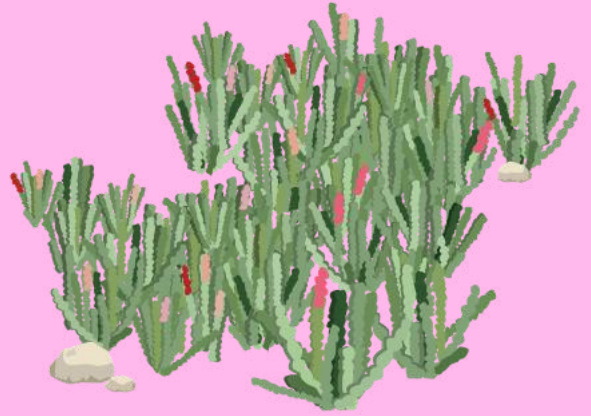
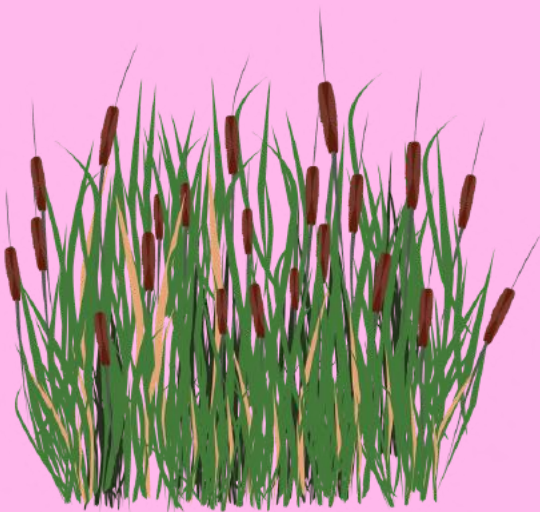




A guide to growing native plants at home



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2026



Autumn in Australia is planting season



Autumn is the perfect time to start planting: it brings cooler air, softer soil, and the first rains of the season give newly planted natives the best possible start. Roots establish quietly through winter, so by the time spring arrives, your plants are anchored and ready to grow.

Timing is important. **Autumn is the best time to plant native seedlings, right after the first rains.** (Source: State Flora)

"Plants are everything for wildlife – food, shelter, survival. Here in the Northern Rivers, our Glossy Black-Cockatoos feed solely on the seeds of she-oak trees. By planting she-oak trees, we're growing their future food source and helping them to survive." – Kelly Saunderson, CVA Project Officer, Northern Rivers NSW

Australia is one of the most biodiverse nations on Earth, home to 600,000–700,000 native species. **84% of our plants and 83% of our mammals are found nowhere else on the planet.** (DCCEEW State of the Environment 2021; TERN/DCCEEW 2025)

Over 100 Australian species have been formally declared extinct since European colonisation. There are 2,175 species threatened with extinction – a number that has grown 54% since 2000.

The connection between biodiversity loss and planting is direct. Native wildlife and local plants evolved together over millennia. When we plant native species back, wildlife notices fast.

You Don't Need to Join a Field Day to Make a Difference

CVA runs conservation projects across Australia, and we'd love to have you at one of our field events. But this guide is for the moments in between. A pot on a balcony, a patch of native plants at the front of the house. These nature-positive choices, repeated across thousands of homes, cumulatively add up to something real for local biodiversity.

The pages that follow give you region-specific plant recommendations on where CVA teams are based, and cover both balcony and garden tips. Every suggestion is chosen for your local climate and to be low-maintenance, while supporting wildlife.

A reminder before you start: **not all Australian natives are right for every part of Australia.** A plant native to southwest WA may become a weed in Queensland. Use this free guide as an initial step and always confirm with your local nursery or council that a species is native to your specific area before planting. (Source: Australian Native Plants Society.)

A NOTE ON THIS GUIDE

We have included regions where CVA Project Officers are based. These are Perth (WA), Sydney (NSW), Northern Rivers (NSW), Melbourne (VIC), Adelaide (SA), Hobart (TAS), Brisbane (QLD), Mackay (QLD), and Gladstone (QLD). If you live in a different part of Australia (including the Northern Territory, ACT, or regional WA), we encourage you to contact your local council or native nursery for region-specific advice.



Perth, Western Australia

Perth sits at the heart of one of only **36 globally recognised biodiversity hotspots**. The south-west corner of WA (Noongar Boodjar) contains **around 8,000 plant species** in a relatively small area, many found nowhere else on Earth. Summer is hot and dry; winter brings most of the rain. Autumn planting gives roots time to settle before the summer heat arrives. (Source: Minimalist Gardener, 2025; Tim Davies Landscaping, 2024.)

