

GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

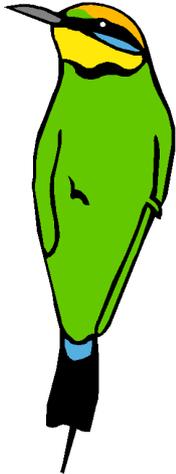
Rubble, Reptiles and Realisation

By Claire Ghee (Old Eastside Resident GfWer)

Concrete, broken bricks and smashed tiles, this was the eye sore which I had been harbouring in the front yard of my Garden for Wildlife property. A pile of rubble had accumulated over the years to become a tribute to various household DIY projects, not all of which were successful.



What a wasted area of the garden, if I planted some local species I could enhance the environment out the front of the house and perhaps attract some wildlife. The skip arrived and work began. While shifting through the junk I spotted some movement in the depths. Carefully removing overlying pieces of rubble I uncovered the long body of a *Delma tinctoria* (pictured), which is a legless lizard. After discovering this interesting little reptile in my waste pile I proceeded cautiously just in case there were other sleeping natives. There were more! A Bynoes Gecko (*Heteronotia binoei*) raced onto my foot from under a brick which I was moving. Later, looking up at me from a pile of broken glass was a Zig-Zag Gecko (*Oedura rhombifer*). I also got a fright when a Two toed Lerista (*Lerista bipes*) emerged from my handful of concrete crumbs. These creatures had found in my rubble a suitable habitat for themselves over winter. Of course the tired reptiles were promptly transferred to a pile of leaves in the corner of the garden to sleep off the rest of the winter in peace. The most unlikely places may be a safe haven for wildlife and the effort of cultivating a lavish native garden may not always be necessary to attract wildlife onto your property.



According to herpetologist Greg Fyfe, *Delma tinctoria* is the most common *Delma* species in the town area of Alice Springs. This lizard looks a bit like a Rusty Topped *Delma* (*Delma borea*), but only has a single pair of post nasal scales rather than 2 pairs. Most properties in town that have a native garden with lots of groundcover vegetation will have this legless lizard present.

A big thank you to the GfWers who made it to the Big headed Ant Workshop on the 14th July. We had 20 people attending the information session and it was interesting to compare microscopic views of introduced ant species to the native ants. Thanks to Andy from **Threatened Species Network** for organising the workshop with Garden for Wildlife, **Bloomin Deserts** for providing an ideal location for the workshop and to **Red Centre Pest Control** for providing valuable information about the control of the Big Headed Ant.