part of the minimum buffer zone of 1.0m from the back of the kerb if the existing naturestrip width does not support both clear zones
- Approved plantings are to be maintained below a height of 300mm from outside edge to a maximum of 600mm at centre of planting area
- Hard landscaping elements such as rock, timber, retaining walls, ornaments must not be used
- Approved mulch material must be kept stable and properly contained. Larger material such as stone and crushed rock greater than 10mm or chunky woodchips are not permitted and must not spill onto footpath or gutter.

If you would like to plant out your nature strip you will need to ensure you prune plants so they don't protrude beyond the boundary and don't exceed the height restrictions. You will be responsible for keeping your nature strip free of weeds, rubbish and any tripping hazards.

Street trees remain the responsibility of Frankston City Council to plant and maintain. If you would like to request a street tree be planted on your nature strip visit the link on page 60 "Request a Street tree".

Indigenous plants

Frankston is home to a vast array of beautiful indigenous plants. For detailed information on indigenous plants appropriate for the Frankston region download a copy of the Frankston City Council Indigenous Plant Guide: See page 60 under Council resources.

Frankston Indigenous Nursery

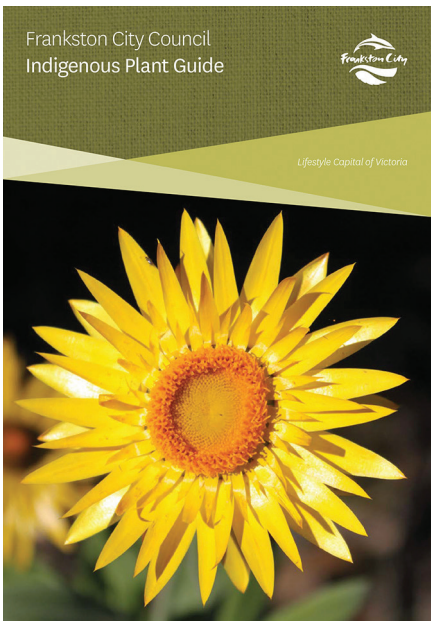
The place to buy healthy indigenous plants for your garden. A great range of plants available, as well as expert advice and guidance on indigenous plant selection and maintenance.

Opening hours (during autumn to spring): Wednesday, 9am–3pm

And the first Saturday of each month, 9am–1pm or by appointment.

7 McMannis Way (Off McCulloch Avenue). Seaford (next to SES)
Tel: 9768 1513
Email: fin@frankston.vic.gov.au

The nursery also has a volunteer program that contributes to the propagation and running of the nursery and new volunteers are always welcome. For further information contact the nursery.



Geology and soil summary

The geology of the Frankston region has been sculpted by nature over millions of years. The unique geology has resulted in the local soil conditions that have had a direct bearing on the natural distribution of local plant communities.

Five hundred million years ago the area was under the sea accumulating sediment washed in from ancient lands to the west. These sediments eventually hardened to form sandstones and mudstones that were subsequently folded, uplifted and eroded to form the underlying bedrock of the Frankston region.

About 370 million years ago molten rock (magma) forced its way into the sedimentary rock from deep within the earth's crust. It slowly cooled and solidified the form granite which is now clearly exposed mainly on the beach at the foot of Oliver's Hill.

About 6 million years ago the sea level rose and then retreated depositing sands and gravels on much of the southern part of the municipality. Around 4 million years ago movement on a major fault line (Selwyn's Fault) elevated the whole Mornington Peninsula to the south and lowered the northern side to form the Carrum Carrum Swamp.

Within the last million years sea level has been low, and sheets of sand have blown in from the west forming large inland dunes that trend northwest to southeast.

The soil surface of the Frankston region is predominantly sands. In broad terms the more elevated areas (former dunes) will drain more readily than the low-lying areas. Much of the organic content has been leached resulting in low nutrient levels. In the lower depressions the soils will tend to be moist with higher organic levels.

Historically, much of the former Carrum Carrum Swamp has been drained leaving behind soil with a high clay and organic content level. However, over the past 120 years there has also been substantial relocation of dumped soil to fill the reclaimed swampland.

For more detailed information on the geology of the Frankston area and the natural vegetation supported see page 60 under Council resources.

Plant communities

Bioregions

Bioregions are a classification given to landscapes on a large scale based on natural features and a range of attributes including geology, soils and vegetation. Bioregions are a nationally recognised classification with Frankston sitting within the Gippsland Plains Bioregion.

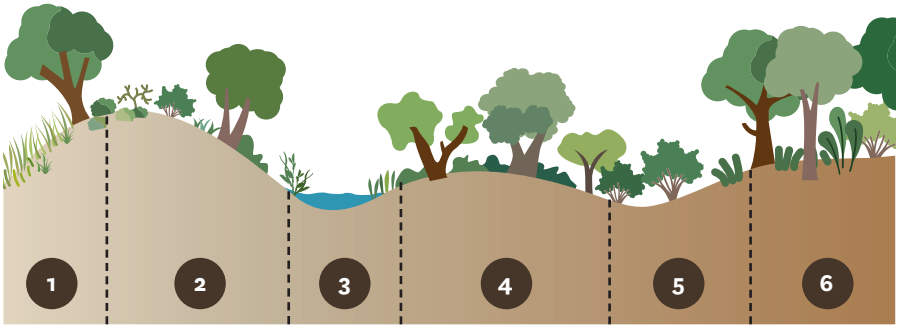
Gippsland Plains Bioregion:

Gippsland Plains Bioregion is characteristed by flat, low-lying coastal and alluvial plains with a gently undulating terrain dominated by barrier dunes, floodplains and swampy flats. The native vegetation has been significantly disturbed, or significantly removed over large areas due to agriculture and residential development.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's)

In Victoria Bioregions are further divided into Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's). EVC's are a classification of a community of plant lifeforms and ecological characteristics which uniquely exist together. Because the natural landscape has been changed considerably throughout Victoria, individual EVC 'benchmarks' have been developed as a pre-European colonisation condition benchmark. These benchmarks can be used to assess the quality of an existing patch of native vegetation and to determine what plant species occur naturally within each EVC.

Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve



1. COASTAL DUNE/SCRUB/BANKSIA WOODLAND
2. SAND HEATHLAND
3. PLAINS GRASSY WETLAND
4. HEATHY WOODLAND
5. SWAMP SCRUB
6. GRASSY WOODLAND

Plains Grassy Wetland

Coastal Dune

Heathy Woodland

Original vegetation communities

Frankston City has at least 16 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) and the adjoining map reflects their original distribution before European settlement. Each EVC is given an identification number as listed in the key below. Many intact EVCs can still be seen in our local nature reserves.

See page 60 under Council resources.

Ideally select plants suited to your EVC, however, due to the creation of the urban environment some species might not be suitable, so species selected from a neighbouring EVC can also be used.

Discuss your plant selection with experts at your local indigenous nursery.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs)

48	Heathy Woodland
897	Plains Grassland/Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic
175	Grassy Woodland
16	Lowland Forest
3	Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland
6	Sand Heathland
83	Swampy Riparian Woodland
53	Swamp Scrub
688	Swampy Riparian Woodland/Swamp Scrub Mosaic
125	Plains Grassy Wetland
902	Gully Woodland
2	Coast Banksia Woodland
904	Coast Banksia Woodland/ Swamp Scrub Mosiac
160	Coastal Dune Scrub
1	Coastal Dune Grassland
161	Coastal Headland Scrub

EVC map of original vegetation communities

This map has been derived from the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Naturekit: biodiversity mapping tool, pre-1750's mapping layer.

Biolinks

Biolinks are areas of vegetation such as native forests, woodlands, grasslands, waterways and roadside reserves that connect areas of valuable habitat such as bushland reserves and parks. Kananook Creek is a good local example. Biolinks enable wildlife to move freely and safely and have access to the broader landscape to feed, drink, reproduce and shelter.

A biolink can also be created by developing patches of bushland or a series of trees that act as 'stepping stones' for wildlife, reducing the distances between habitat patches. For example, Sugar Gliders need patches of vegetation with tall canopy trees a minimum of 50m apart to enable safe movement through the landscape.

Kananook Creek

Roadside vegetation

Native vegetation along roadsides is very significant for many reasons and it is protected by law. Often very old and undisturbed from past activities, it can be the last remaining example of the original vegetation type within an area and provides critical wildlife corridors throughout the landscape. It is important naturally vegetated road reserves are managed specifically for their biodiversity values. Understorey plants, fallen branches and leaves provide important habitat for native fauna and provides natural weed suppression.

Unwanted plants

Non-native or 'exotic' plants can be useful for shade, structure, colour and interest in the garden. However, we need to be constantly aware that they also make up the vast majority of Australia's invasive weeds and include many introduced aquatic and semi-aquatic plants used in ponds and aquariums.

Some Australian plants are also environmental weeds and should be avoided.

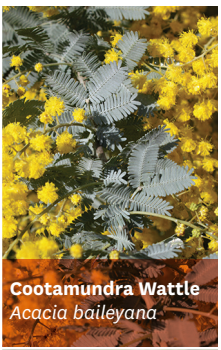
An environmental weed is a plant that escapes from your garden into parks, bushland and other spaces. Weeds are a problem because they out-compete indigenous plants for light, water and nutrients. In a short period of time they can change local ecosystems so that habitat no longer supports native birds and animals.

Weed seed and cuttings can be carried many kilometres by water, wind, birds, animals, vehicles and on clothing. Weeds can spread from people dumping garden waste in reserves and waterways.

Below are examples of a few garden plants that have become weeds in the Frankston region. For more information on identification and control download the Frankston City Council Invasive Species Guide.

See page 60 under Council resources.

Gazania
Gazania linearis



Cootamundra Wattle
Acacia baileyana

Blue Periwinkle
Vinca major

Japanese Honeysuckle
Lonicera japonica

Indigenous fauna

Frankston City is home to a wide variety of indigenous fauna from dolphins, echidnas, owls, skinks, bats, honeyeaters, koalas, frogs, parrots, wallabies and turtles. At least 132 species of native fauna has been recorded, and that is not including the huge diversity of invertebrate species such as butterflies, dragonflies and native bees.

For further information download the Frankston City Council Indigenous Fauna Guide.
See page 60 under Council resources.

Attracting butterflies

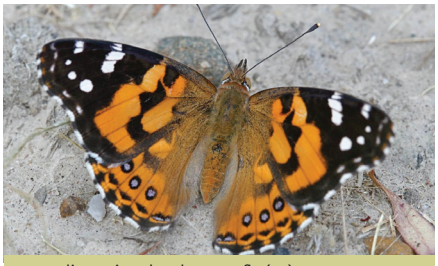
Butterflies will move over large distances to find nectar-producing plants (e.g. daisies, banksias and wattles) to feed on and host plants to lay their eggs (e.g. grasses, wattles and Bursaria).

Recipe:

- Incorporate a range of plant sizes that cater for butterflies that fly at various heights, as different species will fly around grasses, groundcovers, shrubs or mature trees
- Add a dish of damp sand. Butterflies take in water and essential salts and minerals from the soil
- Include a flat rock or paver for butterflies to bask in the morning sun
- Butterflies are not strong fliers. Provide protected areas where they can shelter from wind and rain. Messy patches are great!
- Practise natural pest control (pg 54)
- Plant a range of host plants for different butterflies to lay their eggs (for example, Australian Painted Lady and Red-spotted Jezebel Butterflies prefer Everlasting Daisies, while Common Grass-blue. Butterflies prefer plants in the pea family such as Purple Coral-pea and Austral Indigo)

Threats:

- Insecticides
- Lack of habitat



Australian Painted Lady Butterfly (IM)

Common Grass-blue Butterfly

Yellow Admiral Butterfly

Red-spotted Jezebel (CC)

Chequered Cuckoo-bee

Hoverfly on Bulbine Lily

Fiddler Beetle

Flower Wasp (RN)

Attracting insect pollinators

A wide range of invertebrates, as well as some birds and mammals, are important plant pollinators. Pollinator insects include many species of bees, flies, hoverflies, moths, wasps, butterflies, beetles, thrips and some ants.