Perth's soils vary dramatically by suburb and your selection of plants to grow should be made based on your exact soil type and area within Perth. If in doubt, contact Native Plants WA (nativeplantswa.org.au) — a not-for-profit nursery that provides propagation advice about local species and runs community education programs. Alternatively, take a look at local planting guide resources such as [RewildPerth](#) or [Sercul](#).

BALCONY



Kangaroo Paw
(*Anigozanthos* spp.)

Iconic WA native. Nectar-rich flowers attract birds and insects. Excellent pot plant in a sunny spot. Compact cultivars available for smaller spaces.



Blue Lechenaultia
(*Lechenaultia biloba*)

Striking bright blue flowers. Suited to free-draining pots and rockeries. A striking WA wildflower and great conversation starter on a balcony.



Correa (*Correa* spp.)

Compact shrub growing 0.5–1.5 m. Bell-shaped flowers attract honeyeaters through winter. Thrives in pots and tolerates Perth's sandy soils and part-shade.

GARDEN



Candle Banksia
(*Banksia attenuata*)

Dominant tree of the Swan Coastal Plain. Long cream-yellow flower spikes fill a critical nectar gap for honeyeaters in summer. Never fertilise with phosphorus.



Grass Tree (Balga)
(*Xanthorrhoea preissii*)

Culturally significant to Noongar people. A keystone plant providing nectar, nesting material and reptile habitat. Plant in full sun. Requires sandy soil; slow to establish but virtually maintenance-free.



Toothbrush Grevillea
(*Grevillea bipinnatifida*)

Fast-growing. Attracts frogs, lizards, bees, birds and butterflies. Drought-tolerant once established. Well-suited to Perth's sandy soils.

Sydney, New South Wales

Sydney's temperate coastal climate (mild winters, warm summers, moderate year-round rainfall) suits a wide range of eastern Australian natives. Urban development has significantly fragmented native habitat across the Sydney Basin, which has recorded the **highest number of new threatened species listings in both 2024 and 2025**. (Source: DCCEEW, TERN Australia's Environment Report, 2025.) Home planting makes a measurable contribution to restoring native biodiversity.

BALCONY



White Correa
(*Correa alba*)

This salt-tolerant and wind-resistant plant grows well in coastal gardens and sandy soils, and usually flowers in late Autumn and winter.



Blue Flax Lily
(*Dianella caerulea*)

Strappy-leaved perennial with purple flowers and edible purple berries. Tolerates shade; suits most soils. A good plant for beginners.



Everlasting Daisy
(*Xerochrysum bracteatum*)

Bright yellow flowers almost year-round, attracts bees and butterflies. Colour varieties vary by region. Check with your local nursery.

GARDEN



Sweet-scented Wattle
(*Acacia suaveolens*)

Produces sweet-smelling flowers from June to October which attract birds and insects. Prefers well-drained, sandy soils and full or partial sun. Drought-tolerant once established.



Coastal Rosemary
(*Westringia fruticosa*)

This small, flowering shrub tolerates most soil types and is known for being hardy, easy to grow, and low maintenance.



Waratah
(*Telopea speciosissima*)

NSW state emblem. Striking large red flowers support nectar-feeding birds. Once found widely in metropolitan Sydney; now mainly survives in national parks. Can be challenging to grow and requires a patient green thumb.



Grevillea
(*Grevillea* spp.)

Hundreds of species across a range of sizes. Nectar-rich flowers attract birds, bees and butterflies across multiple seasons. Choose a species local to your Sydney suburb.



Cinnamon Myrtle
(*Backhousia myrtifolia*)

This small rainforest tree species is known for its aromatic leaves. Grows best in full sun and tolerates most soil types. Flowers in summer, attracting birds and pollinators.

Check your local council website for planting guides and free native plant programs. The [Trees Near Me NSW](#) app enables users to explore Plant Community Types across New South Wales and to see what plants were around before being cleared. [National Tree Day's](#) planting guides provide insights into the most suitable native plants for your home, school, or community. Sydney councils – including Canterbury-Bankstown, Waverley, and Canada Bay – have run native plant giveaway programs for residents with balconies and small gardens. There are also many local nurseries, such as IndigiGrow in Sydney, that offer expertise and advice on growing Australian native edible plants and the critically endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

Northern Rivers, New South Wales

The Northern Rivers region (around Lismore, Byron Bay, and Mullumbimby) sits within the warm-humid subtropical zone. It borders the same ecological area as Southeast Queensland. Rainfall is high and seasons are distinct. The region is rich in subtropical rainforest species and coastal heath plants. **Always confirm species with your local council**, as some NSW natives become weedy in this region's climate.

