

Attracting Birds to your Garden

What makes a good bird garden?

Presence of tall trees

Mature, indigenous trees provide hollows and other nesting sites, night-roosts, flowers for nectar, insects on leaves, under bark and buzzing around the flowers. Acacias (wattles), eucalypts, casuarinas, banksias or palms may be appropriate.

Presence of middle and ground level shrubs

A thick understorey layer of ferns, tall grasses, and shrubs from about ground level to two metres gives security to small birds such as thornbills, robins, scrubwrens and fairy-wrens.



Grey fantail © A. Carew

Permanent water supply

Although the birdbath does not need to be fancy it needs to be kept filled, as birds will come to rely upon it. Each bath or pond must be carefully sited to allow small birds to dive quickly into nearby cover.

Suburban proximity to a patch of natural bushland, within 3km

The nearby bushland can help provide elements your garden cannot therefore increasing the diversity of habitat for birds in your area.

A garden for the birds

Below are a few examples of plants that attract birds to your garden; some provide shelter, some food, others both. Try to have a balance—too many of a particular type of plant will attract a limited range of birds. For example large, showy grevilleas tend to attract the more aggressive nectar-feeders like Red Wattlebird and Noisy Miner, reducing the opportunities for smaller birds. Please check the indigenous plants of your own area before making a selection.

Shelter for small birds (scrubwrens, fairy-wrens, thornbills)

Prickly dense shrubs – hakea, acacia, sweet bursaria, burgan, leptospermum.

Shelter for bigger birds (magpies, owls, Tawny Frogmouths, parrots)

Tall trees – eucalypts, casuarina, banksia, acacia.

Insect hosts for robins, wrens, treecreepers

Acacia, bursaria, correa, hardenbergia, melaleuca

birds are in our nature

Nectar for honeyeaters, lorikeets

Eucalypts, correas, epacris, grevillea, mistletoe, xanthorrhoea

Seeds for cockatoos, finches, pigeons

Acacia, casuarina, native grasses – poa, sedges

Multi-purpose

Acacia, banksia, eucalypts, grevillea, hakea, leptospermum, melaleuca



New Holland Honeyeater © John Barkla

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I feed the birds?

A constant supply of 'artificial' food can be unhealthy for birds. Feeding birds can attract large numbers of one species at the expense of diversity. Seeds in some wild seed mixes are potential weeds. Groups of birds at a feeding station become easy targets for birds of prey, cats and foxes.

It is better to create a bird habitat through planting and providing water.

Should I be careful with snail bait and other garden poisons?

Avoiding the use of poisons in your garden can increase the number of insects available to birds.

How can I keep birds away from my fruit tree?

Try hanging a hawk shape above the tree, nets, and the more permanent solution of building a cage around the tree.

What should I do with sick or baby birds I find?

Baby birds are best left where found. Parents will often continue to feed them. Registered animal welfare agents can be contacted to care for sick birds. Your local vet will be able to give you a contact.

How can I stop birds flying into windows?

Stick on hawk shapes may help to deter birds flying directly into large windows.



Spotted Pardalote © John Barkla



Variegated Fairywren (female) © Trevor Queded

Further information

Birds in Your Garden, Revised Edition by Ellen McCulloch

Hyland House Publishing Pty Ltd, 2000

The Australian Bird-Garden: Creating Havens for Native Birds by Graham Pizzey, Harper Collins Publishers Pty Ltd, 2000

Birdwatching in Australia and New Zealand by Ken Simpson and Zoë Wilson, Reed New Holland, 1998

www.birdsinbackyards.net

www.backyards4wildlife.com.au

www.floraforfauna.com.au



Crested Pigeon © John Barkla

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