



### Relevant legislation

Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) – all municipalities in Victoria are covered by land use planning controls which are prepared and administered by state and local government authorities. Planning schemes set out policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land. Each municipality in Victoria is covered by a planning scheme.

The Yarra Ranges Council Planning Scheme reflects the importance of protecting flora and fauna and other biodiversity with a range of strategic statements, local policies, planning overlays and clauses. Contact Council to see what local policies, overlays and clauses affect your land.



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Action Sheet

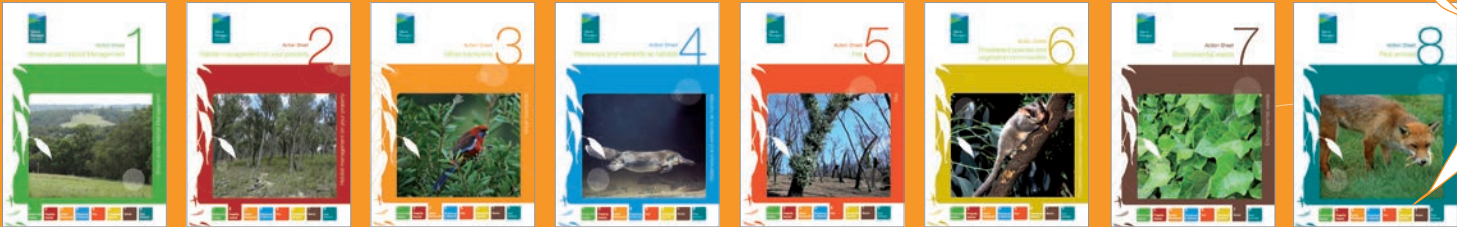
Urban backyards

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### Related materials

- Guidelines**  
Yarra Ranges Council Flora & Fauna Plan 2012: Sustaining biodiversity for current and future generations  
Yarra Ranges Council Environment Department
- Websites**
  - General websites**
    - [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au)
    - [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)
    - [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au)
  - Native plants and vegetation communities**
    - [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Trees\\_Vegetation/Yarra\\_Ranges\\_Plant\\_Directory/Yarra\\_Ranges\\_Local\\_Plant\\_Directory](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Trees_Vegetation/Yarra_Ranges_Plant_Directory/Yarra_Ranges_Local_Plant_Directory)
    - [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/eServices/Online\\_Maps](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/eServices/Online_Maps)
  - Threatened species**
    - <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/plants-and-animals/native-plants-and-animals>
  - Environmental weeds**
    - [http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Greener\\_Living/Weed\\_Control](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Greener_Living/Weed_Control)
    - [http://vro.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/lwm\\_pest\\_plants](http://vro.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/lwm_pest_plants)

Photo acknowledgements: David Blair, Marty White



Urban backyards

1  
Broad-scale  
Habitat

2  
Property  
Habitat

3  
Urban  
Backyards

4  
Waterways  
& Wetlands

5  
Fire

6  
Threatened  
Species

7  
Weeds

8  
Pest  
Animals



## Urban backyards



The right plants will attract birdlife to your garden.

This action sheet discusses the urban backyard and the important role it can play in giving animals and insects a healthy habitat to live in while at the same time improving the lifestyle for residents and their neighbours.

A healthy environment is at the heart of the economic and social wellbeing of the community. The Yarra Ranges Council, Parks Victoria and other agencies play a key role in preserving large bushland reserves, however, this can be enhanced by support from urban communities.

The urban environment in Yarra Ranges contains plants that include exotic, native to Australia and locally native (indigenous). It is this combination that creates a unique landscape character valued by many residents and visitors to the municipality.

The best way for people to build a healthy natural environment is to create and maintain a garden that can be home to birds, insects and wildlife. Native plants are ideal as they are adapted to the local conditions, require less maintenance than the more traditional ornamental plants and can provide additional benefits to the larger environment, i.e. food and shelter for native animals.

The first step is to research if there are remnants of native vegetation on your property. This could be a couple of tall gum trees, a boggy drainage line with a few frogs and aquatic grasses or small patches of native herbs and grasses. Protecting and enhancing these remnants can give you a starting point and provide clues as to what the natural state of the vegetation may have looked like and what your property may be able to offer to wildlife. Your local bushland reserve and indigenous nurseries, as well as the associated friends and Landcare groups in your area, can also give vital clues.

Once you have a starting point, you can determine where best to focus your energy. You could install nest boxes if you recognise a lack of suitable tree hollows; remove weeds that may be spreading to local bushland reserves; grow indigenous plants that are bird or insect attracting or create a frog bog out of an existing drainage line.

If possible, try to grow plants with a range of heights, as you would see in the bush. Keep an upperstorey of tall trees (such as eucalypts), a middlestorey with small trees and tall shrubs (like banksias), a smaller layer of shrubs (like correas), an understorey of low shrubs (like lillies) and groundcovers (which can include mulch). If you plant species that are indigenous or locally native to your area, these plants will give the most benefit to wildlife and the wider environment. Try to recreate the diversity of natural bushland so you have a variety of plants flowering throughout the year as a food-source for nectar-feeding birds and butterflies.

