



# Indigenous Gardens

Creating habitat for people and wildlife in Maroondah



## Acknowledgements

This booklet is a collaboration between CRISP Nursery and Maroondah Council.

### **Photography:**

Craig Allen (The Connies)

Cameron Dean

Doerte Drews

Graeme Lorimer

Annette O'Sullivan

Mark Smith

### **Text and Design:**

Doerte Drews

**Copyright 2012** The information in this booklet may be reproduced with acknowledgement to Maroondah Council and CRISP Nursery. Reproduction of any photos will require permission in writing.

**Disclaimer:** Every effort has been made to ensure the content of this publication is accurate. The authors cannot be held responsible for any claim, loss, damage or liability arising out of the use of the information contained.

This booklet is printed on 100% recycled paper, made carbon neutral.

## Contents

Why plant indigenous?	4
Sustainable	4
Biodiverse	5
Getting started	7
Garden design	7
Site analysis	8
Soil testing	10
Lifestyle requirements	11
Garden design	11
Garden styles	12
Bush garden	12
Cottage garden	14
Minimalist garden	15
Formal garden	16
Incorporating ponds into your design	17
Indigenous lawn alternatives	20
Planting preparation	22
Planting	24
Maintenance	25
Weed control	26
Maroondah Wildlife	28
Indigenous Plants of Maroondah	30

## Why plant indigenous?

Indigenous plants are plants that are local to a region and superbly adapted to local climate and soil conditions. This makes them a logical choice for low-maintenance, sustainable gardens. They also make the ideal habitat for local wildlife.

## Sustainable

An indigenous garden, once established

- will require minimal maintenance and watering,
- can be designed to take on a variety of styles, such as bush garden, rain garden, cottage garden, or even formal garden while still being low maintenance (see examples in design section),
- can complement existing ornamental gardens and thus reduce the overall maintenance and watering requirements of the garden,
- can create micro-climate zones in the garden.

**Well designed micro-climate zones in a garden can be cooler than their surrounds.**

**This is achieved by establishing canopy plants for shade, suitable undergrowth, water features for evaporative cooling effect and the use of non-reflective, permeable materials for paths and sitting areas.**



## Biodiverse

Many of Maroondah's bushland reserves are relatively small pockets of remnant vegetation, but do support diverse ecosystems and contain plants that are locally rare and significant. Often they depend on human intervention for their survival.

The Maroondah Bushland Crew, with significant support from many volunteers, maintains these reserves by removing weed infestations and regenerating or revegetating depleted areas.

The 'Sites of Biological Significance in Maroondah' study (Lorimer, G., Reid, J., Smith, L., & Moss, H., 1996) identifies 131 environmentally significant sites and found that remnant indigenous vegetation occupies 5% of the municipality.

Maroondah is home to a number of rare and locally or regionally significant species, and with only 5% cover of remnant indigenous vegetation cover remaining, those species are under tremendous pressure from weed infestation and vandalism. Where possible, revegetation is undertaken, however, many orchid species for example cannot be propagated. Careful management of sensitive areas is therefore essential.

**Biodiversity is the degree of life form variation in an ecosystem, both at flora and fauna level, and is considered a measure of its health.**



**King-Parrot and Running Postman**  
*(Kennedia prostrata)*

One example of a precious and rare plant is the Kilsyth South Spider Orchid — *Caladenia* sp. Kilsyth South (G.S.Lorimer 1253) Vic. Herbarium. It only occurs in Bungalook Conservation Reserve in Kilsyth and nowhere else in the world. Weed infestation significantly impacts on its habitat and, as it cannot be propagated, it could be lost forever. (Image supplied by Graeme Lorimer)



## Indigenous gardens designed with this in mind

- strengthen existing corridors and increase the number of habitat pockets within Maroondah,
- can create new corridors that link to remnant flora and fauna ecosystems in Maroondah's bushland reserves,
- protect fragile local natural areas by reducing potential weed infestations caused by weedy plants escaping from gardens
- create new habitats for wildlife,
- significantly reduce ongoing maintenance, fertiliser and water use,
- create inviting outdoor living areas,
- raise awareness and appreciation of local indigenous vegetation and wildlife.

## Getting started

Whether you start your garden from scratch or want to gradually incorporate indigenous plants into your existing garden, this booklet will give you an overview of what can be achieved and how.

A list of plants indigenous to Maroondah and particularly suited to garden situations is included at the end of this booklet, together with planting and care advice.

However, there are many more than can be listed here, and the local indigenous community nursery CRISP will be happy to advise you when selecting plants for your garden.

## Garden design

Like with any other garden, the design of an indigenous garden begins with an inventory of existing plants, features and site conditions such as hard landscape features - paving, retaining walls, paths - slope, soil conditions, easements and services and aspect (sun/shade).

This site analysis, combined with a list of lifestyle wants and needs, will be an invaluable guide when designing your garden and selecting plants.



**Before: poor drainage, water collects in the bottom corner, soil is compacted.**



**After: soil has been improved, dry-river bed collects water, any overflow will run into garden bed and be absorbed by wetland plants. The soil dug out of the dry-river bed pan was used to top up the lower bank.**

