

Attracting small birds to your garden

THERE is a wide diversity of birds big and small in the Namoi region and wouldn't it be great to invite more of them to visit your garden?

The bigger birds are generally well looked after with tall trees and exotic gardens containing big flashy flowers. Why not create a habitat garden or a habitat corner in your garden for smaller birds such as fairy-wrens, silvereyes, scrub-wrens, gerygone, thornbills, finches and others.

Hybrid Grevilleas and Callistemons with large showy flowers will attract bigger nectar eating birds which are often very territorial, chasing away small birds. For small birds you need small flowers and plants with dense foliage.



SMALL birds need dense shrubs to hide away from predators.

Local plants such as *Melaleuca bracteata* provide good cover in their dense foliage for nesting and as a haven in which small birds can rest. *Melaleucas* make excellent habitat street trees to assist small birds in moving safely from place to place. For a more complete small bird habitat, provide a dense understorey of native shrubs, grasses and ground covers.

When you go out to eat do you like to eat the same thing all of the time? I think not. Your small feathered friends are the same. If you have a rich, dense and diverse garden with many different

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taller and shorter shrubs and some native grasses and herbs you will be providing a gourmet deli for these little guys.

Small birds are often attracted to plants with small yellow and white flowers. Experiment in your garden with local native species such as *Westringia cheelii* (Mallee rosemary), *Micro-myrtus sessilis* (heath myrtle) and *Eremophilla maculate* (native fuchsia or spotted emu bush). Even non-native plants such as *Banksia rose* (native of China) and citrus trees are good for small bird habitat.

Ask your local Landcare group or the staff at Liverpool Plains Land Management about how to obtain suitable local provenance native plants.

There are many vegetation communities in the Namoi catchment to find the one in the area where you live see "Regional Vegetation Communities in the Namoi Catchment" found at <http://www.namoi.cma.nsw.gov.au/416845.html?2>

From this starting point you can research native plants which you could experiment with in your garden.

For more information please visit our website www.habitatnetwork.org or email info@iewf.org.

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