Recipe:

- Provide water that is accessible for invertebrates that can't swim (they need to stand on the edge, a plant or floating material)
- Leave some messy patches in your garden
- Use bush mulch on your garden beds where there is lack of natural leaf litter (pg 52)
- Practice natural pest control (pg 54).
- Add an 'insect hotel'
- Plant grasses and rushes for egg-laying pollinators. Examples include Kangaroo Grass, mat-rush and flax-lily
- Plant a range of different plants that flower across the seasons

Threats:

- Insecticides
- Lack of habitat

Plague Soldier Beetle (CM)

Build an insect hotel

Have fun with the kids and make an insect hotel!

You can use any untreated timber to make a frame. Add a simple roof overhang to keep the rain out. Avoid glues and paints that may be toxic. Create interesting nooks and crannies with a variety of natural materials such as straw, sheoak cones, pieces of wood, rolled up cardboard and drilled timber blocks.

If you are drilling holes in wood to create burrows, drill holes of varying size ranging from 5-10mm wide and 15-80mm deep. Make the holes smooth and blind (not right through the timber) and slope them slightly upward to help keep them dry.

Or you can fill a pipe with clay and add some holes. Or simply bundle together some straws or bamboo and see who moves in!

Locate your insect hotel with shelter from strong sun, rain and wind. Consider making a few insect hotels and locating them in different sections of your garden such as a high sunny location and a low shady spot.

A sanctuary for insects

Insect hotel

Red-browed Finch

Superb Fairy-wren (RH)

Spotted Pardalote

Willie Wagtail

Attracting small birds

Small birds help control insects, recycle nutrients and disperse seeds. Birds such as pardalotes, robins, wrens, fantails and thornbills feed on insects. Finches and silvereyes feed on berries and seeds.

Recipe:

- Provide a shallow dish of fresh water in an elevated position near a prickly or dense shrub
- Create open areas for foraging
- Mulch garden beds to attract tasty insect treats
- Practise natural pest control (pg 54)
- Plant dense or prickly shrubs for protection and safe nest sites
- Prune shrubs to create a denser form
- Plant a range of plants including prickly wattles, tea-trees, correas grasses and climbers
- Keep your pets inside at night

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs especially at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat

Rufous Whistler

Attracting honeyeaters

Honeyeaters are very active birds that need a rich supply of nectar and pollen-producing flowers to keep them fuelled. They have a brush-tongue they use to collect nectar and pollen. Honeyeaters can be protective of a good supply of food and quite aggressive towards other nectar feeders. They also need insects in their diet so, despite their name, don't be surprised if you see them snapping at some bugs.

Recipe:

- Include a shallow dish of fresh water in an elevated safe position for bathing and drinking
- Practise natural pest control (pg 54)
- Plant dense or prickly shrubs for protection and safe nest sites
- Plant a range of nectar-producing plants that flower across the seasons e.g. correas, banksias and grevilleas
- Keep your pets inside at night

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs especially at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat

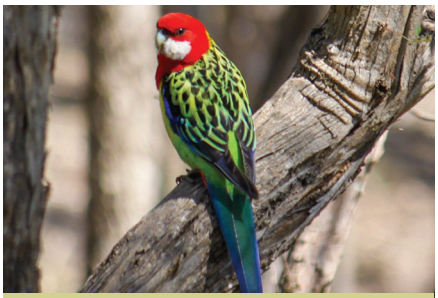
White-eared Honeyeater

New Holland Honeyeater

Yellow-faced Honeyeater

Red Wattlebird (NB)

Eastern Spinebill



Eastern Rosella

Musk Lorikeet

Rainbow Lorikeet

Red-rumped Parrot

Attracting parrots

Parrots feed on a wide variety of plants. Nectar-feeders such as the Musk, Rainbow and Little Lorikeet have a brush-tongue to collect nectar and pollen. Seed-eaters such as Red-rumped Parrots, Galahs and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feed on wattles, banksias, eucalypts and grasses. Long-billed Corellas dig in the ground for tubers. Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos love to find grubs hiding under tree bark and crack open seed pods and wooden fruits to extract seed and insects.

Recipe:

- Include a source of fresh water, especially for the seed-eating parrots that become very thirsty
- Plant a range of nectar, pollen and seed-producing plants
- Add a tall tree for perching, roosting and nesting
- Keep tree hollows for birds to nest in
- Practise natural pest control (pg 54)
- Keep your pets inside at night

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs especially at night
- Lack of habitat, especially hollows

Attracting large birds

Birds such as Tawny Frogmouths, magpies, owls, eagles, Laughing Kookaburras and butcherbirds are carnivorous and feed on small mammals, lizards and large insects. Lower branches and low-lying branches are ideal for fledglings. A few large birds, such as the Common Bronzewing and Crested Pigeon are seed-eaters that mainly feed on grass seeds.

Recipe:

- Provide a source of fresh water for birds to bathe in and drink
- Include a few tall trees for perching, roosting and nesting
- Keep tree hollows for larger birds
- Practise natural pest control (pg 54)
- Keep your pets inside at night

Threats:

- Other carnivorous birds
- Cats and dogs especially at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat, especially tree hollows for owls
- Secondary poisoning

Laughing Kookaburra

Common Bronzewing

Tawny Frogmouth (IM)

Crested Pigeon (AF)

Grey Butcherbird (RH)

Attracting frogs

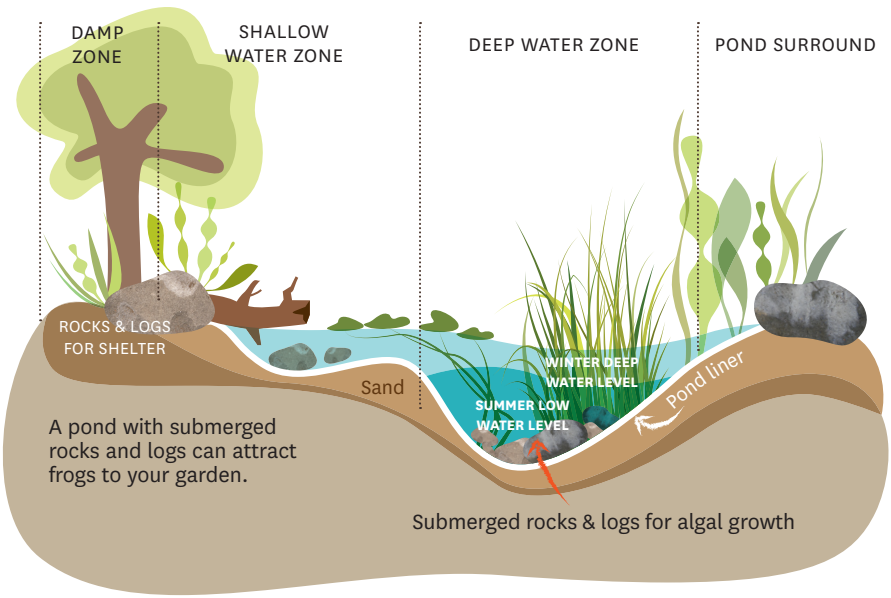
Frogs need water to lay their eggs and for tadpoles to grow into frogs. Tadpoles feed on algae and decaying vegetable matter. Frogs spend their non-breeding life away from water and eat insects. They are actually very quiet during this time.

