

# Bush-Friendly Gardening



An Information Guide by  
**STILL CREEK LANDCARE**



Private gardens are an important part of our environment

Many gardens in our area are an attractive mix of native and exotic plants. **It doesn't have to be one or the other. Any plant should be acceptable as long as it's not invasive, does not require lots of water and grows well without extensive use of fertilisers or chemicals.**

Any gardener can make a garden a great place for a family, and help to maintain the health of the bush and its waterways. If you live on a **"bush block"** **enjoy it for what it is**, - beautiful, a habitat for lots of creatures and easy to look after.

Gardening can be a lot easier and friendlier if we follow a few simple tips. Tips that will also help our bushland, native animals and waterways.

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## Don't let our garden plants 'jump the fence'

Garden escapees are one of the main sources of environmental weeds.

- Recognise and remove **plants known to be 'weedy'**
- Replace plants with non invasive alternatives. Your local garden centre will help identify any suspect invasive plants
- Remove spent flowers that can set seed within your garden or spread to bushland
- **Compost your green waste or use Council's Organics Collection Service**
- **Don't let your green waste regenerate and escape into public spaces or bushland to become a nuisance weed**



*Madreia vine (Anredera cordifolia) is a serious invader of bushland and is difficult to control*

## Consider plants local to our area

Local native species should be sourced locally as these plants will be acclimatised to our conditions so they will grow more easily and survive better. Our local council will be able to provide a list of indigenous plants for our area. Hornsby Shire Council makes such plants available at local native plant giveaway events.

## Introduce a number of 'layers' to the garden

By providing a mix of groundcovers, climbers, shrubs and trees we support a variety of habitats for native animals, particularly the smaller birds that help keep pests down. Rocks and logs can be sculptural and provide habitat for native animals.



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## Conserve water

Conserve water by mulching the garden and only water during the cool of the day. Mulching reduces water loss through evaporation, adds nutrients gradually to the soil and keeps the weeds at bay. When purchasing new plants read labels to look for characteristics such as drought tolerance.

## Minimise the use of fertilisers and pesticides

**Local native plant species won't need much fertiliser, if any. It is important** to apply just enough fertiliser to gardens and lawns, and no more. Be stingy! Our native plants in the bush have evolved to flourish on our naturally nutritionally poor sandy soils. Many fertilisers are toxic to natives and only encourage the weeds to grow.



*A layered garden in the making, note the fallen branches in the foreground*

## Pesticide use

Minimise pesticide use and encourage insect eaters like birds and frogs into the garden with a pond or bird bath. Avoid using any chemicals during or immediately before wet weather. Rain will make chemicals ineffective and leach into the ground water.

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## Want to know more?

Become involved in Bushcare or Landcare. Join a group or encourage friends and family to become custodians of your local environment.

For more information, contact us at

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