

## 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

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### Contacts

Blue Mts Bird Observers [www.bmbo.org.au](http://www.bmbo.org.au)

[www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au](http://www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au)

[www.apsbluemtnsgroup.org](http://www.apsbluemtnsgroup.org) Glenbrook

[www.bluemountains.org.au/nursery](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/nursery)

[www.wildplantrescue.org.au](http://www.wildplantrescue.org.au)



Local Land  
Services  
Greater Sydney

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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 (LM<sup>1</sup>) & Poa (UM<sup>1</sup>) 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.