You have two options for attracting frogs to your garden. One is to build a frog pond that will attract breeding frogs to sing their chorus to attract a mate and lay their eggs. The second option if you have a moist, shady area in your garden is to create a frog hide-away for non-breeding frogs to burrow under a log or mulch and quietly hop about feeding.

Recipe for a frog pond:

- Locate your pond in a low-lying section of your garden that has 70% shade
- Avoid locating your frog pond under trees which may drop leaves
- Ensure your pond includes shallow entry points and deeper sections for potted aquatic plants
- Add rocks and logs and cover the bottom with gravel
- Fill with rainwater or tap water (chlorinated tap water needs to stand for at least 24 hours)
- Add a variety of indigenous aquatic and semi-aquatic plants as well as plants that thrive in moist soil
- Lock up your pets or prevent cats from entering your pond surround
- Avoid pumps and do not add fish

Cross-section of frog pond



Spotted Marsh frog (NC)

Striped Marsh Frog (IM)

Recipe for a frog hide-away:

- Find a moist, shady area in a quiet part of your garden
- Provide shelter such as logs with holes and loose bark or rocks Terracotta pots lying on their side also provide a cool, damp shelter for frogs
- Plant lots of groundcovers, grasses and small shrubs
- Add chunky wood-based mulch

Threats:

- Cats and dogs especially at night
- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat
- Frog Chytrid fungus

Southern Brown Tree Frog (JB)

Pobblebonk (JB)

Southern Toadlet (IW)

Common Eastern Froglet (EX)

Eastern Blue-tongued Lizard (NI)

Marbled Gecko (WM)

Garden Skink (NP)

Jacky Dragon (LP)

Attracting lizards

Blue-tongued Lizards, Marbled Geckos and little Garden Skinks generally prefer to snack on insects, but are opportunists that will also eat berries and seeds. Avoid using snail baits, even pet-friendly ones can harm wildlife. Many a Blue-tongued Lizard has unfortunately died after eating either the snail bait or the dead snails.

Recipe:

- Provide flat rocks or pavers in a protected, sunny spot to warm up
- Mulch garden beds to attract insects to eat
- Practise natural pest control (pg 54)
- Include a fresh, shallow water supply on the ground
- Plant tussocky grasses for protection
- Provide cool shelter such as dense shurbs
- Keep your pets inside at night

Threats:

- Carnivorous birds and Indian Mynas
- Cats and dogs especially at night
- Pesticides
- Lack of habitat

Eastern Three-lined Skink (JB)

Attracting small mammals

Small mammals most likely to visit your garden include the Common Ringtail Possum, Common Brushtail Possum, Sugar Glider, microbats and the Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Recipe:

- Microbats like large old trees with hollows or loose bark
- Plant a range of indigenous plants that flower across the seasons and attract insects
- Provide trees with hollows or species-specific nest boxes
- Plant eucalypts to provide both food and shelter
- Consider the spacing of trees to allow easy movement for tree-dwelling species
- Provide a water source at ground level

Threats:

- Habitat loss (especially tree hollows)
- Cats, dogs and foxes
- Vehicle collisions
- Power lines
- Secondary poisoning

Sugar Glider (IM)

Short-beaked echidna

Little Forest Bat (CL)

Common Brushtail Possum (NL)

Common Ringtail Possum (ST)

Wildlife safe gardens

Creating a wildlife-friendly garden supports a multitude of native wildlife that is often under pressure to survive. Occasionally we encounter a few challenges with wildlife in our gardens that can usually be managed.

Avoid supplementary feeding

Tempting as it may be to put out seed for parrots or nectar for honeyeaters, you may be causing them more harm than good. Wildlife can become dependent on artificial food that may in some situations lead to malnutrition. Feeding stations can attract numerous birds to the same area on a regular basis. Multiple birds eating and defecating in these small areas can greatly increase the spread of disease. A constant supply of 'easy' human food can also disrupt the natural population density within an area. Rather than artificially feeding wildlife, plant lots of food-producing native plants and provide a good supply of water! Change the water regularly to ensure it is fresh and clean.

Deter pest birds

Introduced pest birds such as Indian Mynas are a threat to native birds due to their aggressive territorial behaviour that includes competing for food, evicting native birds from nesting sites and killing chicks and eggs. They are also known to carry diseases that can spread to native birds, domestic pets and people.

Indian Mynas love nothing more than an easy feed from a pet food bowl or artificial feeding station. Feed pets indoors or where birds cannot access their bowl. Ensure compost bins and rubbish bins are covered. Block holes in roofs and eaves. For information see page 60 under Council resources.

Rainbow Lorikeets

Indian Myna

Netting

Tree netting is a popular way to protect fruit from wildlife, particularly in urban areas, but the wrong type of netting can be deadly. Hungry animals are easily caught in 'bird netting'.

Consider protecting your individual fruit with commercial fruit protection bags or plastic garden pots rather than netting the whole tree.

Choose fruit tree varieties that are easy to protect, prune and harvest.

