

Bird habitat for food and safety



Image: Yellow-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*)

Having native birds in your garden is a delightful experience. To attract birds to your garden you need to select plants that will provide them with food, shelter, nesting sites and even nesting material. Plants with prickly foliage such as Native Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Orange Thorn (*Pittosporum multiflorum*), provide excellent protection and safe nesting sites for small birds.



If you wish them to visit your garden for longer, or even move in, then ensure you have sufficient diversity and number of plants to provide food and shelter over a longer period of time.

Native plant species that provide fruit, nectar, insects, and seeds, are a key food source for birds. Growing a range of these types of food plants will ensure that a diversity of species visits or uses your garden. Too many nectar-producing plants can, however, result in large nectar feeders such as Noisy Miners and Little Wattlebirds dominating. These can aggressively exclude smaller nectar feeders, or insect eating birds such as wrens and robins.

Consider growing just a few local nectar producing species, such as banksias and bottlebrushes that flower for shorter periods of time than hybrid grevilleas. When there is a heavy nectar supply all year round, noisy miners may colonise the garden and drive out other birds, both large and small.

Birds need safe perch sites from which to assess their surroundings and look out for predators or for food sources (such as insects). Dead branches in tall shrubs or trees are excellent for this, so consider retaining these if it is safe to do so.

Some useful local plants for attracting birds are:

- Native hydrangea (*Abrophyllum ornans*)
- Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*)
- Native Ginger (*Alpinia caerulea*)
- Dwarf Banksia (*Banksia oblongifolia*)
- Golden Candlesticks (*Banksia spinulosa* var. *collina*)
- Red-fruited Palm Lily (*Cordyline rubra*)
- Blue Flax Lily (*Dianella caerulea*)
- Wild May (*Leptospermum polygalifolium*)
- Prickly-leaved Paperbark (*Melaleuca nodosa*)
- White Bottlebrush (*Melaleuca saligna*)
- Muttonwood (*Myrsine variabilis*)
- Smooth Psychotria (*Psychotria daphnoides*)
- Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum aviculare*)

A more extensive list is available at the Barung Landcare Native Plant Nursery, Maleny.



Image: Decorated birds nest