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PRIMEFACT 545

Trees for attracting birds to your garden

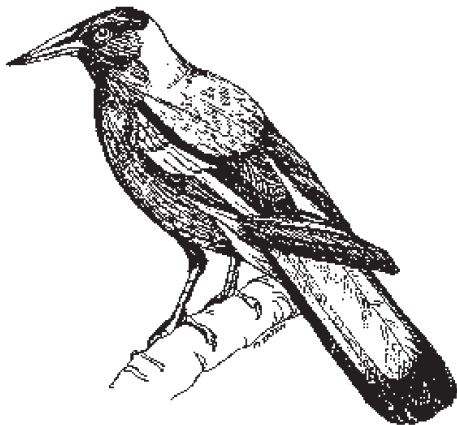
Forests NSW Nurseries

One of the great advantages of growing native plants is that it will attract many species of native birds to your garden. As well as the pleasure you receive from watching them, these birds will also help to control insect pests, keeping a more natural equilibrium and reducing the need to use chemicals.

Creating a balanced garden with a canopy of trees, a middle-storey of large shrubs and an under-storey with thickets of small shrubs, ground covers, grasses and wildflowers will help attract the greatest number of birds. In this way you provide birds with food, shelter and nesting sites.

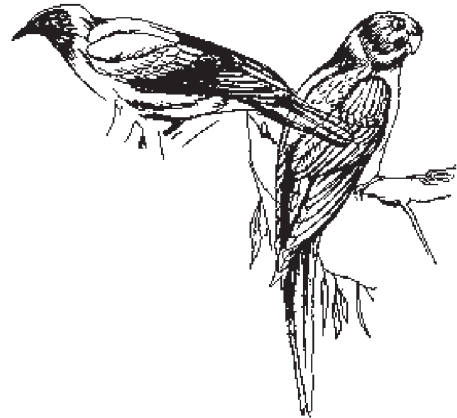
There are four main types of birds you can attract to your garden - pollen and nectar feeders; insectivores; fruit eaters; and seed eaters.

Some species will eat more than one of these food sources.



Above: White backed magpie

The most frequent birds to visit a native garden are the nectar or honey eaters. If you plant long flowering nectar producing plants such as *Banksia*,



Above: Cuckoo-shrike and rainbow lorikeet

Grevillea, *Calothamnus* and *Hakea*, native lorikeets and honeyeaters will become permanent residents in your garden. Some of these plants, such as *Grevillea juniperina*, are prickly and will protect smaller birds such as native finches from predators.

These smaller seed eating birds such as finches will feed on native grasses and small herbaceous plants. Planting *Acacia*, *Banksia* and *Casuarina* will attract the larger seed eating birds like parrots and native pigeons.

Although native birds will feed on some introduced plant species like cotoneaster and lantana, these plants are not recommended for planting as the seeds are spread by birds and will germinate and thrive in native bushland, creating vast environmental weed problems.

In planning a bird friendly garden, think about adding a small and safe water source. Birdbaths with broad, shallow rims near ground level are best. Consider keeping predatory pets, like cats, indoors during the early morning and at night, and have a bell attached to its collar. Birds are much less likely to visit gardens with active pets present.

Birds also require shelter so try to reproduce the natural shelter of a bushland area. Consider placing nest boxes in higher trees for larger tree nesting birds like native owls and kookaburras.

With planning, you will be able to create the habitat and environment to attract native birds back to your garden. In turn, you will be supporting local biodiversity.

Forests NSW Nurseries are specialist growers and retailers of a wide variety of advanced native garden species in various pot sizes. We are renowned for our extensive range of hybrids and grafted stock.

Whether it be creating and maintaining a natural bush garden or a sculptured native garden, it is possible to select native species and have colour and flowers through most of the year.

Our nursery staff can offer the advice and certainly the plants that you will need to give your garden that real Australian character.

The following species will attract native birds to your garden:

Trees

Gums (*Eucalyptus*, *Angophora*)

Wattles (*Acacias*)

Lilly pilly (*Acmena*)

She oak (*Allocasuarina*)

Banksias (*Banksias*)

Fire wheel tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*)

Shrubs

Bottlebrushes (*Callistemon* sp).

Grevilleas (*Grevilleas*)

Correa (*Correa*)

Tick bush (*Kunzea*)

Tea tree (*Leptospermum*)

Net bush (*Calothamnus*)

Ground covers and grasses

Grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea australis*)

Kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthus flavidus*)

Prostrate wattles (*Acacia*)

Grasses (*Themeda*, *Danthonia*, *Poa*)

Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)

Recommended reading:

The Australian bird garden, Pizzey, G, Angus & Robertson books 2000

Field guide to the birds of Australia, Simpson & Day, Penguin books, rev. ed

Contact Our Nurseries:

Cumberland Forest Nursery (Sydney)

95 Castle Hill Road, West Pennant Hills 2125

Ph: (02) 9871 3222

Fax: (02) 9872 7590

Dubbo Forest Nursery

Wellington Road, Dubbo 2830

Ph: (02) 6884 5319

Fax: (02) 6884 7487

Gunnedah Forest Nursery

Cnr Martin & Mullaley Rds, Gunnedah 2380

Ph: (02) 6742 3126

Fax: (02) 6742 0618

Muswellbrook Forest Nursery

New England Highway, Muswellbrook 2333

Ph: (02) 6543 2622

Fax: (02) 6543 1154

Narrandera Forest Nursery

Lake Drive, Narrandera 2700

Ph: (02) 6959 1223

Fax: (02) 6959 2460

Wagga Wagga Forest Nursery

Olympic Way, Wagga Wagga 2650

Ph: (02) 6931 2600

Fax: (02) 6931 3201

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