

SHELTER OR REFUGE

Birds often flee from predators into low spiky shrubs. The hakeas provide shelter for Superb Fairy-wrens and many finches.

Hakea sericea, Needlebush, may grow 1-4m, with spiky foliage and white to pink flowers. Also **H. teretifolia** in wet areas.

Lambertia formosa, Mountain Devil, emblem of the Blue Mountains.

Acacia echinula, Hedgehog Wattle, (yellow flower) & **Acacia ulicifolia**, Prickly Moses (cream flower), local prickly wattles, **Grevillea longifolia** (red flower, mid or LM) or **G. acanthifolia** (pink/mauve spider flowers, UM) & **Daviesia ulicifolia**, Gorse Bitter Pea, all provide good low and mid-storey protective habitat.

Callistemon citrinus, Lemon-scented Bottlebrush, may grow 1-5m, with sharply-pointed leaves & has red flowers in spring.

Other birds require tall shelter which in turn requires more space. Such as:

Angophora costata, Smooth-barked Apple, has a spreading crown, growing to 20m, white flowers in summer (mid to LM).

Eucalyptus oreades, Blue Mountains Ash, (UM). It grows quickly and usually straight to over 20m, with strips of deciduous old bark revealing a smooth white upper trunk.

Birds as large as the Powerful Owl often use trees such as Coachwood, Sassafras & Cedar Wattle for a daytime roost in the wild.

All birds require a roost to spend the night (or day). They also require a perch from which to snatch a passing insect (flycatchers) or pounce onto the ground for prey (yellow robins). Some birds forage amongst the foliage of shrubs and trees.

NESTING

If one has a quiet, secluded garden relatively free from interference and domestic pets, then birds may be attracted to nest in home gardens.

- ❖ Finches may nest in Hakea bushes
- ❖ Buff-rumped Thornbills may nest close to the ground amongst clumps of grass
- ❖ Grey Shrike-thrush prefers nesting on the lower trunks of trees or stumps
- ❖ Wrens, Robins, Brown Thornbills may nest in low shrubs;



Eastern Yellow Robin
Nesting

- ❖ thickets are excellent for small birds
 - ❖ many honeyeaters prefer to nest in pendulous foliage of eucalypts
 - ❖ Magpies usually make a nest in the fork of tall trees, as do Red Wattlebirds, at different heights.
 - ❖ Kookaburras, Parrots, Lorikeets nest in hollows and you can provide these in gardens with a section of hollow tree (e.g. Angophora costata) or nest-box.
- It is important to have food plants and those which attract insects nearby as small birds must conserve energy while nesting.

Bird-Attracting Plants for the Blue Mountains NSW



Superb Fairy-wren
Hakea sericea

Artwork Fiona Lumsden www.fionalumsden.com

Photograph Paul Vale

<http://popesqlen.bushcarebluemountains.org.au>

Contacts

Blue Mts Bird Observers www.bmbo.org.au
www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au
www.apsbluemtnsgroup.org Glenbrook
www.bluemountains.org.au/nursery
www.wildplantrescue.org.au

Original text by RJ Turner [APSBM].
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BIRDS HAVE THREE MAIN REQUIREMENTS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

- food,
- shelter or refuge and
- nesting sites.

Some trees and shrubs provide all of these needs, while others are specialist providers of different sections of the habitat. This leaflet makes a few recommendations of interesting shrubs and trees to plant to attract birds to the home garden.



It is impractical to grow tall trees in many urban blocks, so it is a good idea to plant shrubs, groundcover and other small plants. The mallee eucalypts are very attractive and suitable.

A water bath is another useful addition to the garden to attract birds, but it must be protected from cats and dogs.

PLANTS FOR FOOD

For nectar in flowers:

Eucalyptus piperita, Sydney Peppermint, 15m, abundant white blossoms late spring. Adult leaves have strong peppermint smell.

Eucalyptus sieberi, Silvertop Ash, 20m, bright red branchlets & abundant creamy blossoms in Spring. Heavily fissured bark is good for insect-gleaning birds.

Leptospermum polygalifolium, Yellow, or Lemon-scented Tea-tree, creamy-white flowers with green to yellow centres.



New Holland Honeyeater feeding on Banksia

Banksia ericifolia, Heath Banksia, has dense, dark green foliage to 5m with orange flowers. (alternative **B. spinulosa**)

Correa reflexa, a smaller plant with pendulous, bell-shaped red/green flowers.

For soft fruits:-

Acmena smithii, a Lilly Pilly*, with glossy green foliage and white flowers in summer, fruit in winter. *spelling variable!

Elaeocarpus reticulatus, Blueberry Ash, attractive white to pink flowers in October-November, blue fruits in autumn.

Dianella caerulea, Blue Fax Lily, with yellow & blue flowers & bright blue fruit.

For seed:

Acacia elata, Cedar Wattle, to 20m, with attractive foliage and cream flowers in summer.

Acacia suaveolens, Sweet-scented Wattle, only 1-2m high, with grey-green foliage, and flowering in autumn.

Native grasses & sedges, (check local species). Tussock grasses like Kangaroo Grass (LM¹) & Poa (UM¹) also provide shelter for insects and foraging birds & reptiles.

Other birds seek insects amongst flowers, along branches and leaves or between plants.

Treecreepers climb the trunks of rough-barked trees, e.g. **Eucalyptus crebra**, Narrow-leaved Ironbark (LM), 20m, or one of the other local ironbarks or stringybarks and **Allocasuarina torulosa**, Forest She-oak, 15-20m, has attractive needle-like foliage, furrowed bark and hard fruits suitable for Glossy Black Cockatoos.



Species Suitability:

Not all native plants are equal!

- 1) Recommendations may have UM (upper mountains) or LM (lower mountains).
- 2) It is best to use plants that are growing naturally in your area. Check with native plant nurseries or local Bushcare group if in doubt.
- 3) See front page for links.