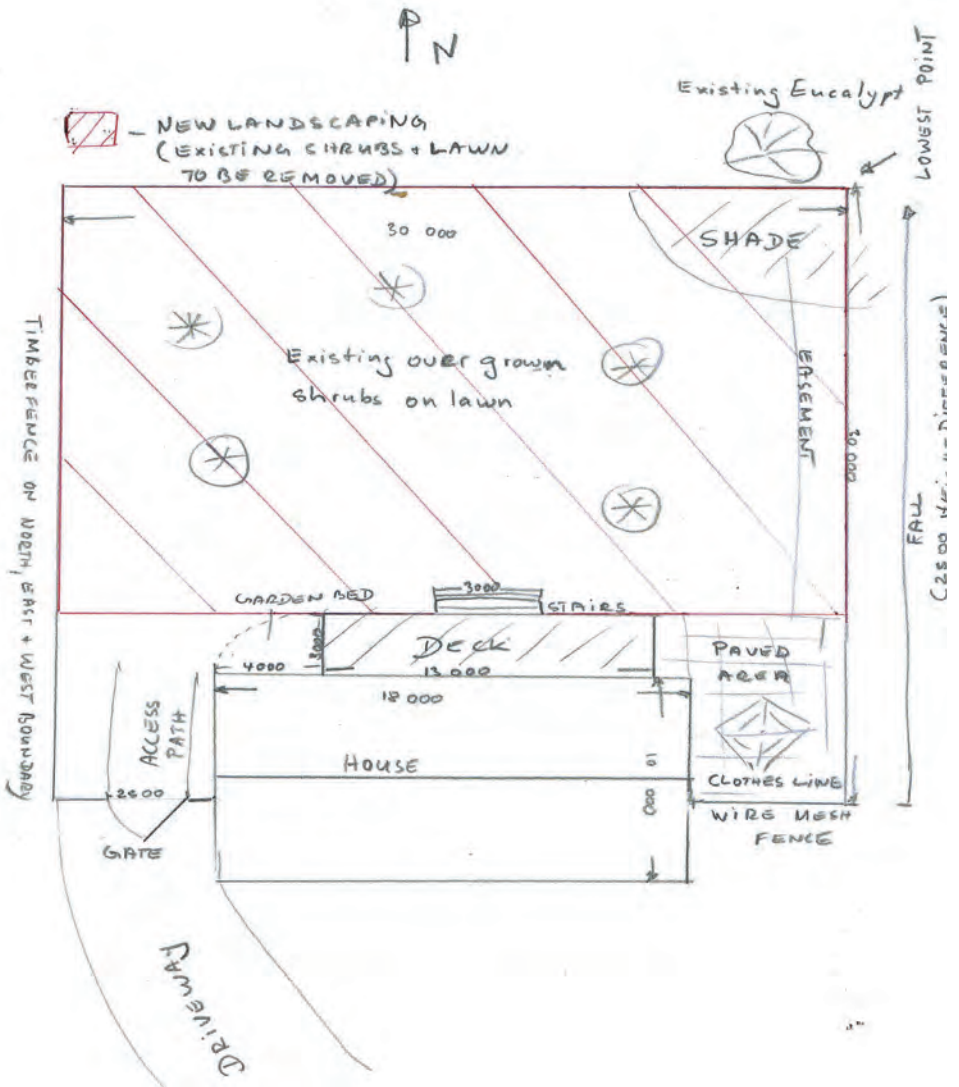
## Site analysis

A thorough site analysis will help you plan your design and implementation, especially when you are landscaping larger areas or are planning work that requires large amounts of materials to be brought in.

- Make a rough sketch of the site, measure the sides and main features and record your measurements (see image over).
- Where is North? Draw it in your sketch.
- Take note of any slopes and record them on your plan. Is erosion control required when you remove any existing vegetation and start preparing the soil? Will the top soil run off into neighbouring areas?
- Record existing vegetation and buildings. Consider the impact existing vegetation and buildings in the vicinity will have on your site. Record them in your sketch, together with sun/shade conditions they could expect to cause.
- Access – are there any restrictions to bringing in equipment and materials? Measure the width of paths and gates that restrict vehicle access, e.g. when you have soil or mulch delivered.
- Services – know where your power, water, gas services and any easements are located.
- In case of heavy rainfall or/and if you are planning to install irrigation, where is your water going to drain?
- Test your soil. What is its texture, structure and pH? Soil test kits are available from garden centres or hardware stores. For more on soil testing see section “Soil testing” on page 10.



# Indigenous Gardens in Maroondah



A site sketch should contain all pertinent information and measurements

## Soil testing

**Soil pH** can be tested using simple pH testing kits available from nurseries and hardware stores. Take soil samples at 5 -10 cm depth, this is where the feeder roots are most active. Depending on the area size, more than one soil sample may be required.

**Soil texture** refers to how coarse or fine a soil is, this is determined by its clay, sand and silt content. There is a simple test to give you a general idea of the composition of your soil sample:

- Take a handful of soil and add water until you can make a ball.
- Feel if the ball is gritty (sand), silky (silt) or sticky (clay). If the ball does not stick together at all and crumbles, your soil is very sandy.
- If you can make a ribbon with your soil, it contains clay. The longer the ribbon you can make, the higher the clay content of your soil.



Checking **soil moisture content** in various spots will give an indication of potential low-lying wet areas, or of drier areas - e.g. under large trees - that will require special consideration when designing, to either select wetland plants or install drainage.



These simple tests will help you determine if any work is required to improve the soil prior to planting and how much time is required for any ameliorations to become effective. (For soil treatment see section “Planting preparation” on page 22).

## Lifestyle requirements

What do you want from your garden? Do you require large entertainment areas? Do you have children that need play areas? Do you want lawn or hard landscape features?

If you have or want to build hard landscape areas such as decking, paving and paths, choose materials that have been sourced from sustainable sources. Timbers ideally should be impregnated using non-arsenic based treatments, so they can also safely be used for vegetable gardens and around children's play areas.

There is a range of paving and path coverings available that is permeable, so water will be absorbed into the soil underneath and run-off issues can be largely avoided. If you want lawn areas, consider using native lawn species (see section on "Indigenous lawn alternatives" on page 20).

## Garden design

Once you have decided which features you want and need in your garden, it is time to select a garden style. The following is a description of the most popular garden styles, that can easily be replicated using indigenous instead of the more commonly planted exotic plants.

Your garden may already be landscaped in one of these styles and, to blend in your addition with indigenous plants, you may want to continue the existing style.

If you are starting from scratch, your selection may be determined by the style of house you have (e.g. cottage, ultra-modern, rustic) and any existing hard landscape features (e.g. fences, paving). Your site analysis sketch is a good base for your design drawing, giving you all the information you need to start laying out your design drawing.

## Garden styles

The garden styles described are just a sample of what can be achieved with indigenous plants. There are many more styles than can be covered here, and there are of course no limits to the imagination applied in your design.

### Bush garden

Probably the easiest garden to create with indigenous plants is a natural bush garden. While the overall result will be that of an informal garden that just “happened”, some thought and planning has to go into its design and the materials that are used. Some points to keep in mind are:

- Indigenous plants, like any other garden plants, have preferred growing conditions. Plants that like full sun will not thrive in the shade and vice versa, and plants that prefer well-drained soils will not do well in boggy conditions
- Always select smaller plants for borders, gradually increasing in size towards the back of your garden beds to ensure you can enjoy a view of all your plants.
- Use natural looking materials for paths – Castella or Tuscan toppings or permeable paving.
- Break up planted areas with logs, small bogs or ponds. If you have rocks available they can be used to create rockeries within beds or by themselves. This will give depth to your garden and create variety.

