

WILDLIFE IN THE GARDEN

Why a wildlife-friendly garden is important

People like to have a home with a garden, so their children can play outside. Many adults like to relax outside.

Wildlife-friendly gardens help native plants and animals survive in towns and cities. They also give people a chance to watch and learn about native animals. If people share their gardens with native plants and animals, they can enjoy watching insects sipping nectar from native flowers, lizards basking on warm rocks and birds raising their young.

Problems with gardens

Most gardens do not provide places for native plants to grow and do not provide food or shelter for native animals:

- **No place for native plants to grow** Many people grow grass lawns, brightly coloured annual flowers and exotic shrubs and trees in their gardens. They do not grow many native plants.
- **No food for native animals** Many kinds of native birds and animals eat the nectar, seeds or fruits of native plants. They will only live in a place if they can find enough of the right kind of food.

FACTS ABOUT GARDENS

A garden is a piece of ground where people grow flowers, shrubs, trees, fruits, vegetables or herbs.

Many kinds of native birds, frogs and lizards eat native insects. They need to live in a place that has a variety of native plants to attract native insects.

- **No shelter for native animals** Many gardens do not provide enough shelter for native animals. Frogs like to creep through long grass and overgrown gardens. Lizards like to hide in curls of bark, hollow logs and terracotta pipes. Some birds like to shelter in dense bushes, while others like to roost in tall trees.



A shady pond that is surrounded by moist native plants and piles of rocks or branches is an ideal frog habitat.

Wildlife-unfriendly gardens are a threat to biodiversity

When land is cleared for urban development, native plants and animals lose their homes. If native plants cannot grow in people's gardens or in urban bushland, they will disappear from the area forever. Many of the animals that pollinate them will also disappear. If native animals cannot find new places to feed, shelter and breed, they will disappear from the area forever.

Many people use chemicals such as fertilisers and pesticides in their gardens. Chemicals harm insects, spiders, lizards, frogs and birds.

Working towards wildlife-friendly gardens

People can help native plants and animals survive in towns and cities by making wildlife-friendly gardens.

People can make wildlife-friendly gardens by planting native grasses, shrubs and trees. Native plants provide food, shelter and nesting sites for native animals. A garden that has lots of different plants, of different heights, will attract a variety of insects, lizards, frogs and birds. It may even attract possums and gliders. Local native plants are best because they grow in the local ecosystem. When people plant native plants, they create **habitat corridors** that help animals move around towns and cities.

People can provide a place for frogs to breed by making a pond in a damp, shady corner of the garden. They can provide a place for birds and possums to breed by planting dense bushes and by building nesting boxes.



People can build nesting boxes to provide homes for parrots and owls.

Government in action

The Flora for Fauna program is supported by the Australian government. Nurseries and garden centres have Flora for Fauna labels on plants that suit the wildlife in their area.

Garden habitats overseas

In the United States of America, the National Wildlife Federation has a Backyard Wildlife Habitat program. Gardens that provide food, water, cover and a place for wildlife to raise their young qualify as official Certified Wildlife Habitats.

In Brief

✗ Wildlife-unfriendly gardens are a threat to biodiversity because they do not provide food, water, shelter and places for most native animals to raise their young.

✓ People can protect the environment and biodiversity by planting native plants, making a frog pond and installing a bird or possum nesting box in their garden.

PACKAGING AND RECYCLING

Why packaging is important

People use packaging because it keeps foods and drinks fresh for longer. Packaging contains and protects foods and drinks so they can be transported safely. It identifies and describes the food or drink that is inside.

People can reduce the amount of packaging they throw away by buying products that are sold in packaging made from recycled materials, and by buying products that are sold in packaging that can be recycled.



Used steel cans can be made into new steel cans.

FACTS ABOUT PACKAGING AND RECYCLING

Packaging is the protective wrapping or container in which a product is bought, sold or transported. Many kinds of packaging can be recycled. Recycling means that the packaging is reprocessed into a new product, instead of being thrown out.

Problems with packaging

When people make packaging they use raw materials, use energy and create waste:

- **Using raw materials** When people make packaging they use raw materials. Aluminium is refined from bauxite (aluminium ore). Plastics are made from oil, natural gas, coal and salt. Glass is made from sand, limestone and soda ash. Paper is made from wood chips from trees.
- **Using energy** It takes far more energy to make packaging that is made from raw materials than it does to make packaging that is made from recycled materials. For example, an enormous amount of electricity is needed when aluminium is made from bauxite, but less energy is needed to make packaging from recycled aluminium.
- **Creating waste** After packaging is collected from rubbish bins, it is buried in landfill sites. Land that would otherwise provide homes for native plants and animals is cleared to make landfill sites. Some packaging becomes litter that pollutes the land, the rivers and the sea.

