Attracting native wildlife to your garden

Invite the birds over

If you are designing a new garden or redeveloping an old, why not create a setting where native wildlife will be as equally at home - it may well double the pleasure you get from the garden! Even if your garden is small, it can still attract birds on a temporary basis, especially over winter and spring when the tui, bellbird and kereru (native wood pigeon) will travel considerable distances in search of flowers and fruit.

Silvereye, greywarbler and fantail are insect eaters so plant varieties are not so important as a healthy organic mix of spiders, moths, beetles, wetas, earthworms, katydids and stick insects. A good layer of mulch or leaf litter on the garden will encourage insects and birds are a natural way of keeping them under control. Morepork and kingfisher eat insects as well as mice. Birds also pollinate flowers and give pleasure with their song.

in making your garden attractive to native birds, introduced birds such as goldfinch, chaffinch, yellow hammer, blackbird, song thrush, house sparrow and starling are also likely residents.

Plant food species

Some rough 'wild' areas are ideal for wildlife, especially gullies, streams and boggy areas but it is possible to have a more formal garden and still have native birds visiting. This is more likely if you have native bush nearby and some favourite food trees for birds in either shelterbelts or around the garden. These could include kowhai, flax, kakabeak and tarata for nectar and wineberry, karamu and korokia for fruit. The chart overleaf is a guide to some of the more important food bearing species, though it should be noted that not all grow in all parts of the country. As a general rule, choose plants that naturally occur in your area.

Plant favourite bird foods like flax and kowhai where you can see them from inside the house. But avoid planting too close to the house as reflections on windows can confuse birds. A number of kereru are killed every year trying to fly through panes of glass - a distressing way to die for such a beautiful bird.

Hang 'em high

Most native birds have become wary about feeding on the ground, wise to the fact that a cat may be lurking in the bushes. Think about growing ground creepers like Fuchsia procumbens in a hanging basket – it is a wonderful sight with red berries hanging down. Climbing plants like *Metrosideros carminea*, *Passiflora tetranda* (NZ passionfruit) and *Tecomanthe speciosa* also have a place along a wall or over a pergola - but you do need a frost-free site for *Tecomanthe*.

Keep it low

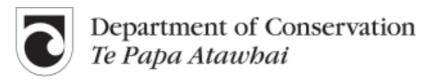
In designing your garden, consider making some safe areas for lizards by using low-growing, dense plants such as *Coprosmas or Muehlenbeckia* as well as rocks, dry stone walls, concrete slabs or even a log stack where lizards can hide from predators, especially cats.

Pushed for space?

If you have limited space for big trees, try growing plants in containers, for example, titoki, broadleaf or cabbage tree. Some shrubs like kakabeak can even be standardised to fit in with your garden design – but make sure you allow them to flower so the birds benefit.

What to plant

There are many native trees, shrubs and climbers that look attractive in the garden and also provide food and shelter for wildlife. The following is a selection only. There are also numerous hybrids and cultivars of native plants developed for garden situations but these should not be planted in or near natural bush so as to avoid cross pollination. Your local plant nursery should be able to advise further.



Planting list

Botanical name	Common name	Features
Trees over 6 m		
Alectryon excelsus	titoki	red fruit
Carpodetus serratus	putaputaweta	lilac flower
Cordyline australis	ti kouka (cabbage tree)	cream flower
Coprosma repens	taupata	orange/yellow fruit
Griselinia littoralis	broadleaf	purple fruit
Fuchsia excorticata	kotukutuku or konini	red flower, black fruit
Knightia excelsa	<i>r</i> ewarewa	red flower
Melicytus ramiflorus	mahoe	violet fruit
Pennantia corymbosa	kaikomako	black fruit
Pittosporum eugenioides	tarata (lemonwood)	yellow flower
Pittosporum tenuifolium	kohuhu	dark red flowers
Pseudopanax arboreus	five finger	black fruit
Schefflera digitata	pate	purple/black fruit
Sophora tetraptera	kowhai	yellow flower

red flower

Trees & shrubs (approx 1.5 m to 6 m)

Vitex lucens

	•	
Aristotelia serrata	wineberry	deep red fruit
Brachyglottis repanda	rangiora	yellow flower
Coprosma rhamnoides	coprosma	crimson fruit
Coprosma robusta	karamu	orange/red fruit
Coprosma grandifolia	kanono	orange fruit
Cordyline indivisa	mountain cabbage tree	cream flower
Corokia species	korokio	orange to red fruit
Leptospermum scoparium	manuka	white/pink flower,
Marcopiper excelsum	kawakawa	orange fruit
Myrsine australis	mapou	black fruit
Phormium tenax	NZ flax	yellow flower
Pittosporum crassifolium	karo	crimson flower
Pomaderris apetala	tainui	yellow flower
Pomaderris kumeraho	kumerahou	yellow flower
Pseudopanax laetus	five finger	black fruit
Sophora microphylla	kowhai	yellow flower

puriri

Shrubs (approx 500 mm to 1.5 m)

Alseuosmia macrophylla	toropapa	cream to red flower
Astelia nervosa	astelia	orange fruit
Clianthus puniceus	kaka beak	red flower
Coprosma cheesmanii	coprosma	orange red fruit
Corokia cotoneaster	korokio	red fruit
Hebe species	hebe	flowers various colours
Libertia grandiflora	NZ iris	orange seed pod
Melicytus micranthus	nanakura	purple to white fruit
Phormium cookianum	dwarf mountain flax	yellow flower
Rhabdothamnus solandrii	matata	yellow to red flower

Low-growing plants (to 500 mm approx)

Coprosma acerosa & brunnea sand coprosma pale blue fruit NZ blueberry blue fruit Dianella nigra Fuchsia procumbens fuchsia red fruit

Hebe species hebe flowers various colours

Libertia ixioides or L.peregrinans NZ iris orange seed pod

Muehlenbeckia axillaris creeping pohuehue white fruit white flower Parahebe species parahebe Podocarpus nivalis mountain totara red fruit

Pratia angulata creeping pratia purple/red fruit

Container plants

Climbers

Alectryon execelsus titoki red fruit

Astelia species orange fruit

kakabeak red flower Clianthus species Cordyline australis cabbage tree cream flower Cordyline indivisa mountain cabbage tree cream flower broadleaf Griselinia littoralis purple fruit

NZ Flax Phormium species yellow flower

Pittosporum species yellow to red flowers Pseudopanax species five finger black fruit

pink/red flower, red fruit

Vitex lucens puriri

Metrosideros carminea carmine rata crimson flower

Passiflora tetranda kohia orange fruit

Tecomanthe speciosa cream flower