



STILL CREEK LANDCARE

Bushfire Smart Native Gardens

By Jutta Hamilton

We are reprinting this article as a gentle reminder that the fire season is around the corner. Please prepare your properties and consider working with your neighbours on a common threat.

In any area subject to bush fires, attention must be given to proper planning and regular maintenance of gardens. An article published in the March 1994 issue of "Native Plants for New South Wales", the newsletter of the Society's NSW Region, suggested some of the factors that should be considered.

- Plant trees at least 5mtrs from house to allow clear access. Have paved sections such as paths and barbecue areas and/or a pebble garden with herbs near to the house.
- Space trees and shrubs to avoid continuous canopy that may carry fire. Careful arrangement of plants is essential. Don't have trees that overhang the house.
- Use plants around the house that can be pruned when fire threatens. Trees and shrubs with lignotubers will re-sprout and recover quickly if it is necessary to cut them back hard in the face of threatening fire.
- Monitor the growth of trees and shrubs so that pruning is maintained, dead limbs removed, and leaves put into compost bins with lids.
- Avoid combustible door mats and brush fences.



Photo by Dean Ingwersen: Regent Honeyeaters
a Critically Endangered Local Species.

- Avoid growing Conifers, rough fibrous bark trees such as *Syncarpia glomulifera* and "candle bark" trees that have loose bark near the house.
- All plants, whether they are exotic or Australian, will burn when subjected to sufficient heat. Nevertheless, native trees, shrubs and groundcovers of the rainforest type, if correctly sited, conserve moisture, serve as a wind break and absorb and deflect radiant heat from the fire and act as a barrier to flying sparks and embers. These plants also look nice, attract wildlife into the garden and do well in the right positions.

THE FOLLOWING PLANTS ARE SOME OF THE SUITABLE PLANTS FOR A BUSH FIRE SMART GARDEN:

Trees: *Acmena smithii*, *Alectryon subcinereus*, *Callicoma serratifolia*, *Cassine australis*, *Diospyros australis*, *Eleocarpus reticulatus*, *Glochidion ferdinandi*, *Hymenosporum flavum*, *Rapanea howittiana*, *Acacia elata*, *Angophora costata*.

Shrubs: *Banksia integrifolia*, *Acacia saligna*, *Acacia terminalis*, *Banksia marginata*, *Bursaria spinosa*, *Dodonaea* spp., *Einadia hastata*, *Grevillea* spp.

Groundcovers: *Auga australis*, *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, *Dichondra repens*, *Einadia nutans*, *Eremophila debilis*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Kennedia rubicund*, *Myoporum parvifolium*, *Pelargonium* spp., *Scaevola* spp.

Contacts: www.stillcreeklandcare.com.au email Stillcreeklandcare@iinet.net.au or Nick Chartorisky 9653 2056



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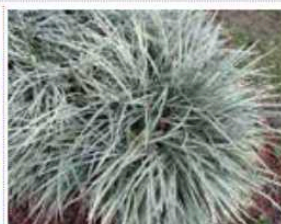
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