

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 tetrandra* (NZ passionfruit) and *Tecomathe speciosa* also have a place along a wall or over a pergola - but you do need a frost-free site for *Tecomathe*.

Keep it low

In designing your garden, consider making some safe areas for lizards by using low-growing, dense plants such as *Coprosma* 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		
<i>Alectryon excelsus</i>	titoki	red fruit
<i>Carpodetus serratus</i>	putaputaweta	lilac flower
<i>Cordyline australis</i>	ti kouka (cabbage tree)	cream flower
<i>Coprosma repens</i>	taupata	orange/yellow fruit
<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>	broadleaf	purple fruit
<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i>	kotukutuku or konini	red flower, black fruit
<i>Knightia excelsa</i>	rewarewa	red flower
<i>Melicytus ramiflorus</i>	mahoe	violet fruit
<i>Pennantia corymbosa</i>	kaikomako	black fruit
<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>	tarata (lemonwood)	yellow flower
<i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i>	kohuhu	dark red flowers
<i>Pseudopanax arboreus</i>	five finger	black fruit
<i>Schefflera digitata</i>	pate	purple/black fruit
<i>Sophora tetraptera</i>	kowhai	yellow flower
<i>Vitex lucens</i>	puriri	red flower
Trees & shrubs (approx 1.5 m to 6 m)		
<i>Aristotelia serrata</i>	wineberry	deep red fruit
<i>Brachyglottis repanda</i>	rangiora	yellow flower
<i>Coprosma rhamnoides</i>	coprosma	crimson fruit
<i>Coprosma robusta</i>	karamu	orange/red fruit
<i>Coprosma grandifolia</i>	kanono	orange fruit
<i>Cordyline indivisa</i>	mountain cabbage tree	cream flower
<i>Corokia species</i>	korokio	orange to red fruit
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	manuka	white/pink flower,
<i>Marcopiper excelsum</i>	kawakawa	orange fruit
<i>Myrsine australis</i>	mapou	black fruit
<i>Phormium tenax</i>	NZ flax	yellow flower
<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i>	karo	crimson flower
<i>Pomaderris apetala</i>	tainui	yellow flower
<i>Pomaderris kumeraho</i>	kumerahou	yellow flower
<i>Pseudopanax laetus</i>	five finger	black fruit
<i>Sophora microphylla</i>	kowhai	yellow flower
Shrubs (approx 500 mm to 1.5 m)		
<i>Alseuosmia macrophylla</i>	toropapa	cream to red flower
<i>Astelia nervosa</i>	astelia	orange fruit
<i>Clianthus puniceus</i>	kaka beak	red flower
<i>Coprosma cheesmanii</i>	coprosma	orange red fruit
<i>Corokia cotoneaster</i>	korokio	red fruit
<i>Hebe species</i>	hebe	flowers various colours
<i>Libertia grandiflora</i>	NZ iris	orange seed pod
<i>Melicytus micranthus</i>	nanakura	purple to white fruit
<i>Phormium cookianum</i>	dwarf mountain flax	yellow flower
<i>Rhabdothamnus solandrii</i>	matata	yellow to red flower

Low-growing plants (to 500 mm approx)

<i>Coprosma acerosa & brunnea</i>	sand coprosma	pale blue fruit
<i>Dianella nigra</i>	NZ blueberry	blue fruit
<i>Fuchsia procumbens</i>	fuchsia	red fruit
<i>Hebe</i> species	hebe	flowers various colours
<i>Libertia ixioides</i> or <i>L.peregrinans</i>	NZ iris	orange seed pod
<i>Muehlenbeckia axillaris</i>	creeping pohuehue	white fruit
<i>Parahebe</i> species	parahebe	white flower
<i>Podocarpus nivalis</i>	mountain totara	red fruit
<i>Pratia angulata</i>	creeping pratia	purple/red fruit

Container plants

<i>Alectryon excelsus</i>	titoki	red fruit
<i>Astelia</i> species		orange fruit
<i>Clianthus</i> species	kakabeak	red flower
<i>Cordyline australis</i>	cabbage tree	cream flower
<i>Cordyline indivisa</i>	mountain cabbage tree	cream flower
<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>	broadleaf	purple fruit
<i>Phormium</i> species	NZ Flax	yellow flower
<i>Pittosporum</i> species		yellow to red flowers
<i>Pseudopanax</i> species	five finger	black fruit
<i>Vitex lucens</i>	puriri	pink/red flower, red fruit

Climbers

<i>Metrosideros carminea</i>	carmine rata	crimson flower
<i>Passiflora tetrandra</i>	kohia	orange fruit
<i>Tecomanthe speciosa</i>		cream flower