**When selecting your plants, consider their use as habitat for birds, butterflies, lizards and frogs. The plant catalogue in this booklet will tell you which plants have specific habitat uses.**



**Three examples of bush gardens, using permeable path materials, rocks, logs and untreated sleepers. In the garden below, indigenous plants are complemented by other Australian natives.**



## Cottage garden

A number of plants indigenous to Maroondah provide a broad spectrum of flower colours, from white Daisy bushes (*Olearia* spp.) to yellow-flowering Daisies, Lilies and Bush-peas (e.g. *Chrysocephalum*, *Hibbertia*, *Daviesia*, *Bulbine*), purple (e.g. *Viola*, *Veronica*, *Hardenbergia*, *Wahlenbergia*), red (e.g. *Astroloma* and *Kennedia*) and blue wildflowers (*Brunonia*). Mass plantings of these will result in vibrant colour displays. The addition of features such as an arbour to support climbers, birdbaths, sculptures and pots



will add to the cottage garden look. Smart plant selection will ensure year round colour. While the majority of wildflowers flower in

spring, there are some that flower throughout the year, such as Tangled Guinea-flower (*Hibbertia empetrifolia*), Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*) and Native Flax (*Linum marginale*), or well into autumn such as Common Lagenifera (*Lagenophora stipitata*) or Sweet Hound's Tongue (*Austrocynoglossum suavolens*).

**Most exotic plants will require regular watering at least during summer, whereas indigenous plants will only need to be watered under extremely dry conditions and continue to flower prolifically even during dry periods.**

## Minimalist garden



Minimalist gardens feature mainly hard landscapes punctuated by sparse plantings of so-called architectural plants and modern sculptures. Architectural plants are those with interesting shapes and bold, distinctive outlines that make a strong statement in the garden.

A number of indigenous plants fall into this category. The design intent usually is to complement the hard landscape without softening or distracting from it.

The design is held together by strong lines and symmetry, which is reflected in the planting.

Each plant therefore needs to have an impact through its shape, colour and foliage for this to work, as plants will usually be planted as specimen and stand-alone, or in repeat plantings with substantial spaces between plants.



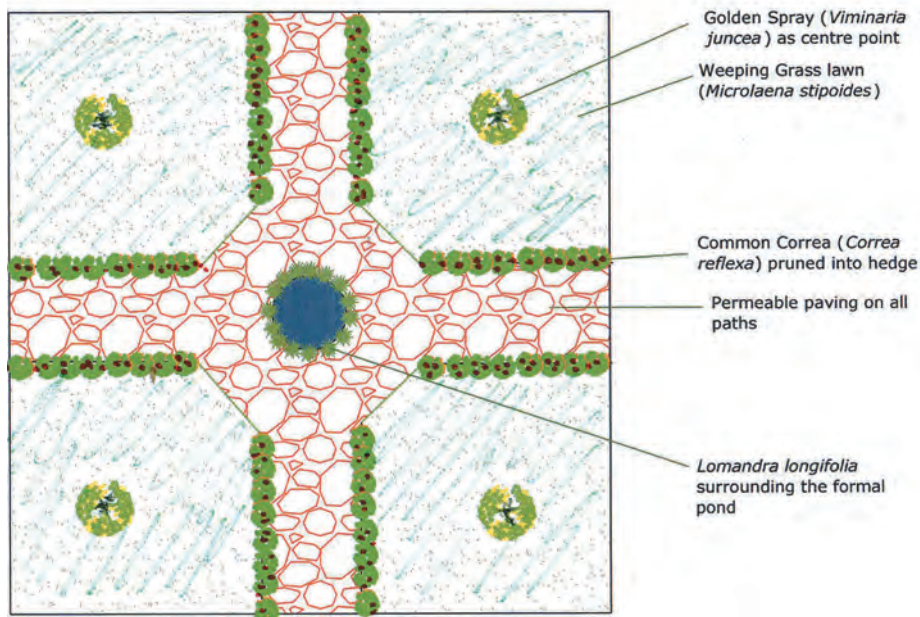
**Every element of the minimalist garden is selected for maximum effect. Indigenous plants that create such an effect are Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea* spp.) Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), Pale Rush (*Juncus pallidus*) some Banksias and Grasses such as Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)**

## Formal garden

Formal gardens are characterised by symmetrical design and straight lines that are reflected in the planting. Preferred plants in formal gardens are those that can be shaped through pruning, either as stand-alone shapes or in hedges, and plants that look good planted in rows and as borders.

This will require a certain uniformity, that is usually achieved through plant breeding (e.g. certain types of Box ). However, there are a number of indigenous plants that are suitable, e.g. *Correas* can be pruned into hedges, many of the Rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and Mat-rushes (*Lomandra* spp.) grow reliably uniform.

Many others complement these, and a sample design for a formal garden is shown in the figure below.





## Incorporating ponds into your design

Ponds add a whole new dimension to your garden; they will attract frogs, different birds and a wide variety of invertebrates into your backyard and expand your plant range to include aquatic and semi-aquatic plants.

Most of the design styles described can include ponds, however, the layout and plant selection will be different for each style.

A bush garden is the most likely background for a natural pond, billabong or dry river bed feature, with the irregular shape and dense planting mimicking what would be found in the bush.



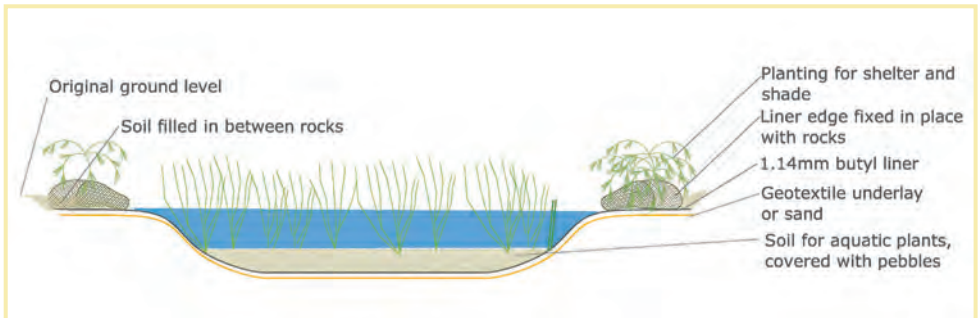
**A pond and its surrounds can create an oasis in the backyard for frogs, birds and humans alike.**

Cottage gardens may have ponds or birdbath type water features placed around the garden area.

To suit formal gardens, ponds can be designed to have a geometric shape - exactly round, square or rectangular. This can be reflected in the pond side planting, with symmetrical rows of plants selected for their uniformity.

## The basic considerations when designing and building your pond will be the same for all styles:

- Determine the position, size, depth and shape of the pond you want.
- Consider that if you want frogs, shallow edges will allow them to get in or out easily.
- When digging the hole for the pond, allow for an extra 200 - 300 mm of depths for soil to be added to the bottom of the pond for planting.
- A ledge around the pond will provide space to place rocks, pebbles or soil to hide the pond liner and keep it in place.



- The most UV-resistant and durable pond liner is a butyl-based rubber liner with a minimum thickness of 1 mm.
- Once the hole is dug out, a string can be run along the two longest distances along the bottom length and width of the pond, including the ledges, and measured to give the dimensions for the liner.
- Allowing for approximately an extra 300 mm of liner in each direction will ensure that the liner is not excessively stretched

when the pond is filled with water and will cover the ledge so that soil and rocks can be placed on top to hold it in place.

