

Where to start?

Creating wildlife habitat in your Northern Rivers urban backyard



Plants are the key

Choose local native plants that naturally occur in your area. They're adapted to local conditions, need less maintenance and provide food and habitat for native wildlife that have evolved here over thousands of years.



Think in layers

Where space allows, include a mix of tall trees, shrubs and groundcovers. Different vegetation layers create more places for wildlife to feed, shelter and nest – and can also help suppress weeds.



Upper storey

Tall native trees provide food, shade and nesting sites.

Mid storey

Shrubs and small trees offer flowers, fruit and shelter.

Ground layer

Native grasses, groundcovers and leaf litter create habitat and help suppress weeds.

12 practical ways for creating wildlife habitat in your patch

1 Offer fruits and seeds



Native fruiting trees and shrubs provide food for possums, flying foxes and fruit-eating birds such as figbirds and parrots.

2 Plant for pollinators



Nectar-rich native flowers support bees, butterflies and honeyeaters. Use a variety of flowering plants, rather than relying heavily on a few species, which may favour larger, more dominant birds.

3 Grow native grasses



Let native grasses set seed. They are an important food source for small birds such as finches and also provide shelter for insects.

4 Welcome insects



A mix of flowering and leafy plants attracts insects that pollinate plants and provide food for birds, frogs and lizards.

5 Create safe hiding places



Dense, prickly native shrubs and climbing plants offer smaller birds protection from predators and larger birds, as well as places to nest.

6 Leave a log or two



Fallen timber supports fungi and insects while creating shelter and foraging opportunities for lizards, ground-dwelling birds and small mammals.

7 Add rocks and crevices



Rocks provide basking spots and hiding places for reptiles and invertebrates. Group rocks to create protected spaces.

8 Let the garden floor be a little wild



Keep some fallen leaves, twigs and natural mulch. These protect the soil and create habitat for insects and other small creatures.

9 Support native bees



Provide suitable nesting habitat for solitary native bees, including bare soil, hollow stems or a purpose-built bee hotel.

10 Provide fresh water



A shallow dish with stones and easy escape routes gives small animals and insects a place to drink. Refresh and clean it regularly.

11 Make a bird-friendly bathing spot



Place a shallow birdbath near protective vegetation so birds can drink and bathe while having somewhere to retreat if disturbed.

12 Consider nesting hollows



Natural tree hollows can take many decades or centuries to develop. A species-specific nest box can provide additional shelter, but correct design, installation and maintenance are essential.

Healthy gardens. Healthy waterways. Healthy oceans.

Every patch counts! By planting local natives, protecting soil, reducing chemicals and creating space for wildlife, we can support biodiversity in our neighbourhoods while helping care for the waterways that connect our backyards to the ocean.

Small changes make a big difference!