BALCONY



Native Violet
(*Viola hederacea*)

Low-growing ground cover. Masses of small purple-and-white flowers. Suits hanging baskets and pots in part shade. Hardy and spreads gently to fill space.



Pigface
(*Carpobrotus glaucescens*)

Native Australian succulent featuring bright pink-magenta flowers. It withstands coastal exposure, salt spray, and dry periods once established. Ensure to source *Carpobrotus glaucescens* (the native species) instead of the invasive *Carpobrotus edulis*.



Blue Flax Lily
(*Dianella caerulea*)

Strappy-leaved perennial with purple flowers and edible purple berries. Tolerates shade; suits most soils. A good plant for beginners.

GARDEN



Bangalow Palm
(*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*)

Iconic subtropical rainforest palm. Provides canopy structure, fruit for birds, and a lush look suited to the Northern Rivers' humid landscape.



Callistemon (Bottlebrush)
(*Callistemon viminalis*)

Weeping bottlebrush with vivid red flowers. Magnets for honeyeaters. Thrives in the moist, coastal conditions of Northern Rivers. Hardy once established.



Native Ginger
(*Alpinia caerulea*)

Rainforest understorey plant. Blue berries loved by birds. Thrives in the shaded, humid conditions of Northern Rivers gardens and provides year-round structure.

The Northern Rivers has strong community networks around native planting and bush regeneration. Connect with local Landcare groups for free advice on local provenance species suited to your specific micro-climate.

Melbourne, Victoria

Melbourne's cool, temperate climate (four distinct seasons, with frosts possible in winter, and variable rainfall) is well-suited to a wide range of Victorian and southeastern Australian natives. Urban biodiversity is supported by the city's **Gardens for Wildlife program**, which encourages private landholders to create habitat stepping stones across the municipality. (Source: Gardens for Wildlife Melbourne program.)

BALCONY



Correa
(*Correa alba* / *Correa glabra*)

Hardy to heavy frost and drought. Produces bell-shaped flowers for months. Happy in part shade — useful for balconies that don't get full sun. Attracts nectar-feeding birds and insects.



Kangaroo Grass
(*Themeda triandra*)

Native grass suited to pots and small planters. Provides seeds for native birds, hosts butterfly larvae, and shelters skinks and geckos. Low maintenance.



Native Violet
(*Viola hederacea*)

Small, spreading ground cover. Purple-and-white flowers. Perfect in a hanging basket or shallow pot. Thrives in Melbourne's cooler, wetter conditions.

GARDEN



Grevillea
(*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*)

Frost-hardy, compact shrub. Rich nectar source for small birds. Suited to Melbourne's cooler winters. Multiple cultivars available for small gardens.



Silver Banksia
(*Banksia marginata*)

One of Victoria's most important nectar plants. Cylindrical yellow flower spikes attract birds and insects across multiple seasons. Suited to most Melbourne soils.



Flax Lily
(*Dianella tasmanica*)

Clumping strappy-leaf perennial. Blue spring flowers followed by berries eaten by birds. Low maintenance, frost-tolerant, and suited to Melbourne's clay soils.

For provenance-correct plants local to Melbourne, visit the Bili Nursery (Westgate Biodiversity partner) or VINC, both recommended by the City of Melbourne's Gardens for Wildlife program.

Adelaide, South Australia

Adelaide has a classic Mediterranean climate (hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters). This makes autumn the ideal planting window: soil is warm enough for roots to grow, and winter rain reduces the need for supplemental watering. Adelaide's native plants are adapted to the state's alkaline soils, hot summers, and extended dry periods. **Using locally grown, provenance-correct plants protects the genetic integrity** of Adelaide's remnant bushland. (Source: Backyards 4 Wildlife SA, DEWNR.)

BALCONY



Lavender Grevillea
(*Grevillea lavandulacea*)

This ornamental, evergreen shrub produces delicate and colourful pink or red flowers that attract birds and insects. Hardy, low-maintenance and tolerant, enjoying full sun. Prefers well-drained soil, shade-tolerant.