Unsustainable use of packaging is a threat to biodiversity

When people cut down trees in forests so they can make paper, they destroy the homes of native plants and animals.

When people mine bauxite so they can make aluminium cans, they clear forests and move huge amounts of soil and rock.

When people dig sand, soda ash and limestone out of the ground so they can make glass, they change the land surface.

Working towards reducing packaging and improving recycling

People need to reduce packaging and improve recycling so they use fewer raw materials, use less energy and create less waste:

- Used paper can be made into good quality paper, newsprint and packaging. When people recycle paper, they do not need to cut down as many trees.
- Used aluminium cans can be made into new cans. When people recycle aluminium they do not need to mine as much bauxite.
- Used plastics can be made into new bottles, fleece clothing and compost bins. When people recycle plastics, they do not need to use as much oil, natural gas, coal and salt.
- Used glass bottles can be made into new bottles and jars. When people recycle glass, they do not need to use as much sand, limestone and soda ash.

Government in action

The Australian Packaging Covenant encourages people involved in packaging to reduce packaging waste. It encourages workplace and public place recycling and litter reduction programs.



Recycling overseas

In Belgium, people sort and recycle household waste. Some waste is collected from homes and some must be taken to collection points. Recycling bins come in different colours for different purposes.

In Brief

✗ Unsustainable use of packaging is a threat to biodiversity because it causes more raw materials and energy to be used, and more waste to be created.

✓ Recycling benefits the environment and biodiversity because people use fewer raw materials, use less energy and create less waste when they recycle used paper, aluminium, steel, plastics and glass.

TOURISM

Why ecotourism is important

People want to visit natural areas so they can learn more about the plants and animals that live on the Earth. People enjoy visiting new places and having new experiences. Unfortunately, when people visit new places they damage them.

Ecotourism is sustainable tourism that provides people with opportunities to understand nature. People who work in the ecotourism industry try to reduce the effects of tourism on the environment.

Problems with tourism

People damage natural areas because they take things home, leave litter behind and introduce plants and animals to new areas:

- **Taking things home** When some people visit a place, they take things home. When people take rare plants, they cause the plants to become even rarer. When people take hollow logs or bushrock, they take away the homes of native animals. When people take shells and corals, they make beaches less interesting.
- **Leaving behind litter** When some people visit a place, they leave litter behind. Plastic litter can choke, strangle and trap animals.

FACTS ABOUT TOURISM

Tourism is the practice of travelling around to look at or experience interesting places. Ecotourism allows people to experience natural areas and teaches them to understand, appreciate and conserve the environment.

Broken glass and metal cans can injure animals. The animals may die later if the injury becomes infected. Cigarette butts can start bushfires, which destroy entire ecosystems.

- **Introducing plants and animals** When people walk from one place to another, they may transport seeds that are stuck to their hair, clothing or shoes. When people drive from one place to another, they may transport soil and animal manure (which could contain seeds, fungus or parasites) that are stuck to their vehicle's tyres.



In the World Heritage-listed Cradle Mountain/Lake St Clair National Park in Tasmania, people can walk through ancient rainforests that contain trees that are more than 1000 years old.

Unsustainable tourism is a threat to biodiversity

When land is cleared for tourist development, the homes of native plants and animals are destroyed. Access roads destroy or **fragment** habitats. Tourist vehicles injure and kill native animals that try to cross roads.

Many places are damaged because too many tourists visit them. If too many tourists visit rainforests, they disturb the animals that live in them. If too many tourists visit nesting beaches, they disturb the animals that nest on them. Tourists trample plants and crush the homes of ground-dwelling animals.

Improving tourism

The United Nations nominated 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. Its aim was to encourage governments and the tourism industry to develop tourism in a sustainable way.



At Fraser Island in Queensland, people can enjoy watching Humpback whales.

People can protect the natural areas they visit by making sure they do not take plants, animals, wood, rocks, shells or coral. They can make sure that they dispose of litter properly. They can also make sure they stay on marked tracks so they do not trample plants or animal habitats.

Governments can protect natural areas by limiting the number of people who visit them. People who work in the tourism industry can provide tourists with opportunities to understand nature, and can contribute to the conservation of natural areas.

Government in action

The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism provides advice to the Australian government about tourism. Its goal is to increase tourism in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.

Ecotourism overseas

In 2008, more than 13 million people in 119 countries went whale watching. They spent more than \$2.8 billion on these trips.

In Brief

✗ Unsustainable tourism is a threat to biodiversity because tourists damage natural areas and disturb the animals that live in them.

✓ Ecotourism benefits the environment and biodiversity because it teaches people to care about the environment. It is managed in a sustainable way so that it reduces the effect of tourism on the environment.