

GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

Creating a Bird Friendly Garden!

The plants that originally flourished in the Alice Springs region were naturally adapted to the area and supported a rich array of animal wildlife. By planting local native plants, you can recreate some of the relationships that existed between native plants and native wildlife.

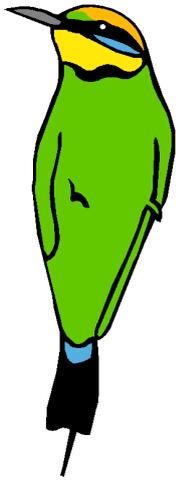
It is important to plant a range of differing plants that have a variety of heights. Different animals live in different layers of vegetation, so the more variety that you can provide in the size of plants you grow, the greater the variety of animals you are likely to attract. Different vegetation levels provide a diverse supply of food and safe retreats. Western bowerbirds *Chlamydera guttata* will feed on fruit and berries in one layer, the male will build a bower in the grassy undergrowth and the female will build a nest in the upper strata of the vegetation. To provide an attractive habitat for this and other species, all their



Juvenile Pied Butcher Birds, Australian Ringneck Parrots and Spiney-cheeked Honeyeaters

needs should be taken into account – food (local native plants), water, shelter, breeding habitat, and protection from native and introduced predators.

Currently, it is bird breeding season and you may have noticed an increase in bird activity in around town. This is due to the warmer weather promoting breeding activity by an increase in vegetation blossoms as well as an increase in insects for feeding.



Water in one form or another is essential for all birds. Some species will venture closer to the populated areas looking for water, especially around the road verges, where there is succulent grasses shooting. While many insectivorous bird species acquire the majority of their water from their food, granivores such as Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla*, Budgies *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Zebra finch *Melopsittacus undulatus*, Diamond dove *Geopelia cuneata* and Peaceful dove *Geopelia striata* need drinking water daily and most species will utilise fresh water for bathing.

Bird baths can be placed in varying locations within the garden, but ensure that you secure the area from cats and other predators. It's a good idea to keep the bird bath deep enough so that smaller birds can bath in it and importantly keep the water fresh. Bird baths don't require a lot of water and if you are in the habit of capturing the cold water from the shower before it heats up, you can bucket this water into your bird bath as well as onto the garden.

Garden for Wildlife News

We now have 80 property members, which is fantastic! For those of you that have not returned your Garden for Wildlife registration form, now is the time to do it as soon it will be too warm to get out in your garden. I look forward to providing you with valuable information to assist with biodiversity conservation of the unique habitats within Alice Springs.

Geoff Miers Garden Solutions Nursery

Geoff Miers has opened the doors to his nursery on Lindsay Ave. The nursery provides detailed information about local native plants, and is designed so that you can view all the different strata easily i.e. ground covers, shrubs, tall shrubs up to trees.

Books Worth a Look

Greening Australia's book *Native Plants for Central Australian Gardens*

This is a great reference book, its clear and concise and provides valuable tips for creating and maintaining a garden in our local environment. The book profiles approximately 50 native plants in detail, with information on trees, tall shrubs, shrubs, groundcovers and grasses. Information on habitat, salt and frost tolerance, lifespan, growth speed, specific uses and flowering is presented in an easy to follow table.

The book is available by mail through Greening Australia, Geoff Miers Garden Solutions and will be widely available soon in the local book stores.

National Water Week - Waterwise Garden Workshop

Sunday 21st October 2007. Find out about water in Alice Springs and arid zone gardening techniques, view a new greywater system, help spread mulch and lay irrigation, brainstorm design ideas and gather tips for your own waterwise garden, learn how to create recycled sculptures for your garden. COOLmob will be putting on a BBQ and you can visit an arid zone Garden in the afternoon. For further details please contact Heidi 08 8955 5222 or Kat from COOLmob at dka.coolmob@coolmob.org

RSVP by Wednesday 17th October (limited numbers).