Muntries
(*Kunzea pomifera*)

These small, woody shrubs make good groundcover and produce little berries which ripen around February and small, white flowers in spring. They grow best in full sun with well-drained soil.



Lomandra
(*Lomandra densiflora*)

Versatile clumping plant to 1 m. Tolerates salt spray, drought and wet zones. Works as an accent pot plant or in small groupings on balconies.



Dianella (Flax Lily)
(*Dianella revoluta*)

Blue flowers on narrow stalks in spring, followed by blue berries. Tolerates shade and most Adelaide soils. Good balcony plant in medium and large pots.

GARDEN



Rock Correa
(*Correa glabra*)

This small, flowering shrub prefers well-drained soils. Avoid planting near sewer mains or connections. Plant in full sun. Drought and frost-hardy, low-maintenance.



Sweet Bursaria / Christmas Bush
(*Bursaria spinosa*)

Small shrub growing 2–4 m tall. Grows best in sun or light shade in well-drained soil. Fragrant flowers bloom in summer, attracting butterflies, birds and other insects.



Common Everlasting
(*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)

Perennial herb used as groundcover, producing vibrant yellow button-shaped flowers. Hardy, frost-tolerant, water-wise and low-maintenance. Pruning when flowers fade can help to encourage second flowering and more growth.

The SA Government's [Plant Selector](#) + tool lets you find local native plants for your specific Adelaide suburb, soil type, and garden conditions.

Hobart, Tasmania

Hobart's cool temperate climate (mild summers, cold, wet winters, possible frosts) supports a distinctive and ecologically rich native flora. **Tasmania's island isolation has produced species found nowhere else in Australia.** Autumn planting, timed after the dry season, allows plants to use natural winter rainfall for establishment. (Source: Tasmanian Land Conservancy, 2025.)

BALCONY



Correa
(*Correa backhouseana*)

Frost-hardy, produces tubular bell flowers through winter and spring. Suits pots in part shade and tolerates Hobart's cool, wet conditions with minimal care.



Boronia
(*Boronia pilosa*)

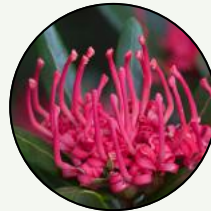
Small aromatic shrub with pink flowers. Suited to pots in part shade. Fragrant and low maintenance — a Tasmanian native that rewards little effort.



Tasmanian Flax Lily
(*Dianella tasmanica*)

Clumping perennial with blue-purple flowers. Frost-tolerant, suits containers. Provides berries for birds and is excellent as ground cover in small spaces.

GARDEN



Tasmanian Waratah
(*Telopea truncata*)

Distinctive red flowers in summer. Attracts nectar-feeding birds, including honeyeaters. Adapted to Hobart's cool climate and higher rainfall zones. Restricted range from 600–1000m, making it tricky to grow in lower, warmer areas.



Silver Banksia
(*Banksia marginata*)

Compact tree or shrub with golden cylindrical flower spikes. Blooms consistently; attracts birds, bees and insects. Drought-tolerant once established.



Mountain Pepper
(*Tasmania lanceolata*)

Tasmanian native with aromatic leaves and edible, peppery berries. Both a male and female plant are required to produce berries. Provides habitat and food for birds. Suited to cool, moist Hobart gardens.

The Understorey Network's Guide to Growing Native Plants in Tasmania (available at Fullers Bookshop, Hobart) includes propagation notes on over 1,400 Tasmanian species and is highly recommended for anyone starting a local, native garden.

Brisbane, Queensland

Brisbane's subtropical climate (hot humid summers, mild dry winters) suits a wide range of tropical and subtropical Australian natives. Winter and early spring (dry season) are the best planting windows, with autumn also viable. Native plants in Brisbane are generally **drought-tolerant, pest-resistant**, and grow well in the region's typically nutrient-poor soils. (Source: Brisbane City Council website resources on gardening.)

BALCONY



Native Violet
(*Viola hederacea*)

Small groundcover with delicate purple-white flowers. Good in pots and hanging baskets in part shade. Spreads well and needs very little attention.



Scaevola (Fan Flower)
(*Scaevola humilis*)

Low-growing native with purple fan flowers. Compact, drought-hardy and well-suited to pots and balcony containers in Brisbane's subtropical climate.



Grevillea
(*Grevillea banksii*)

Upright, fast-growing shrub with large red flower spikes. Attracts honeyeaters and lorikeets. Also works as a large container specimen for balconies with space.