- To protect the liner, sand or geotextile underlay can be put down before the liner is placed.
- When placing the liner, some wrinkles along the length and width of the liner will let the liner fit around any little hollows or bumps without too much stretching when water is added.
- Once the liner is in place and the edges are fixed with soil and rocks, the pond bottom can be lined with soil for the aquatic plants.
- Ideally, some rocks or pebbles should be placed over the soil to keep it settled.
- The submerged aquatic plants can now be planted, then fill the pond slowly to minimise disturbing the soil.
- After planting the pond bank, the project is complete. In most cases it won't be necessary to source tadpoles for your pond, frogs will move in uninvited, usually within the first two months.
- If you choose to have native fish in your pond be aware that they may eat the tadpoles.

### Plants for in and around the pond:

<b>Red-fruited Saw-Sedge</b>	<b>(<i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>)</b>
<b>Streaked Arrow-grass</b>	<b>(<i>Triglochin striata</i>)</b>
<b>Derwent Speedwell</b>	<b>(<i>Derwentia derwentiana</i>)</b>
<b>Common Spike-rush</b>	<b>(<i>Eleocharis acuta</i>)</b>
<b>Swamp Club-rush</b>	<b>(<i>Isolepis inundata</i>)</b>
<b>Angled Lobelia</b>	<b>(<i>Lobelia anceps</i>)</b>
<b>Swamp Stonecrop</b>	<b>(<i>Crassula helmsii</i>)</b>
<b>Water Millfoil</b>	<b>(<i>Myriophyllum crispatum</i>)</b>
<b>Slender Knotweed</b>	<b>(<i>Persicaria decipiens</i>)</b>
<b>River Buttercup</b>	<b>(<i>Ranunculus inundatus</i>)</b>

## Indigenous lawn alternatives

If you are thinking of creating lawn areas, there are some drought-tolerant indigenous grass species that are suitable for gardening situations. Compared to the conventional lawn grasses, indigenous grasses need more time to establish, but become just as dense.

Two local indigenous grass species that are suitable as lawn are Mat Grass (*Hemarthria uncinata*) and Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*). The image shows a Mat Grass lawn at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne.



Indigenous lawns take a bit more time to establish than conventional lawns, but once they do, they can survive for prolonged dry periods.

They grow in a wide range of soils and tolerate frost, moderate salt conditions and shade, but they may wear out in areas of heavy traffic.

## Weeping Grass

Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) grows into a soft compact lawn with leaves growing from 2 - 20 cm, however, it does tolerate frequent mowing and can be cut to any height required.

It spreads from underground stems, much in the same way as couch grass, but is less prolific. It grows a tall (50 - 80 cm) flower stalk, but not when mown regularly. It does not go dormant during winter, stays green throughout the year and is frost-tolerant. It will grow well in a range of soils and in full sun as well as in shady conditions.

## Mat Grass

Mat Grass (*Hemarthria uncinata*) is a rigid matting, perennial grass which like Weeping Grass spreads from underground stems. Mat Grass is drought tolerant, but can also tolerate wet areas. It grows in full sun and semi-shade. The Royal Botanic Gardens have created an experimental lawn that established very well.

To achieve a uniformly green lawn all year round for a wide range of environmental conditions, including heavy traffic, Weeping Grass and Mat Grass can be planted/sown in combination.

**Other indigenous grasses suitable for low-traffic areas are Wallaby Grasses (*Rytidosperma* spp.) and Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*), however, these are less tolerant to mowing and should only be cut approximately twice a year and no lower than 4 cm.**

## Planting preparation

Once your garden beds are marked out according to your design drawing and your hard landscape features such as rocks, paving, logs etc. are installed, the soil can now be prepared for planting.

At pH ranges lower than 4.5, aluminium becomes more soluble and thus more available to plants, potentially resulting in aluminium toxicity. On the other end of the scale, at high soil pH iron is less available, potentially leading to iron deficiency.

Using the results from you soil tests conducted during the site analysis, determine whether your soil requires pH correction and texture improvement.

Most indigenous plants grow well in soils with a pH between 5 and 6 (slightly acidic). Most natural soils in the Maroondah area will be in that pH range and usually consist of a loamy topsoil layer of about 10 cm on clay. This is the kind of soil indigenous plants are adapted to and prefer.



**Dark topsoil layer over lighter yellow-brown clay layer**

However, soils of house blocks have often been disturbed and altered at the time of building and may need work to achieve the desired pH, structure and texture. The better your soil, the more likely your plants are going to succeed, saving you a lot of money in the long run and making them more resistant to pests and diseases.

If your soil's pH is  $<4.5$ , it may require application of lime. Application rates depend on current pH and are usually found on the product package.

Highly alkaline soils ( $> \text{pH } 7.5$ ) can be corrected using sulphur or iron sulphate. Sulphur application rates are generally substantially lower than those for iron sulphate, however, sulphur takes effect in 3 – 4 months, iron sulphate shows results in just 3 – 4 weeks.

The reason pH is corrected is that some nutrients are either not available to plants or become much more available in the above pH ranges, resulting in deficiency or toxicity.

**Soil texture and structure** can be improved by adding organic material or, in the case of very sandy soils, clay. Where the topsoil is very thin and the clay layer is exposed, gypsum can be applied to break up the clay.

It is not necessary to get rid of clay entirely. On the contrary, some clay is desirable, as each clay particle has a huge surface area compared to sand or silt and a slight negative charge which enables it to attract and hold water and nutrients.

## Amelioration for acidic and alkaline soils

Should you find that your pH is too acidic (below 4.5) or too alkaline (above 7.5) consider rectifying this before planting. Use lime for acidic soil and iron sulphate for very alkaline soils.

To determine whether soil will be responsive to gypsum application, stir a tablespoon of clay into a glass of water and stand it for 5 – 10 minutes. If the water remains cloudy, the clay is likely to respond to gypsum. Now add some gypsum and check if the clay flocculates (sticks together).

## Planting

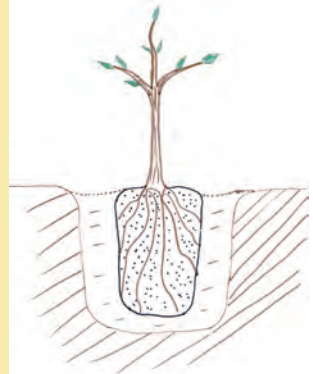
The best time to plant is autumn; the soil is usually still warm despite cooler days and autumn rains provide sufficient moisture for plants with only minimal or no watering required during the establishment phase and throughout winter.

