

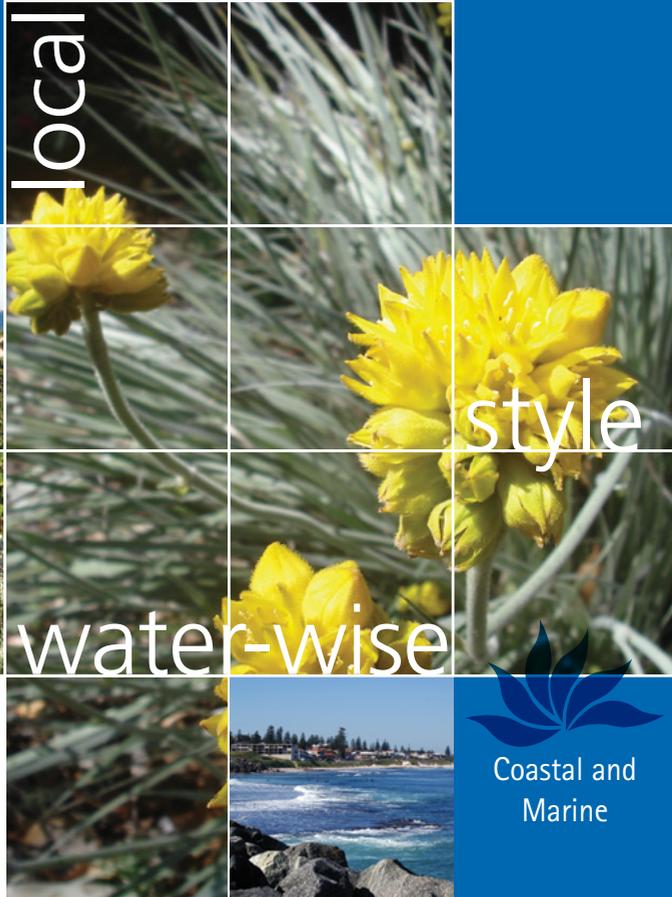


Perth Region  
NRM

Coordinating sustainable  
environmental outcomes

# Coastal Gardens

A planting guide for the  
Perth coastal region



Coastal and  
Marine



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY

# Healthy & attractive urban landscapes

This guide provides simple yet inspiring garden advice for people living in the coastal suburbs of Perth and beyond. Water wise, local native plants are suggested as attractive replacements for introduced plants that can be harmful to our local coastal landscapes. It has been prepared by Perth Region NRM, an independent, not-for-profit organisation. We coordinate a range of projects across the Swan Region to ensure that our natural environment is protected and enhanced. Find out more at [www.perthregionnrm.com](http://www.perthregionnrm.com).

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# Using this planting guide

## Getting started

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Western Australia is renowned for its diverse, stunning flowering plants however, we face many challenges. We have long-hot-dry summers, drought, water restrictions and a changing climate. Coastal residents may also have to tackle salt spray, sand blasting and sandy or saline soils.

However, there is good news! You *can* have a garden that copes with our tough climate without compromising on style by using resilient, local, native coastal plants that are also ornamental.

This guide shows you how to utilise the fantastic variety of native plants available to make a stunning garden. Taking you through, step by step, you will learn what plants work best for a given area or need, how to incorporate them in different landscaping styles, how to maintain them and where to buy them.

- Learn about local alternatives to plants that are ornamental, tough and attract wildlife!

Using local native plants in your coastal garden benefits your wallet. It is an easy, rewarding way to look after our environment. We hope you enjoy discovering local coastal plants. Happy gardening!



# Discovering local plants

## What is a local plant?

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Local plants are species that would naturally occur in your neighbourhood so they have evolved to suit local conditions. They are also called 'indigenous plants' or 'native plants'.

## Why use local plants?

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Local plants have a huge range of benefits.

- Adaptable to various landscaping styles, producing striking results.
- Provide habitat, food and shelter for local fauna such as birds, butterflies and small lizards.
- Native plants flower at different times of the year so you can have a flowering garden all year round.
- Require minimal watering = conserving our water supply.
- Low maintenance.
- Drought tolerant.
- Do not need fertilisers or pesticides.
- Save you money and time.

