Good or bad?

Queensland has more than 40 native species of mistletoe. Severe infestations can kill the entire tree, but most of the time it only kills the branch it covers. Mistletoe provides a rich food source for many animals, in particular the spectacular mistletoe bird, honeyeaters and many butterflies.

Butterflies are attracted to flowers producing nectar. A garden full of colourful butterflies is very appealing. However, butterfly larvae eat plant parts. If this is not desired, don’t encourage the larvae by planting species preferred by the larvae. If you do choose to plant them, accept the damage and enjoy the butterflies. A healthy plant will recover.

Are you considering feeding wildlife?

Establishing a native flora garden will provide natural food sources for native animals. Sugar and honey supplements are poor substitutes leading to dietary deficiencies and poor health. QPWS does not encourage artificial feeding of native fauna as native gardens are a healthy alternative.

Useful references:


DPI Resource Management. 1995. Trees and Shrubs 1995 Helping you to plant the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason. DPI.


Society for Growing Australian Plants, Mackay Branch. 1991. Butterflies and food plants - a guide to the common butterflies found in the Mackay district and their food plants.


Further information

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Cnr Wood and River Streets
PO Box 623 Mackay QLD 4740
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Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

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Growing plants to attract wildlife to your garden

Whatever the size of your urban or farm garden, it can be wildlife-friendly.

This guide will help you encourage native wildlife into your garden by selecting and planting local species.

This guide is designed for the Sarina-Proserpine Lowlands (see map). All species listed occur naturally in the area and are generally available through local nurseries, specialist native plant growers, or through organisations such as the Society for Growing Australian Plants. An additional list for high altitude areas such as Eungella is available from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Mackay.

Some difficult-to-obtain plant groups such as mistletoes, aquatic/bog plants (sedges, rushes, lillies etc), grasses (kangaroo, black spear, blady grass) and vines that are butterfly food plants (Parsonia species, Capparis species and native grapes) have not been included.

Hollows are important.

Hundreds of native wildlife species rely on hollows for nesting and shelter. These range from mammals (gliders, possums, bats), birds (cockatoos, kingfishers, owls), reptiles (pythons, tree snakes, monitors) and frogs (green tree frog) to many insects. Keep trees with hollows.

Artificial nest boxes can act as a substitute. Contact QPWS for nest box designs.

Establishing and maintaining your native garden.

Consider your site constraints and the conditions the plants will encounter. Select species that suit your conditions and requirements. What is the soil fertility, structure and drainage? Is the area exposed to sun, shade, wind, salt spray or is water limited? Group plants with similar requirements.

Decide the types of plants you require – ground covers, tufties, shrubs, trees or vines. Make sure that the mature heights and the root systems of your selections are suitable for where they are to be planted. Vigorous roots or plants that become too large for their location can damage buildings, plumbing and sewerage pipes and can be very costly to remove.
Plants included in this guide.
- grow naturally in Central Queensland Coast bioregion from Proserpine to Carmilla (see map)
- are available commercially or through propagation groups
- attract wildlife
- grow in lowland garden communities (excludes high altitudes).

This is only a guide to plant selection. For basic gardening information, consult garden books and garden clubs.

Native plants provide resources for native wildlife.
- Fruit and nuts – possums, bats and birds (pigeons, figbirds, parrots),
- Nectar – bees, butterflies, birds (sunbird, honeyeaters),
- Seeds – finches
- Foliage – possums and insects (which in turn are an important food source for other native species, especially birds).

Why grow local native plants?
By selecting a range of plants that provide flowers or fruit throughout the year, native animals will continuously visit your garden.

Plants local to an area (local provenance) are adapted to the local conditions (soil, rainfall, temperature) and if planted in the correct environment will generally require less attention and perform better. However, to keep them looking their best, they require tender love and care, as do non-natives.

Attracting native wildlife offers many benefits.
- Wildlife is aesthetically pleasing, providing colour, movement and companionship.
- Native species pollinate plants, including crops used in agriculture.
- Native species control garden and agricultural pests.
- Native species maintain soil condition and fertility.
- The sound and sight of wildlife reduces stress, improving our health.
- Most of Australian native wildlife are nocturnal, (possums, gliders, owls, bats, moths, frogs), especially mammals. Your native garden may attract animals which come out to feed and forage at night, therefore your native garden can be enjoyed by day and night.
- Many people seek native plants and animals within the landscape. You can create your own natural haven to enjoy.

Where to from here?
Establishing layers of vegetation in your garden will not only look great, but each layer will provide habitat for different animals. A ground layer of leaf litter, logs, grasses and herbs, an understorey of shrubs and small trees, and taller trees preferably with hollows in the canopy layer, are ideal for wildlife.

We have a tendency to tidy our garden, sometimes removing micro-habitat for many little creatures. Leaf litter and mulch are habitat for lizards, frogs, insects, small mammals and ground birds and help retain moisture in the soil.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific name</th>
<th>Common name</th>
<th>Plant form</th>
<th>Animals the plant attracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acacia auriculiformis</td>
<td>garden wattle</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia decurrentis</td>
<td>pretty wattle</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acacia flavescens</td>
<td>wattle</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia holosericea</td>
<td>wattle</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acacia homogenes</td>
<td>rusty fig</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acesta hemihyophylla</td>
<td>broad-leaved fig</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acesta hyophylla</td>
<td>white gum</td>
<td>Deciduous tree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acesta laevigata</td>
<td>yellow wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acesta laevigata var. skinneriana</td>
<td>yellow-barked wattle</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Acesta pleiocarpa</td>
<td>black lace-wood</td>
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<td>Acesta pseudosinensis</td>
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<td>Acesta superba var. hemsleyana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ficus virens</td>
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<td>Deciduous tree</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**
- tree
- shrub
- vine
- tree dwelling mammal
- bird general
- bird swallow
- tree frog
- butterfly
- mammal
- mammal larvae
- grass tree
- rare
- common
- uncommon
- very uncommon

**Note:** The flora species in this table have been selected by botanist, Irene Champion and flora/flora associations have been sourced from published documents listed in the further reading section. For a more extensive list or a list for high altitude areas (such as Eungella), please contact Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Mackay on 0494 7600. Corner River and Wood Streets Mackay.