Plant growth slows down during the cooler months, so the energy of the plant goes into its establishment without the stress of having to cater for growth spurts. During growing phases, plants require more nutrients and water.

If you want to plant during late spring or summer, be prepared to water regularly to nurse your plants through the hotter temperatures.

### The best start for your plants is correct planting:

- Loosen the soil in the planting area.
- Holes should be about twice as wide and slightly deeper than the plant pot or tube.
- Watering the plant in the pot prior to planting ensures optimal hydration.
- Tap the plant out of the pot and place it in the hole, if needed add some fertiliser. Potting mix and surrounding soil should be level.
- Backfill loosely with soil and water in.
- Add some more soil around the plant and gently press down, leaving a shallow depression around the plant to assist with water absorption during watering.





## Maintenance

- **Pruning** - usually very little pruning is required for indigenous plants. Pruning can encourage bushiness, maintain density and shape and is best done after flowering.  
Indigenous grasses can be rejuvenated by cutting them back severely to remove dead leaves and encourage new growth.
- **Staking** - Staking may be required for young tree saplings in very wind-exposed situations. In general, saplings that have been hardened off properly will not need to be staked.
- **Watering** - Indigenous plants will require watering for an initial period of time to allow them to establish when planted in late spring/summer or into very dry soil. Plants chosen for their suitability to a particular situation may never require watering, even in extreme dry times.
- **Fertilising** - the closer the composition of a garden soil is to that of original soil in local bushland, the less fertilising will be required.  
Commercial native fertiliser or organic fertiliser can be applied at the time of planting. Native fertilisers have a phosphorus content of no more than 2%. When using organic fertiliser, ensure that this is not exceeded, as most Australian native plants are very sensitive to phosphorus and high phosphorus fertiliser input may result in phosphorus toxicity.
- **Mulching** - a sufficiently thick layer of mulch (minimum 8 – 10 cm) will prevent moisture evaporation from the soil and achieve a degree of weed suppression by cutting out light. Composted mulch is best; uncomposted mulch will lower Nitrogen in the soil, as it is used up by the microorganisms breaking down the mulch.

## Weed control

Many weeds compete with garden plants for light, nutrients and water and are usually better (and faster) at propagating from seeds or, in the case of Buffalo or Couch grass, from stolons and rhizomes, or bulbs, like Oxalis.



**Bulbous weeds like Oxalis or Angled Onion can either be dug out - taking care to remove all bulbs - or sprayed.**

A weed management plan for the home garden will ensure the most efficient use of your time. There are a few general things that can keep weeds to a minimum:

- Mulching - a sufficiently thick layer of mulch will achieve a degree of weed suppression by cutting out light.
- Filling empty spaces in the garden with desired vegetation. Many weeds move into disturbed or empty areas. If you have such areas in your garden, consider filling them with groundcovers (see plant catalogue).

Dense groundcover works similar to mulching, as it covers the ground, cutting out light for any weeds that may germinate. In addition, groundcovers use up soil nutrients, thus making it more difficult for weeds to establish, and the number of weeds in such an area can be significantly reduced.

The most common method of removing weeds is to pull them out by hand. This will work well for weeds that do not have stolons, rhizomes or bulbs. These can regenerate from any remaining piece of the root system with a growing point, using the starch stored in the roots as energy.

The easiest method of removing those weeds is spraying them with Glyphosate (commercially available). Glyphosate translocates from the leaves into stems and roots and bulbs. Spraying should be done when the weed is actively growing and preferably before it has a chance to set seed.

If you are not comfortable using a chemical herbicide, try one of a number of available organic, non-chemical alternatives available from retail nurseries.

Alternatively, you could solarise those weeds. This will only be feasible in summer, when the sun is hot. Cover the weedy area with black plastic - this will deprive the weeds of light and water in addition to the heat it will generate - and for Couch and Buffalo Grass leave it on for 6-8 weeks at least. When you remove the plastic cover, the grass should look white (no chlorophyll left). This method will not be satisfactory for bulbous weeds like Oxalis or Angled Onion. They will have to either be dug out or sprayed.

## Environmental weeds

Environmental weeds are non-indigenous plants that have the potential to infest natural bushland and suppress indigenous vegetation. Some plants that are sold as garden plants have high weed potential. Some of the major threats are **Agapanthus**, **Arum Lily**, **Honeysuckle**, **Ivy**, **Broom** species and **Blue Periwinkle**.

A complete list of environmental weeds and alternate plants is available from Maroondah Council.

## Maroondah Wildlife

Maroondah's bushland reserves are home to a diverse range of birds, frogs, insects and mammals. They depend on the health of the reserve's ecosystem for their survival.



**Swamp Wallaby** (*Wallabia bicolor*)

Wallabies have been seen in Warranwood Reserve, Loughies Bushland, the Glenvale Road area and Hochkins Ridge.

Wildlife corridors between reserves allow for the migration of animals between reserves, virtually expanding territories and breeding areas. Some corridors exist already, they can be strengthened through the creation of indigenous gardens, giving wildlife extra space.



**Australian Wood-duck** (*Chenonetta jubata*)

Australian Wood-ducks breed in Candlebark Walk Reserve, which is home to many water birds.



## **Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)**

Echidnas have been seen in many of the major bushland reserves. They are particularly susceptible to dog attacks. Please check Maroondah Council's off-leash policy for dogs and cat curfews.

New housing development puts pressure on our wildlife. This can be mitigated to a degree by using indigenous plants when landscaping new gardens and removing as little indigenous vegetation as possible.

**A list of all Maroondah Bushland Reserves showing the vegetation and wildlife for each reserve can be found on the Maroondah Council website <http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/FactSheets>.**

## **King-Parrot (*Alisterus scapularis*)**

King-Parrots can be found in B.J. Hubbard Reserve, Loughie's Bushland and Warranwood Reserve. They are also frequent visitors to home gardens and can become quite tame.





## **Milkmaids** (*Burchardia umbellata*)

- Perennial herb, 10 - 65cm high, dies down after flowering. Moist, well-drained soils in full sun, semi-shade.
- Flowers September to December.
- Attractive little plant for drifts amongst trees with a light canopy, in rockeries or in containers, well suited to cottage gardens.



## **Chocolate Lily** (*Arthropodium strictum*)

- Tufted perennial up to 50cm.
- Violet, chocolate scented flowers on tall stems November to December.
- Adaptable plant good in mass plantings suited to containers, rockeries and wildflower beds in cottage gardens.



## **Bulbine Lily** (*Bulbine bulbosa*)

- Perennial herb with yellow star like flowers on stems up to 60cm. Dies back to tuberous root stock in dry weather.
- Flowers September to January.
- Good in mass plantings or as part of a wildflower bed in cottage gardens.

