

# backyards for biodiversity SMITHS LAKE PROGRAM



**The Backyards for Biodiversity program is now running in your area. It's free and is for anyone with plants on their property.**

Whether you're a fastidious gardener, occasional gardener or someone who avoids gardening, this project will benefit you.



Participating in Backyards for Biodiversity can have all sorts of benefits, including reduced maintenance in your garden, feeling good about helping local wildlife, and creating a beautiful space for you to enjoy.

## What's it all about?

It's about getting everyone involved in protecting natural bushland from invasive plants and providing the right kind of habitat for local fauna in your own backyard.

With loss of habitat resulting from increasing urbanisation, it is important that we continue to extend our native habitat corridors through our gardens for the future wellbeing of both our native plants and animals and for our own enjoyment.

There has been a lot of activity in removing weeds and providing habitat for fauna in local bushland by volunteers, National Parks, and Council, but the scale of the problem means we've got more work to do.

## Create a wildlife-friendly garden

Wildlife-friendly gardens require as much diversity as possible. The natural environment can be complex to replicate in your yard.

- Plant native species at different levels. Include ground cover and dense undergrowth.
- Provide logs and rocks.
- Install water in the garden in the form of a pond or birdbath.

## Get rid of weeds

Environmental weeds are a threat to native ecosystems. They compete with native plants for space, light, nutrients and water and reduce the variety of plants and animals that can live in an area.

Weed management is also costly for landholders, farmers and government and can be difficult to get rid of once they take hold.

## The problem with weeds

An environmental weed could be one that popped up by itself in your garden, something that was already there when you moved in, or you may have unwittingly planted it.

Approximately 65% of weeds invading reserves and bushland areas came from urban gardens and are termed 'garden escapees'. That's why it's so important to know what's in your garden and how to remove environmental weeds.

## HOW TO TAKE PART

Getting involved doesn't mean doing everything at once; it's just about starting where you are. Pick an ideas below, or come up with your own:

- Get familiar with the plants in your garden. Are there any environmental weeds?
- Allocate half an hour in the next week to spend removing as many environmental weeds as you can. You could make it social and swap working bees with a friend!
- Plant bushland-friendly plants such as natives.
- Over the next few months Council staff will be undertaking inspections throughout the Smiths Lake area. Keep an eye out for a letter in the mail and check out the website for more information.
- Sign up to email updates to get tips and the latest project information.

Scan the QR code to find out more about Backyards for Biodiversity.