If you use tree netting:

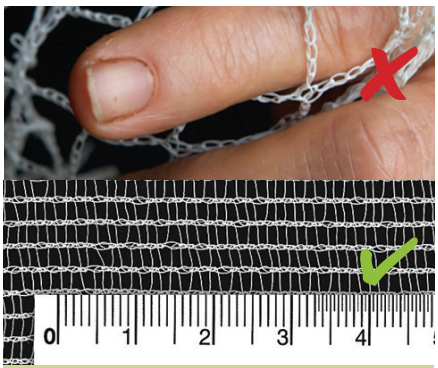
- choose a mesh size less than 5mm x 5mm. As a rough guide, if you can insert your finger through the netting it is capable of trapping wildlife
- ensure your netting is securely fixed to the ground or tied around the base of your tree above ground level
- remove nets when they are not required e.g. after fruiting

Net disposal

Like ghostnets in the ocean, unwanted netting can continue to maim and kill. Ensure that discarded netting cannot become a hazard to wildlife.

For more information visit: **wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/WFF/Netting.html**

Eastern Brown Snake caught in garden netting



Finger test

Securely netted fruit tree

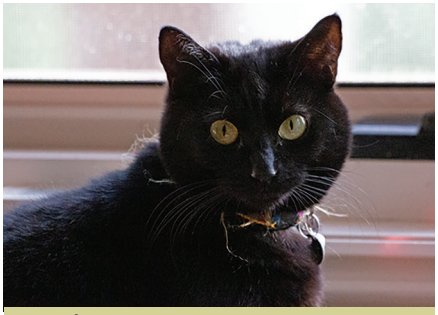
Pet control

Domestic cats and dogs are one of the main threats to our native wildlife. Keep your dog securely confined to your property and your cat inside from dusk to dawn.

Cats do not have to roam. Providing their basic needs are met, cats live approximately three times longer when secured to their own property. A number of options exist including:

- Cat proof fencing (modifying existing fencing to make it cat proof, giving your cat access to either part or all of your backyard)
- A cat enclosure attached to another structure (house or shed)
- Free standing cat enclosure

For more information visit: **agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/cats/enclosures-and-fencing**



Cat curfew

Cat enclosure attached to the house

Free standing cat enclosure

Rodent control

Rats and mice are a common problem wherever people live. Often our response is to lay rodent bait and hope they disappear. What has happened however, is a very toxic poison has just been released into the ecosystem of your home, garden and beyond.

Before reaching for the bait ensure you have picked up fallen fruit in the garden, limited access to pet food and sealed potential roof/cavity access points. Try snap traps or electric traps.

There are two main types of rodent poison. The most commonly used are Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARS). They are so powerful that a single feed will usually prove lethal. However, there is a time lag between when the rodent eats the bait and dies. This provides plenty of time to wander around and be scooped up by a hunting owl. In fact some owls consume multiple poisoned, active mice in one feed. SGARs take a long time to break down and remain in tissues and organs for years.

Barn owl eating mouse (RB)

First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs) are effective but breakdown quickly, so there is less chance of larger animals being poisoned.

LESS HARMFUL FGAR ACTIVE CONSTITUENTS:

- ✔ WARFARIN
- ✔ COUMATETRALYL

MORE HARMFUL SGAR ACTIVE CONSTITUENTS:

- ✗ BRODIFACOUM
- ✗ BROMADIOLONE
- ✗ DIFENACOUM
- ✗ DIFETHIALONE
- ✗ FLOCOUMAFEN

Wildlife-friendly fencing

Wildlife such as wallabies, koalas, birds and bats regularly travel through the landscape to locate food or find partners for mating. When wildlife crosses barriers such as fences they can be easily killed or injured because the animals get caught or tangled in the wire or wounded by the fence posts. Wildlife Friendly Fencing is fencing that is safe and effective for wildlife, people and livestock. It allows appropriate free movement across urban and rural environments that does not harm wildlife.

Barking Owl caught in barbed wire (WFF)

Existing fences

- Replace barbed wire with plastic-coated wire (sighter wire) to make the wire more visible and reduce injury from contact. Use electric fences to contain stock
- If this is not practical, locate wildlife trails and fit barbed wire with PVC conduit. Wildlife tends to use the same paths to cross properties. Look for areas of dense vegetation with visible wildlife trails
- Increase visibility by painting posts and attaching reflective material such as bunting or old CDs
- Remove chicken wire and wire mesh
- Remove low fence wires to 50cm to allow animals such as wombats and echidnas to easily cross under

Do you need a fence? If there are no animals to keep in or out, can you use trees and shrubs instead to define property boundaries and enhance privacy

New fences

- Post and rail fencing is the most wildlife-friendly fencing
- Avoid using barbed wire and ringlock fencing
- A ridged top rail prevents injury of animals trying to cross over the fence

For more detailed information on constructing a wildlife-friendly fence visit: **wildlifefriendlyfencing.com/WFF/Friendly_Fencing.html**

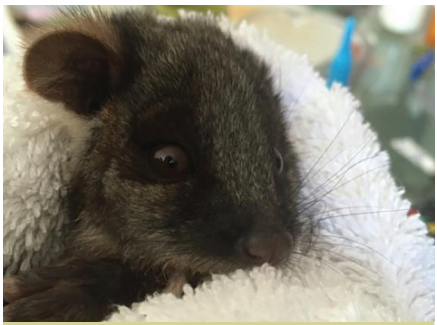
This will reduce but not remove the risk to wildlife. Regularly check your fences to ensure no wildlife has got entangled.

Plastic sighter wire

Vehicle collisions

Wildlife vehicle collisions significantly contribute to death and injury of many wildlife species. Reducing your driving speed at dawn, dusk and night-time will give you more time to spot wildlife and the animals an opportunity to move off the road.

If an animal appears dazzled by headlights, flash your lights a number of times if it is safe to do so.



Rescued baby Ringtail possum

ADD TO YOUR PHONE CONTACTS:

Wildlife Rescue and Emergency Service
0427 301 401

AWARE Wildlife Rescue
0412 433 727

Wildlife Victoria
03 8400 7300

Wildlife Rescue and Information Network 0419 356 433

Expert help

If you find sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, immediately call for assistance. Do not try to unnecessarily handle the animal. Always treat wildlife with caution, especially when distressed or injured. They may react unpredictably, carry disease and can be dangerous. Wherever possible, wait for an experienced/ qualified person to arrive. Police will assist with traffic management until a wildlife rescue expert has taken the injured animal to a vet or wildlife carer.

If the animal has died, move the body well away from the road. If you can, check the pouch for surviving joeys or contact a wildlife rescue service to request a pouch check.