## **Button Everlasting** (*Helichrysum scorpioides*)

- Perennial matting herb up to 30cm. Well-drained soils.
- Single flat yellow flower heads on long stems Sep-Dec.
- Attractive rockery plant which dies back after flowering, well suited to cottage gardens.



## **Common Hovea** (*Hovea linearis*)

- Open trailing sub-shrub to 60cm. Olive green leaves. Dry, well-drained soil.
- Small mauve pea flowers along the stems August to October.
- Attractive little plant for drifts amongst trees with a light canopy, in rockeries or in containers, well suited to cottage gardens.



## **Long Purple-flag** (*Patersonia occidentalis*)

- Clumping perennial herb up to 60cm.
- Many purple iris-like flowers on stems September to January.
- Bog gardens, but adaptable to drier locations, stunning as specimen or in groups.





## **Grass Trigger-plant** (*Stylidium graminifolium*)

- Perennial herb with prominent grass-like tuft at base stems to 80cm. Moist, well-drained soils.
- Flower spike with many small pink flowers September to December.
- Suitable for cottage gardens or as underplanting together with grasses.



## **Pink-bells** (*Tetratheca ciliata*)

- Attractive, slender or spreading shrub to 60cm. Moist, well-drained soils.
- Pink/magenta flowers July to December.
- Attractive in wildflower garden bed, in groups or as part of a mass planting, giving colour in late winter/early spring into summer.



## **Tangled Guinea-flower** (*Hibbertia empetrifolia*)

- Wiry, spreading shrub to 80cm high, spreading to 2m. Moist, well drained soils.
- Flowers throughout the year, peaking August to February.
- Rockeries, cottage gardens, can be trained up trellis or fences, or pruned into a small hedge.
- Food plant for caterpillars.



## **Native Violet** (*Viola hederacea*)

- Prostrate fast growing matting perennial herb. Light green kidney shaped leaves. Moist, well-drained soils.
- White flowers with purple centres June to March.
- Long-flowering, attractive in rockeries or as underplanting.



## **Bluebell** (*Wahlenbergia gracilis*)

- Tufted herb with bell shaped blue flowers at the end of long stalks, moist, well drained soils.
- Flowers for a long period through spring and early summer.
- Looks good planted en mass, or in between other wildflowers.
- Nectar attracts butterflies.



## **Black-anther Flax-lily** (*Dianella admixta*)

- Vigorous spreading plant with tough strap-like leaves to 1m. Spreads by rhizomes. Well drained soils.
- Many blue or violet flowers on rolled stems to 1m, September to April.
- Good rockery plant, cottage gardens, under trees and shrub, excellent alternative to Agapanthus
- Berries attract birds.





## **Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)**

- A dense soft tussock, with flower stems to 1m. Green, greyish or red and green species which tends to take on reddish tones during winter.
- Flowers September to February.
- Very hardy in wide range of conditions.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.



## **Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)**

- Large, dense tussock forming perennial herb up to 1.2m. Smooth bright green strap-like leaves. Well-drained soils.
- Many yellow flowers on spiky stems September to December.
- Excellent architectural plants for formal gardens and mass plantings.
- Seeds attract birds.



## **Common Tussock-grass (*Poa labillardierei*)**

- Large, coarse tussock up to 0.8m. Greyish/green or blue/green leaves, adapts to most soils.
- Green/purplish flower-seed spikes to 1.2m October to February.
- Popular landscaping plant, ideal for mass planting.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.

## **Red-anther Wallaby-grass** (*Rytidosperma pallidum*)

- Tufted perennial grass forming tussock to 1m.
- Seed spikelets with red anthers on stems to 1.5m, October to January.
- Very attractive grass for rockeries, cottage gardens and as weeping border planting.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.



## **Velvet Tussock-grass** (*Poa morrisii*)

- Soft, velvety grey to bluish tussock-forming grass to 30cm. Moist, well-drained soil
- Flower-seed spikes to 90cm October to January.
- Very attractive grass planted en masse or as a border, in rockeries and cottage gardens.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.



All the wildflowers listed are frost- and drought-tolerant. While they have preferred positions, they will flower equally well in sun, semi-shade or shade.

### **Other locally available wildflowers:**

**Clustered everlasting** (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*)

**Wiry Buttons** (*Leptorhynchos tenuifolius*)

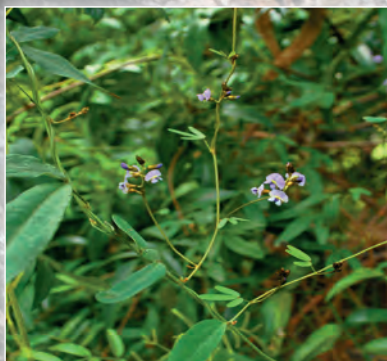
**Showy Podolepis** (*Podolepis jaceoides*)

**Yam Daisy** (*Microseris lanceolata*)



## **Purple Coral-pea** (*Hardenbergia violacea*)

- Fast growing dense climber/scrambler to 2m, well-drained soils.
- Many sprays of purple to pink pea-flowers massed along branches July to November.
- Showy climber, ideal for fences, trellises and arbours in cottage gardens or as a colour highlight twining over shrubs.
- Butterfly attracting (food for caterpillars)



## **Twining Glycine** (*Glycine clandestina*)

- Dainty, twining climber up to 2m. Moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates dryness once established.
- Small blue-mauve pea flowers October to January.
- Suitable for shady garden positions, will twine around trees and shrubs.
- Butterfly attracting (food for caterpillars)



## **Austral Clematis** (*Clematis aristata*)

- Attractive, vigorous climber with shiny green leaves. Although found in damp habitat, suits well-drained soils best for planting.
- Many creamy white starry flowers with attractive feathery seed heads August to March.
- Ideal for fences, trellises and arbours in cottage gardens.
- Butterfly attracting (food for caterpillars)

## **Common Apple-berry** (*Billiardiera mutabilis*)

- Adaptable light climber producing edible berries. Well-drained, moist soils.
- Greenish-yellow flowers throughout the year.
- Will grow under established trees and on fences.
- Nectar and berries attract birds.



## **Bidgee-widgee** (*Acaena novae-zealandia*)

- Rambling, dense ground cover. Useful soil binding plant. Adaptable.
- Round, greenish-white flowers (burrs) on stalks to 20cm, October to January.
- Interesting groundcover due to unusual burr-like flower. Not suitable where pets are around (burrs get tangled in fur).
- Seeds attract birds.



## **Kidney Weed** (*Dichondra repens*)

- Dense spreading herb with kidney-shaped leaves. Rooting at nodes to form mats.
- Tiny greenish flowers September to December
- Can be used as replacement for grass where there is light traffic.
- Flowers are too insignificant to attract birds, insects or butterflies.