GARDEN



Callistemon (Bottlebrush)
(*Callistemon viminalis*)

Weeping bottlebrush beloved by birds. Hardy, low-maintenance, and well-suited to Brisbane's rainfall pattern. Produces showy red flowers across multiple seasons.



Native Gardenia
(*Randia fitzalanii*)

Small tree with fragrant white flowers and orange fruits eaten by birds. Suited to Brisbane's subtropical conditions and provides excellent garden structure.



Wattle
(*Acacia* spp. (local species))

Fast growing, rich in pollen for native bees, and provides shelter and seed for birds. Choose a species local to the Brisbane area. Many species are short-lived but highly productive for wildlife.

Brisbane City Council's online gardening resources include a full list of recommended native species by plant type (groundcovers, shrubs, trees), available at brisbane.qld.gov.au. Cross-check with your local nursery for provenance-correct stock.

Mackay and Gladstone, Queensland

Mackay and Gladstone sit in the tropical and subtropical zone of central Queensland. High summer rainfall, a distinct dry season, and warm temperatures year-round shape what grows well. This region supports distinctive coastal and dry woodland species. **Autumn and early winter (May to July) are the best planting windows** — the dry season gives newly planted natives a steady establishment period before summer rains arrive. (Source: Mackay Regional Council, Plants of the Region.)

BALCONY



Blue Flax-lily
(*Dianella caerulea*)

Hardy perennial herb with vibrant blue flowers in spring and summer. Prefers moist, well-drained soils, and full sun or partial shade; low maintenance.



Scaevola (Saltbush / Fan Flower)
(*Scaevola taccada*)

Coastal native, highly tolerant of salt spray and wind. Excellent choice for balconies near Mackay or Gladstone's coastline. Purple-white fan flowers.



Native Hibiscus
(*Hibiscus tiliaceus*)

Hardy coastal shrub or small tree adaptable to large containers. Yellow flowers, quick-growing, and attractive to birds and insects throughout their flowering season.

GARDEN



Callistemon (Bottlebrush)
(*Callistemon viminalis*)

Weeping bottlebrush with bright red flower spikes. Attracts honeyeaters and lorikeets. Hardy and suited to the tropical/subtropical conditions of central Queensland.



Wattle
(*Acacia flavescens*)

Fast-growing local wattle with golden flowers. Key pollen source for native bees. Provides seed and shelter for birds. Local provenance is important — check with your nursery.



Native Frangipani
(*Hymenosporum flavum*)

Slender tree with fragrant, cream-yellow flowers. Attracts insects. Suited to both Mackay and Gladstone's warm climate and grows well in coastal garden conditions.

Mackay Regional Council has a dedicated Our Native Garden program. Check the council website (mackay.qld.gov.au) for local native plant lists and advice specific to the Mackay region.

A Few Tips Before You Start



Use a native-specific potting mix for containers.

Australian native plants are sensitive to high phosphorus levels. A premium native potting mix will protect them.

Mulch matters.

A 5–10 cm layer of coarse mulch helps soil retain moisture, suppresses weeds, and regulates soil temperature. Keep it away from plant stems.

Water deeply after planting, then let the soil dry between watering.

Most natives prefer infrequent, thorough watering over frequent light watering.

Avoid pesticides.

They disrupt the insects your plants are trying to attract. A healthy native garden finds its own balance over time.

Let leaf litter accumulate in garden corners.

It provides habitat for insects, frogs, and small reptiles.

Ask your local nursery about provenance.

Plants grown from locally collected seeds are genetically matched to your area. They support the specific insects, birds, and fungi that evolved alongside them.

Even one plant is worthwhile.

A single native plant can attract a bee. A few together can bring birds you have not seen in years. Nature responds faster than most people expect.

Produced by Conservation Volunteers Australia.

Want to go further?

Find a CVA volunteer event near you at volunteerportal.cva.org.au

Questions about corporate partnerships or volunteering programs?

Contact us at partnerships@cva.org.au



Sources referenced throughout this guide include:

- DCCEEW Threatened Species List: dcceew.gov.au
- Australian State of the Environment Report 2021: dcceew.gov.au
- Australia's Environment Report 2025: ausenv.tern.org.au
- Brisbane City Council: brisbane.qld.gov.au
- Mackay Regional Council: mackay.qld.gov.au
- Tasmanian Land Conservancy: tasland.org.au
- City of Melbourne Gardens for Wildlife: melbourne.vic.gov.au
- Greening Australia: greeningaustralia.org.au