Rescued baby Southern Boobok Owl (MC)

Planting and maintenance

Garden maintenance keeps your garden looking fresh and healthy. It is an opportunity to check your plant health and spot any pest infestations before they become a major issue. Prune back leggy foliage or remove any branches that may become a safety issue. Garden maintenance is a healthy family activity and a perfect opportunity to spy garden critters.

Plant selection

Success in the garden starts with choosing the right plant for the right spot.

To find the ideal spot for your plant, consider its soil, moisture and sunlight requirements and potential size when fully grown. Plant labels and nursery staff should assist you with selecting suitable plants by understanding their needs. Also consider how plants may interact with each other, especially the influence large trees may have in your garden as they mature.

It's a good idea to know exactly where you are going to plant something. This will help avoid failed plantings or other issues in your patch. For example, if not carefully selected and positioned, large trees may shade out sun-loving plants underneath them, impact nearby buildings or plumbing with their vigorous roots, or create problems with leaves dropping in gutters.

Timing of planting is important. Generally autumn and early winter is an ideal time to plant as the weather is usually cooler and wetter encouraging the establishment of a strong root system. It is best to give plants a deep water rather than frequent, shallow watering.

When selecting plants from a nursery check that the plant is healthy.

- Start with the foliage and ensure the plant has plenty of new green growth. Avoid plants with pale, yellowing or wilting leaves as these can be a sign of stress.
- Check the undersides of leaves as well as the stem joints for any insect pests or signs of disease such as pale or dark spots, webs, chewed leaves or lesions on the stem.
- Select plants that have compact, bushy growth. Long, leggy growth often indicates a struggle.
- Plants that have roots growing out of the drainage holes or on top of the potting soil can be root bound and may be too stressed to thrive in your garden. And, if a plant doesn't have many roots, it may need more time to grow and become garden-worthy.
- Remember that plants in larger pots will not necessarily give you better results. Tubestock (plants in 15cm tall plastic tubes) will generally catch up with and outgrow larger, more mature stock. They are also easier to establish in difficult sites with poor soils.

Site preparation

To find the ideal spot for your plant, consider its soil, moisture and sunlight requirements and potential size when fully grown.

Weeds

Weeds should be controlled prior to planting to reduce competition and for post-planting maintenance. Hand-weed any pest plants from the site. Avoid spraying the weeds with chemicals as they can build up in the soil and are harmful to soil organisms and all wildlife within the food chain.

For large patches of weeds, such as grasses and creepers, solarisation is an option for weed control. Cover the plants with thick black or clear plastic and cover the edge with soil or heavy timbers. Leave for 6-8 weeks over summer. This process cooks the weeds.

When weeding try and minimise disturbance to the soil as much as possible. Tilling or excessive digging-over can destroy the important fungi in the soil which is crucial to the overall health of your garden and plants.

Pre-planting mulch

Good quality mulch should be spread over your garden to a minimum depth of 10cm prior to planting. Water your soil before laying mulch.

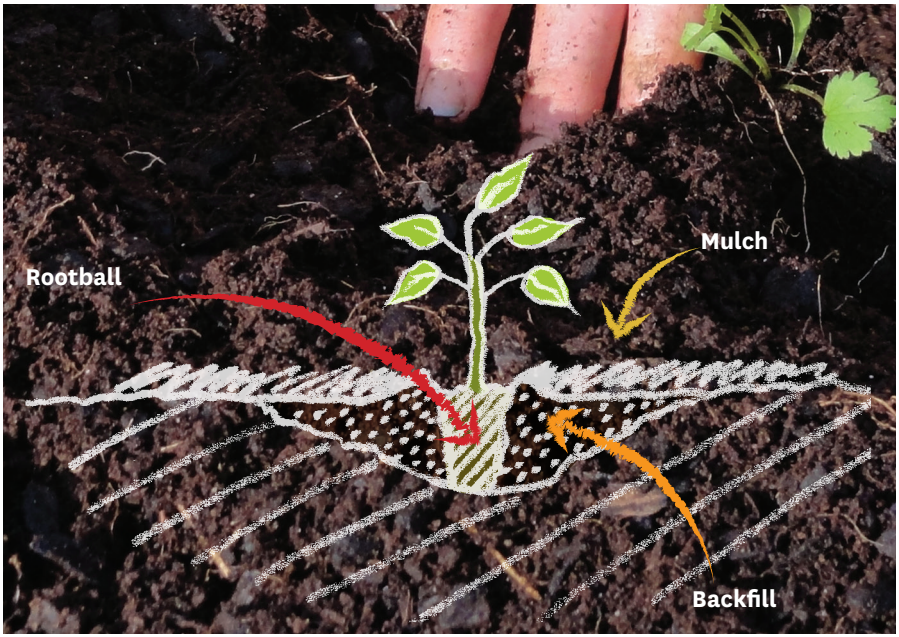
Covering the soil surface with mulch can improve soil structure, nutrient availability and water retention, and prevent future weed growth. Check if there is any existing indigenous vegetation to ensure you do not mulch over the top of it.

Ensure that the mulch you select is made from a sustainable resource. Chipped waste wood and green waste mulches are generally a good option. Always ensure that any green waste has been well composted before use to kill any weed seeds that may be present.

Hand weeding

Mulch improves soil and helps to prevent weed growth.

Planting out



1. Give your potted plant a good soak in a bucket of water prior to planting.
2. Dig a sloping, shallow hole 2 to 3 times the width of the root ball and as deep as the root ball.
3. Remove any weeds in the planting hole as they can emit a chemical that inhibits root growth.
4. Fill the hole with water and allow it to drain before planting.
5. Upend your pot. Any roots protruding through the bottom can be pruned before removing from the pot. Remove the plant from the pot by holding it upside down and gently tap it out of the pot. Note, there is generally no need to tease or separate the root ball,unless a plant is severely root bound. It is better not to disturb the root system.
6. Place the plant in the hole so that the top of the root ball is flush with the surface level.
7. Backfill loose soil around the plant and press down firmly.
8. Fashion a circle of raised soil around the edge of the root ball to form a watering basin.
9. Water thoroughly to settle the soil around the plant.
10. Mulch up to the edge of the root ball. Do not mulch against the stem as this may cause collar rot.