# Indigenous Plants of Maroondah



## **Honey pots** (*Acrotriche serrulata*)

- Dense ground cover to 30cm spreading up to 1m. Hardy when established. Well-drained clay soils.
- Sweet smelling translucent tubular flowers May to October.
- Ideal for rockeries, flowers are edible.
- Nectars and fruit attract birds.



## **Running Postman** (*Kennedia prostrata*)

- Prostrate perennial. Drought tolerant once established.
- Single scarlet pea flowers scattered along stems April to December.
- Ideal for rockeries, also grows well in hanging basket.
- Nectar attracts insects and butterflies, insects in turn attract birds.

## **Other locally available climbers and creepers:**

**Wonga Vine** (*Pandorea pandorana*) flowers prolifically in August and September, with stunning white tubular flowers with scarlet centres.

**Austral Cranes-bill** (*Geranium solanderi*) has paired pink flowers from October to February.

**Native Raspberry** (*Rubus parvifolius*) has small deep pink flowers from October to December, followed by small edible red berries.

### **Pale Rush** (*Juncus pallidus*)

- Common moist area plant, to 2m tall. Often found in swamps and along watercourses. Useful for binding soil.
- Straw-coloured flowers, October to January.
- Pond plant, also suitable as architectural specimen.
- Habitat for small birds and frogs.



### **Water-milfoil** (*Myriophyllum crispatum*)

- Erect perennial herb, grows in water, swamp, and mud.
- Insignificant cream/brown flowers, October to April
- Excellent pond plant, Can prevent algae growth by taking nutrients out of the water.
- Excellent frog habitat.



### **Red-fruit Saw-sedge** (*Gahnia sieberiana*)

- Clumping perennial sedge, to 3m tall, spreading to 2m, moist to wet soils.
- Light-brown flower spikes, turning black later with red nuts, October to January.
- Impressive pond plant, also perfect as a specimen among lower growing plants.
- Habitat for birds, food plant for the Swordgrass Butterfly.





## **Tassel Sedge** (*Carex fascicularis*)

- Tufted bright green coarse sedge with sharp leaves up to 1m. Moist to wet soils.
- Tassel-shaped, spiky, light-brown flower heads October to April.
- Attractive sedge with tassels, can be planted beside ponds or in shallow water
- Frog habitat.



## **Loose Flower Rush** (*Juncus pauciflorus*)

- Perennial rush to 60cm, bright green arching tussock.
- Loose, straw-coloured flower spikelets December to March.
- Adaptable plant for wet areas, that tolerates dryness once established.
- Seeds attract birds, frog habitat.

### **Other locally available aquatic and semi-aquatic plants:**

**River Buttercup** (*Ranunculus inundatus*) is a matting perennial with yellow flowers from September to December.

**Spotted Knotweed** (*Persicaria praetermissa*) a scrambling perennial herb with small pink flowers from December to April.

**Water-ribbons** (*Triglochin procera*) grow submerged in water and assist in algae prevention by absorbing nutrients from the water.



**Spreading Wattle** (*Acacia genistifolia*)

- Fast growing, prickly shrub to 2 - 3m. Adaptable to most soils.
- Prolific creamy yellow ball flowers over long period.
- Can grow under established trees.
- Useful bird habitat, seeds attract birds, in particular parrots.



**Myrtle Wattle** (*Acacia myrtifolia*)

- Fast growing upright or bushy shrub up to 3m. Suits most soils.
- Prolific creamy yellow balls July to October.
- Benefits from heavy pruning, tolerates full shade. Good screening plant.
- Seeds attract birds.



**Juniper Wattle** (*Acacia ulicifolia*)

- Open rounded prickly shrub up to 2m. Moist, well-drained soils.
- Flowers are prolific creamy balls March to September.
- Provides winter colour in the garden, may require pruning to maintain bushiness.
- Food and habitat plant for birds.





## **Grey Parrot-pea** (*Dyhlwinia cinerascens*)

- Open, erect/spreading shrub up to 1.5m.
- Many yellow/orange pea flowers per stem July to November.
- Adaptable shrub for shady situations, tolerates dry soils, ideal for cottage gardens.



## **Common Heath** (*Epacris impressa*)

- Open upright shrub up to 1.5m, moist, well drained soils.
- Prolific white, red/pink flowers March to November.
- Victoria's Floral emblem. Attractive in rockeries and cottage gardens.
- Nectar attracts birds and butterflies.



## **Hop Goodenia** (*Goodenia ovata*)

- Fast-growing hardy shrub to 2m, moist to wet soil.
- Yellow flowers August to February.
- Great filler plant, will spread. Prune regularly to maintain bushiness.
- Food plant for caterpillars.

**Austral Indigo** (*Indigofera australis*)

- Attractive open shrub to 2m with blue-green feathery leaves; well-drained soils.
- Sprays of mauve/pink pea flowers September to December.
- Suitable for mass-planting or as an under-shrub in shady positions. Prune after flowering to maintain bushiness.
- Food plant for caterpillars and butterflies.



**Silky Daisy-bush** (*Olearia myrsinoides*)

- Small open spreading shrub to 1m, well drained soils, full sun to semi-shade.
- Many white, yellow centred daisy flower heads, October to February.
- Ideal for cottage gardens and in rockeries, complements multi-coloured plantings.



**Angled Flat-pea** (*Platylobium obtusangulum*)

- Small upright or scrambling shrub up to 1m for drier soils.
- Yellow and red pea flowers September to December.
- Provides prolific flowers and interesting foliage for rockeries, cottage gardens and bush gardens. Can be pruned for hedging.





## **Golden Bush-pea** (*Pultenaea gunnii*)

- Wiry shrub 0.5-1.5m with tiny, ovate, dark-green leaves, well-drained dry soils.
- Terminal clusters of bright yellow/orange to red flowers September to October.
- Great in mass plantings, can tolerate shade, pruning encourages bushiness.



## **Rough Bush-pea** (*Pultenaea scabra*)

- Small shrub to 1.5m with small dark- green wedge-shaped leaves. Well drained soils in full sun or part shade.
- Masses of orange/yellow flowers September to November.
- Hardy in dry steep slopes and rockeries, attractive in cottage and bush gardens.



## **Dusty Miller** (*Spyridium parvifolium*)

- Spreading shrub with dark-green elliptic leaves to 2m, moist well-drained soils, prefers shady position.
- Small bunches of white flowers July to November.
- Attractive, fragrant shrub for mass plantings, can be pruned for hedging.

**Cinnamon Wattle** (*Acacia leprosa*)

- Fast growing, shrub with weeping foliage to 5m.
- Up to six ball-shaped, yellow flowerheads per flower stalk, August to December.
- Very adaptable screening plant with cinnamon fragrance. Attractive weeping over water features.
- Habitat and food plant for birds.

