

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



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.



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.

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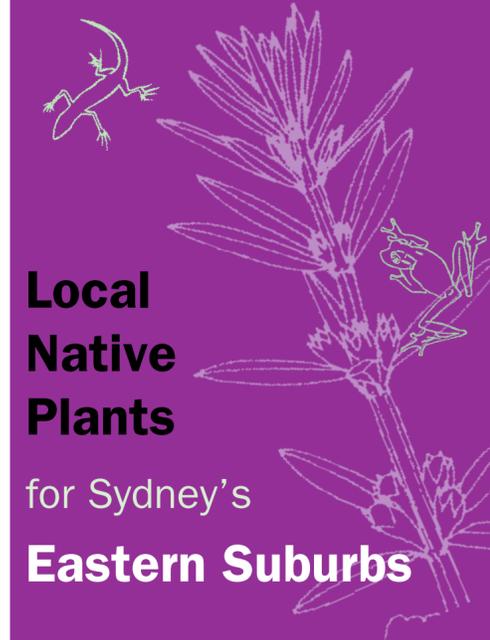
Contacts

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

Waverley Council
Bushcare Projects Coordinator 9369 8041
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Randwick City Council
Bushland Management 9399 0683
Noxious Weeds 9399 0686
Randwick Council Community Nursery 9399 0933
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Parks Department 9366 3521
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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.

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