Stakes and guards

Staked and guarded seedling

Staked Eucalyptus

Stakes and guards

A plant will grow with greater strength if it is not tied to a stake. When a plant is blown around by the wind, plant hormones are released by this movement creating a stronger plant. Plants only need to be staked if they are in danger of toppling over. If staking is required, ensure that the ties allow for some movement. Ensure the ties do not ringbark the plant as it grows. As a rule of thumb - use a tie that is softer than the plant it is tied to - old cotton tee shirts are great due to biodegradability.

Young plants may need protection from wildlife and rabbits. Position three stakes in a triangular formation and add a guard.

Plastic guards should be avoided around waterways or exposed, windy sites as they can become a litter problem. Consider instead biodegradable guards. Remove the guard once the plant is producing lots of new growth, generally after two years.

Mulch

Mulch helps to smother weeds and hold water in the organic matter and soil. As some mulch layers break down, they also add nutrients to the soil. Very fine mulches are to be avoided as they can compact and not allow water to reach the soil beneath. Their fineness also means they are capable of holding a lot of water, once again preventing it from filtering into the soil beneath. Good organic mulch is a mix of fine and coarse particles. Avoid using grass clipping as a mulch as they tend to increase weed levels in your garden. Better to compost them or spread them lightly over your lawn. Avoid spreading around the base of trees as this can cause damage. Mulch is not required where there is a natural leaf litter layer. e.g. in areas of existing native vegetation. This allows for the existing seed bank to generate.

Which mulch does my garden need?

- Straw-based mulches are ideal for sandy soils, vegetable gardens and fruit trees. They break down quickly returning nutrients to the soil.
- Bark/Bush mulch is useful for weed suppression. Bark mulch is longer lasting than straw-based mulches.
- Use pine bark and needles if you have alkaline soil or plants that are acid-loving.
- Stone/pebble mulch is suitable in areas of high traffic or succulent plant beds. Make sure your stones are sourced sustainably. For more information visit **sgaonline.org.au/sustainable-horizontal-garden-surfaces/.**

Straw mulch

Bush mulch

Pebble mulch

Mulch as habitat

- Bush mulch is not just ideal for native habitat garden, but all types of gardens. When spread on your garden it will create a natural leaf litter look and provide habitat for insects and lizards to shelter and feed. It will break down with time to improve the quality of the soil.
- Many habitat gardeners mulch quite deeply to a depth of 10-15 cm to encourage invertebrate life.


Erect Guinea-flower

How to mulch

1. Remove weeds from your soil.
2. Moisten the soil thoroughly. Ensure the water is penetrating the soil. If the water is running off the soil, fork through some compost to aid water retention.
3. Spread your mulch to a depth of 3-10 cm.
4. Keep the area directly around each plant mulch-free, as contact can occasionally lead to disease such as collar-rot.
5. Top up as your mulch breaks down. Generally twice a year for fine mulches and once every couple of years for coarse mulches.


Bush mulched garden bed

Watering

Water is critical for plant health. Collecting rainwater from your roof is an ideal water source for your garden. A dedicated rainwater tank enables you to continue watering your plants should water restrictions apply. Indigenous plants are generally drought-tolerant once they are established (1-2 years). Check for wilting on hot days. Group plants according to their water needs.

How water is delivered to your plants is very important.

- Use a drip line watering system which reduces waste by ensuring that the water only goes to the roots of your plants where it is needed.
- Check and clean your irrigation system every spring to ensure it is working efficiently.
- Install garden tap timers to reduce over-watering and monitor.
- Use a rain sensor so that watering doesn't occur automatically and ensure the system is turned off if rain is predicted.
- Water in the early morning so your plants are not distressed through the heat of the day, this may also work to reduce the impact of fungal diseases and moulds.
- Give your plants a long, deep watering and make sure they are grouped according to their water needs.
- Use a trigger nozzle hose when watering for extra savings!

For information on current permanent water use rules and rebates contact your water retailer.

Tap timer


Dripline irrigation


Trigger nozzle

Natural pest control

Gardening with indigenous plants is a great reason to ditch your herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers as you generally won't need them and they kill our native wildlife and important natural pest-controlling insects and fungi. By growing a good diversity of plants and using non-chemical pest control you can usually control outbreaks of pests in your garden, and create healthier habitats.

Consider

- Check your garden regularly for pests.
- Make sure plants are not planted too close together so there is good ventilation to prevent fungal diseases.
- Hand remove weeds when they are small.
- Attract natural predators to your garden. Create the right habitat and your garden will be jumping with ladybirds and small birds feasting on garden pests.
- Keep your pruning tools sharp so cuts are clean and bark isn't torn.

Some home remedies

- Add a few drops of detergent, linseed or fish oil to a shallow dish to catch earwigs and Portuguese millipedes.
- Place a ring of crushed eggshell, sawdust or coffee grounds around plants to deter snails and slugs. They will also tend to gather under an upturned pot for easy collection.
- Make a garlic spray (2 tablespoons of crushed garlic to 1 litre of water. Stand overnight, strain and spray).
- Hunt introduced garden snails after dark, especially after rain.

Common Spotted Ladybird eating aphids (ES)

Introduced Garden Snail

Snail trap

Teatree

Pruning

Pruning prevents plants from getting leggy and untidy. Some indigenous plants respond well to a heavy pruning, while others can suffer from a light trim. Check with your local nursery about individual species.

As a rule of thumb most plants can be trimmed lightly after flowering during their first two years of growth by pinching out the tips. After that, prune with secateurs by about a third after flowering to shape the plant and encourage a more compact form.

Daisies such as *Chrysocephalum* and *Xerochrysum* species, and grasses such as Poas, Kangaroo Grass and Wallaby Grass respond well to a heavy prune (50-80%) shortly after seeding.

Ensure your pruning tools are sharp so cuts are clean and the bark isn't torn. Clean your secateurs by wiping the blades with eucalyptus oil before moving between plants to prevent potentially spreading disease.

Correas

Dusty Miller

Trees

Trees produce oxygen, absorb carbon dioxide and filter airborne pollutants. They also provide shelter and shade and reduce the effects of wind. Also they add enormously to the beauty of our streetscapes and provide valuable habitat for wildlife.

Frankston City Council manages approximately 65,000 street trees representing over 530 species.