**Hop Wattle** (*Acacia stricta*)

- Fast growing, open, erect shrub up to 4m, tolerates a variety of soil, tolerates full sun and full shade.
- Prolific pale yellow balls May to October.
- Ideal under existing trees, provides colour in the garden during winter.
- Seeds attract birds.

**Prickly Moses** (*Acacia verticillata*)

- Large shrub up to 5m with fine, prickly leaves, tolerates clay and sandy soils.
- Yellow flowers June to December.
- Very adaptable garden plant, prune when immature to promote bushiness.
- Seeds attract birds, provides habitat for birds.





## **Common Cassinia** (*Cassinia aculeata*)

- Open, fast growing, aromatic shrub up to 4m, heavy, moist, well-drained soils.
- Prolific, dense white flower clusters November to March.
- Excellent screening plant when pruned to maintain bushiness. Tolerates sunny to part shady positions.



## **Hop Bitter-pea** (*Daviesia latifolia*)

- Open, spreading shrub up to 3m, adapts to most soils.
- Attractive sprays of brown and yellow pea flowers September to December.
- Good hedge or screening plant, prune after flowering to maintain density.



## **Golden Tip** (*Goodia lotifolia*)

- Fast growing open shrub up to 5m, well-drained soils.
- Many spikes of yellow/red scented pea flowers September to December.
- Excellent background plant, prune after flowering to maintain bushiness.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.

## Hemp Bush (*Gynatrix pulchella*)

- Open woody shrub up to 4m with heart-shaped leaves; well-drained, moist soils.
- Sprays of fragrant greenish-white flowers August to October.
- Can be planted near water, prune to maintain shape.



## Prickly Tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale*)

- Erect shrub with prickly leaves up to 4m, adaptable to most soils.
- Masses of white flowers October to March.
- Can be planted in rows for formal gardens, pruning will maintain shape.
- Nectar attracts butterflies.



## Snowy Daisy-bush (*Olearia lirata*)

- Soft open shrub up to 4m, moist well-drained soils.
- Masses of small white daisy flower heads September to December.
- Attractive plant under trees or as a background plant, responds well to pruning.
- Food plant for caterpillars.





## **Tree Everlasting** (*Ozothamnus ferrugineus*)

- Very fast growing erect shrub or small tree to 4m with narrow lance-shaped leaves, moist, well-drained soils.
- Dense white flower clusters November to February.
- Ideal background or screening plant.



## **Victorian Christmas Bush** (*Prostanthera lasianthos*)

- Large shrub up to 5m with mint-scented toothed leaves,; moist well-drained soils.
- Profuse white flowers with purple interior markings November to January.
- Attractive shrub for moist positions, ideal screening plant, responds well to pruning.



## **Golden Spray** (*Viminaria juncea*)

- Fast growing shrub up to 5m with long needle-like branchlets, tolerates poorly-drained soils.
- Long drooping sprays of yellow pea flowers October to February.
- Weeping habit makes it very attractive as specimen plant or as part of pond background planting. Can adapt to drier conditions. Excellent alternative to Broom species.



**Black Wattle** (*Acacia mearnsii*)

- Fast growing, open spreading tree up to 20m, adaptable to most soil types.
- Strong scented pale yellow balls September to December.
- Attractive shade tree, can be subject to borer attack.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.

**Black Sheoak** (*Allocasuarina littoralis*)

- Erect tree to 10m, with needle-like branchlets and deeply furrowed bark; clay to rocky soils.
- Female flowers red balls, March to June.
- Often used in windbreaks, trunks can be used as host for epiphytic plants (e.g. orchids). Attractive as specimen tree in most garden styles.
- Seeds attract birds, food plant for caterpillars.

**Swamp Paperbark** (*Melaleuca ericifolia*)

- Small tree to 9m with heath-like leaves, prefers moist to wet soils.
- Masses of small cream flowers forming brushes, October to November.
- Excellent screening tree when mass-planted, has a natural tendency to sucker and form a dense copse.
- Food and habitat for birds, nectar attracts butterflies.





### **Hazel Pomaderris** (*Pomaderris aspera*)

- Small slender tree up to 10m with large soft deeply veined leaves with rusty new growth; moist, well-drained soils.
- Many sprays of greenish/yellow flowers October to December.
- Excellent tall screen, can be used as specimen tree with interesting mottled bark.
- Food plant for caterpillars.



### **Red Box** (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*)

- Slow growing tree to 20m. Distinctive blue-grey foliage and red box-type bark. Tolerates poor soils providing drainage is good.
- Many cream flowers September to January.
- Ornamental, attractive shade tree in larger gardens, good as specimen tree or screen.
- Bee-attracting honey tree, food tree for caterpillars and birds, nectar attracts butterflies

Maroondah is home to many more Eucalypt species, all of them available in your local community nursery. The majority grow to over 20m tall and may not be suited to smaller gardens, as they create large shade areas and their roots may cause problems with existing buildings. Your nursery can advise on Eucalypt species for your particular situation.

## References and further reading

### Books and CDs

*Flora of Melbourne* - Australian Plants Society Maroondah Inc.

*Native Trees and Shrubs of South-Eastern Australia* - Leon Costermans

*Bush Invaders of South-East Australia* - Adam Muyt

*Native Plants of Melbourne* - David and Barbara Jones

*Australian Plants for the Garden* - Gwen Elliot

*Gardening Down-Under* - Kevin Handreck

*Attracting Wildlife to your Garden* - Rodger Elliot

*Plants of Melbourne's Outer East - Indigenous Flora and*

*Environmental Weeds* - CD ROM by Helen Moss, available through Baber Enterprises Pty Ltd, (03 - 9879 0351)

### Websites

Sustainable Gardening Australia - [www.sgaonline.org.au](http://www.sgaonline.org.au)

Amphibian Research Centre - [www.frogs.org.au](http://www.frogs.org.au)

Australian Native Plant Society - [asgap.org.au](http://asgap.org.au)

Gould League Environmental Education - [www.gould.edu.au](http://www.gould.edu.au)

## Contacts:

### **CRISP Nursery**

17 Greenwood Avenue  
Ringwood VIC 3134  
Ph: 03 9879 3911  
Email: [crisp@melbpc.org.au](mailto:crisp@melbpc.org.au)  
<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~crisp/index.html>

### **Opening times**

Wednesday 9:30am - 12:30pm  
Friday 9:30am - 12:30pm  
Saturday 10:00am - 1:00pm  
(March - November)

### **Maroondah Council Bushland**

24 - 28 Lincoln Road  
Croydon VIC 3136  
Ph: 03 9294 5677  
Email: [bushland@maroondah.vic.gov.au](mailto:bushland@maroondah.vic.gov.au)

