HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR GARDEN

- Water efficiently — give plants only what they need; use trickle systems and tap timers.
- Mulching can reduce water loss.
- If you must fertilise, consider composting or use "slow release" fertilisers. Use as little as possible and do not fertilise in winter or autumn when most plants are dormant.

INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL PLANTS

The following books provide useful information about identifying and cultivating local plants in Perth:


Plants of the Perth coast and islands, E. Rippey and B. Rowland, University of Western Australia Press, 1995.

The bushland plants of Kings Park, Western Australia, E. Bennett, Kings Park and Botanic Garden, 1988.

The following organisations can provide information about local plants:

Kings Park and Botanic Garden
Telephone: (08) 9480 3600
Internet: http://www.kpbg.wa.gov.au

Local Plants Group
Telephone: (08) 9401 2537 (after hours)
Internet: http://www.inet.net.au/~dragon/Bushthat.htm

Greening Western Australia
Telephone: (08) 9335 8933

Wildflower Society of Western Australia
Telephone: (08) 9383 7979

FIND OUT MORE

Information about water resources and their wise use and management, garden bores, and free posters on catchment-friendly gardening, are available from the Water and Rivers Commission — phone (08) 9278 0300.

Advice on waterwise gardening is also available from the Water Corporation on (08) 9420 2420.
WHAT ARE LOCAL PLANTS?

Perth is home to a diverse array of about 1,500 local plant species that can be used to create an interesting and vibrant garden environment. A garden of local plants has many advantages over traditional, poorly adapted European style gardens.

Local plants are plants that grow naturally in one or more of the soil types in the Perth metropolitan area. They have evolved in the region and so are adapted to the local soils and climate.

‘Local plant’ is a more useful term than ‘native plant’ because the term ‘native plants’ is often used for species from anywhere in Australia, including rainforest plants. Local plants are indigenous to your neighbourhood. Most species currently planted in Perth gardens are not locals.

LOCAL PLANTS FOR CONSERVATION

Local plants in gardens provide food and shelter for birds, insects and small lizards, many of which are becoming rare in Perth due to urban development. Many local plants are endangered by land clearing and frequent fires. Growing these species in gardens is an important way to ensure their preservation.

LOCAL PLANTS TO PROTECT WATER RESOURCES

Local plants do not need added fertiliser for healthy growth

Excessive fertiliser use is responsible for many of the environmental problems seen in wetlands and waterways.

Fertiliser washed from gardens and parks through stormwater drains, and fertiliser leaching through the soil into groundwater will all eventually find its way into wetlands and waterways.

High nutrient levels can trigger algal blooms, upset the natural ecological balance and reduce biodiversity in these water bodies.

Nitrate from fertiliser that reaches the water table may also make groundwater unsuitable for drinking in areas used for public water supply.

You can help protect our water resources by using local plants that do not need added fertiliser.

Local plants require little or no watering

Once they are established, local plants need less watering than most introduced exotics. Growing local plants can substantially cut your annual water bill. Nearly half the scheme water currently used by households in Perth is used for garden watering. This is a waste of a precious resource and increases the rate at which new water supplies have to be developed, ultimately increasing the cost to the whole community.

A garden of local plants helps to conserve water.

HOW TO PLAN YOUR GARDEN

• Retain natural bush on your block. Position your house to keep trees or a patch of wildflowers. Make sure builders know what you want left intact!

• Plant local species. Look at what is growing in nearby bushland to find out what used to grow on your block. Local plants can be grown from seed or seedlings obtained from specialised nurseries, or from seed collected with permission from uncleared private land. (Seed cannot be taken from Crown Land without a licence). Some environmental groups rescue seedlings from land that is about to be cleared for development. For more information look on the back of this brochure.

• Group plants with similar water needs to save water. If you must plant exotic species that need water and fertiliser, locate them away from local species. Many local plants are adapted to dry, infertile conditions and will not tolerate excessive water and fertiliser.

• Minimise lawn — consider alternatives like groundcover.