Council also maintains a Register of Significant Trees on Public Land. The aim of this Register is to increase awareness of these iconic trees amongst Council staff, contractors, external agencies and the community. This will lead to greater appreciation for their contribution as a landmark feature, heritage or cultural value, outstanding size, unusual growth habit or species or for their support to our local fauna.

Tree maintenance

Looking after your tree will help maintain a healthy, long lived plant. Give your tree a deep watering when establishing rather than shallow, frequent watering. Particularly in the first 3-5 years your tree will benefit from regular pruning of any diseased branches or deadwood, removing food sources for any fungal pathogens. Pruning will also reduce the incident of branch limbs dropping. It is not a good idea to attach swings or tree houses to a tree as they can create large open wounds or limit trunk growth.

Mulch to a depth of 8-10cm and ensure your mulch extends to the drip line of the tree canopy as a tree's root system will extend beyond this area.

Do you need an arborist?

Arborists are professionals who can help with tree pruning, pest and disease management and if required, tree removal. They are trained and equipped to work at height without causing unnecessary damage to your garden or home. If your tree needs pruning or removal you should ensure they are suitably qualified and insured. Also contact Council to see if you need a permit to prune or remove a tree. Fines can apply for the unlawful removal or pruning of trees.

For further information see page 60 under Council resources.

Reference and advice

Environmental volunteers and groups

There are many different opportunities for volunteering within Frankston City Council and other agencies within Frankston City covering work in natural reserves, Gardens for Wildlife, wildlife rescue, beach clean ups and environmental action and advocacy groups. These volunteers are always keen to have new members join them and share the passion and achievements.

For further information see page 60 under Council resources.

Become a citizen scientist!

You might like to record your wildlife observations. The iNaturalist platform helps you to share your observations, see sightings near you and have your records added to the national biodiversity database for use by others including scientists. Find out more at **inaturalist.ala.org.au** and **inaturalist.org/projects/frankston-city-council-biodiversity**

Or participate in backyard wildlife surveys such as:

- Aussie Backyard Bird Count **aussiebirdcount.org.au**
- Wild Pollinator Count **wildpollinatorcount.com**
- Frog ID week **frogid.net.au**

Land for Wildlife

Land for Wildlife (Victoria) is a State Government program supporting landholders or managers who provide habitat for native wildlife on their land.

Land for Wildlife is a voluntary wildlife conservation program. If your property is 0.4 hectares (1 acre) or greater and you wish to create or protect wildlife habitats, then the Land for Wildlife scheme can offer you advice and assistance no matter whether you manage a farm, a bush block or school ground.

Landholder participation is free and membership doesn't alter the legal status of your property in any way.

Over 12,500 people make a significant contribution to native biodiversity conservation through their combined membership, actively involved in protecting or restoring habitats on their own land. Approximately 4,500 properties (more than 500,000 hectares of private land) are currently registered throughout Victoria, many in Frankston.

For more information visit: **wildlife.vic.gov.au/protecting-wildlife/land-for-wildlife**

Gardens for Wildlife

The Gardens for Wildlife program assists residents to create a wildlife-friendly habitat by providing simple, practical advice. The program is provided by Frankston City Council and supported by our wonderful garden guide volunteers. For further information see page 60 under Council resources.

White-eared Honeyeater

Council resources

frankston.vic.gov.au/NativeFauna

frankston.vic.gov.au/NativeFlora

frankston.vic.gov.au/PestAnimals

frankston.vic.gov.au/EnvironmentalWeeds

frankston.vic.gov.au/ApplyforaNatureStripPlantingPermit

Request a street tree frankston.vic.gov.au/Urban-Forest-Action-Plan-2020-2040

frankston.vic.gov.au/EnviroActivities

frankston.vic.gov.au/MaintainingTreesonPrivateProperty

frankston.vic.gov.au/GardensforWildlife

Frankston City Council Indigenous Plant Guide.

Frankston City Council Invasive Species Guide.

Frankston City Council Indigenous Fauna Guide.

Natural Reserves within the Frankston City.

Sustainable Gardening in Frankston City.

Further reading

Bull, M. (2014) *Flora of Melbourne*, Hyland House Publishing, Melbourne.

Costermans, L. (2009) *Native Trees and Shrubs of South-East Australia*, Reed New Holland, Sydney.

Richardson, F.J., Richardson, R.G. and Shepherd, R.C.H (2011) *Weeds of the South-East – an identification guide for Australia*, Second edition, R.G. and F.J Richardson, Victoria.

Scott, R. et el (2002) *Indigenous Plants of the Sandbelt*, Earthcare, St Kilda.

Useful websites

Frankston City Council
frankston.vic.gov.au

Garden for Wildlife Victoria
gardensforwildlifevictoria.com

Agriculture Victoria
agriculture.vic.gov.au

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
delwp.vic.gov.au

Melbourne Water
melbournewater.com.au

Weeds Australia
weeds.org.au

Pestsmart
pestsmart.org.au

Invasive Species Council
invasives.org.au

Key Messages Checklist

Key components	✔	Notes
I have observed my local environment and my garden before finalising my garden design.		
I have included elements from the recipes for wildlife section within my garden design		
I have included many different plants across a variety of colours, height and forms.		
I have incorporated ground level diversity by mulching and leaving branches and leaf litter on the soil.		
I have ensured adequate water supply and safe shelter for wildlife.		
Where appropriate I have included guarding young indigenous plants and reducing browsing pressure.		
I have considered the bushfire risk around buildings, waterways and run-off from paths.		
I have planned to plant at an appropriate time of the year for my garden's location – not too dry and not too wet and cold.		
I try to avoid the use of chemicals, including pesticides and herbicides.		
I have discussed and placed my plant orders with my indigenous nursery by October of the year prior to when I will be planting.		
I have selected the right plants for my area and the right part of my garden for them to thrive.		
I have removed weedy garden escapees and invaders and disposed of them appropriately.		

Frankston City Council
30 Davey Street,
Frankston VIC 3199
Australia
PO Box 490
Frankston VIC 3199

Phone 1300 322 322
Fax +61 3 9784 1094
Email info@frankston.vic.gov.au
frankston.vic.gov.au

Seaford >> Frankston >> Langwarrin >> Karingal >> Skye >> Frankston South >> Frankston North >> Carrum Downs >> Langwarrin South >> Sandhurst