### Flora and fauna goals

#### Goal 1 PROTECT

Removing vegetation from backyards (including trees, shrubs and grasses) causes the decline of indigenous fauna and compromises the way the ecosystem functions to provide abundant clean water and healthy soil and maintain the existing climate.

#### Goal 2 ENHANCE

Urban backyards can play a vital role in helping to give animals a place to visit and to live and support the wider patchworks of the natural environment.

#### Goal 3 RESTORE

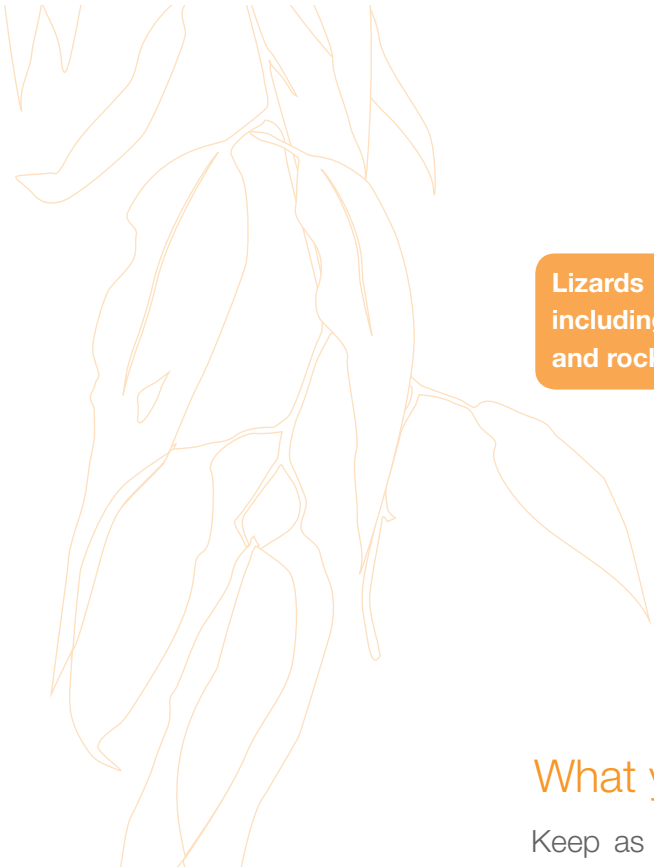
It is vital that the Yarra Ranges retain and enhance existing patches of native vegetation to support healthy ecosystems, which will ensure successful natural regeneration of flora and create suitable habitat linkages for fauna.

#### Goal 6 STEWARDSHIP

Environmental stewardship is based on both understanding and appreciating the ecological values of the area. Part of the challenge to fostering environmental stewardship across communities within Yarra Ranges and beyond is the need for information, education, support and understanding about ecological processes and the impacts upon them. The Yarra Ranges Council is fortunate to have a dynamic group of people, of all backgrounds and ages, dedicated to enhancing and preserving many of our unique natural assets. Local schools and environmental groups play a key role in the protection of our bushland areas, habitat corridors and along waterways.



Banksia produces nectar which is an important food source for animals, birds, bats, possums, bees and some invertebrates.



Lizards like lots of cover including logs, leaf litter and rocks.



### What you can do

Keep as much vegetation in your backyard as you can. Old trees with hollows offer homes for gliders, possums, parrots, owls, and bats.

Find out what rare threatened species need extra protection in your area. For example two of our rarest threatened trees that need special protection includes : the Yarra Gum and the Green Scentbark. If you are considering removing any trees or native vegetation, check with Council to see if the vegetation contains threatened species.

- Solve those hard to maintain areas of the garden by creating a frog bog in existing drainage lines and depressions and planting it out with self-maintaining native plants. By planting native plants and building a pond you can create an ideal habitat for frogs.
- Fight weeds in your garden and replace with hardy native species. The best way is to remove them as soon as they appear or target them before their seeding period.
- Contact Council for information on the best way to tackle common weeds (**see Action sheet 7**).
- Minimise the impact your pets have on wildlife by having wildlife only areas of your garden.
- Contact Council to find out about the local fauna watch groups, friends groups, and Landcare groups in your area. People who join these groups often form lifelong friendships, while achieving a long-lasting environmental legacy.

### What Council will do

Within Yarra Ranges, there are over 80 community groups such as Landcare and Friends groups. More than 60 of the 84 schools in the Yarra Ranges are participating in the Council's Learning for Sustainability Program. These key community groups volunteer time and resources to improve the quality of local habitat areas. Active on both public and private land, groups complete tasks such as environmental weed control and revegetation. Council will continue to support these groups.

- A range of weed removal and native plant fact sheets are available from Council.
- Council provides a Biodiversity Extension program to rural and urban properties of high conservation value and provides support to these landholders through education, weed control and revegetation.
- Council provides ongoing support to private landholders through the Weed Wipeout Program (**see Action sheet 7**).
- Council's Environment Assessment Officers review all planning permit applications for vegetation removal to ensure that the impact of vegetation removal is avoided and minimised wherever possible.