Local plants are a great option for residents of coastal areas. They have adapted to survive the harsh conditions of sand and salt blasting, prolonged sun exposure, nutrient-depleted soils and limited water availability. They are the best plants for your neighbourhood and the environment.



## How to use local plants

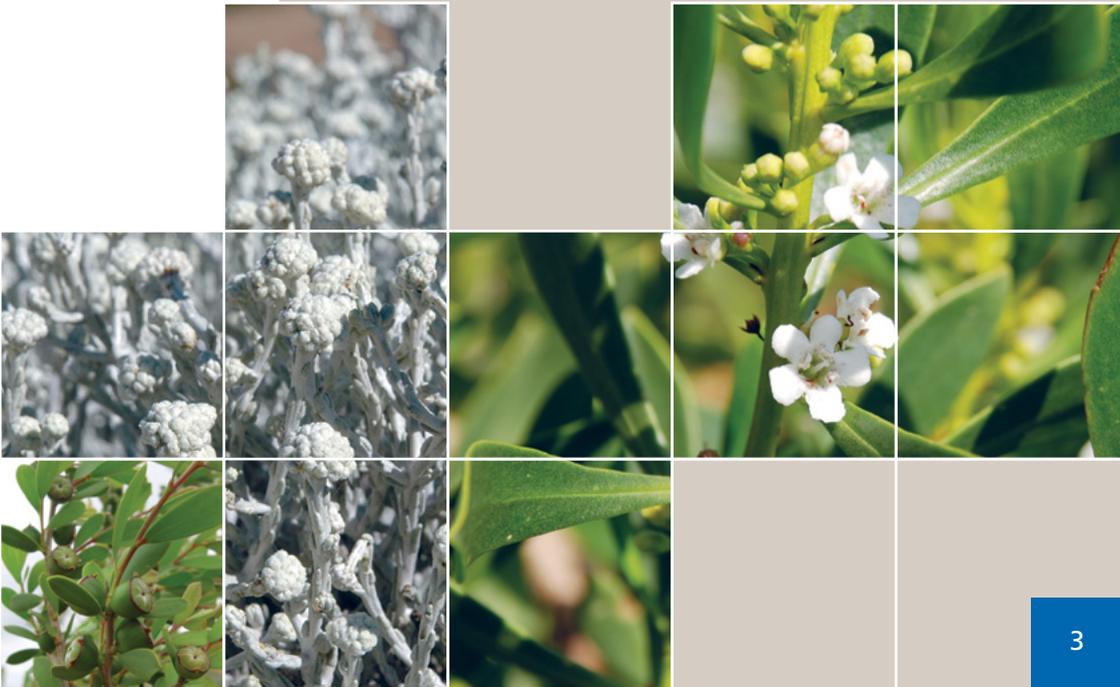
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Local plants can be incorporated into your garden the same way as exotic plants. They are suited to all landscaping styles from formal to Japanese; contemporary to natural cottage; to courtyards and pots.

As you will discover throughout this guide, there is a local coastal plant for most garden situations. Plants featured include striking ground-covers, low shrubs, structured sedges and grasses, flowering creepers and trailers, bird-attracting shrubs and screening trees.

This guide also shows you which local species to use for particular effects, and makes friendlier recommendations for replacing plants known to become invasive coastal weeds.

Information on caring for local plants is provided on pages 26–27.



# Garden escapees

## Are you harbouring known villains?

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Weeds are plants that grow where they are not wanted; and they are not just sour sobs and thistles! Some plants escape from gardens and become serious environmental weeds that pose a major threat to the health and value of our natural environment.

Environmental weeds are trouble because they:

- Threaten our local native plants and environment.
- Can reduce habitat, shelter and food for native fauna.
- Can alter soil conditions.
- Clog up waterways and affect water quality of our coastal waters.
- Harbour pest animals such as rabbits, foxes, feral cats and rats that prey on native wildlife.
- Can alter coastal dune shape.
- Are very costly to control and take resources away from other important issues.

Plants that cause problems often originate from regions with similar climates such as the Mediterranean and South Africa. Thriving in similar conditions, they out-compete local natives as they do not have the pests and diseases that controlled them in their original environment.

## How do non-native garden plants become coastal invaders?

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You might not realise you are harbouring garden escapees, or you might not know that they 'jump the fence' to become problems. Garden plants can escape into natural environments naturally, accidentally and deliberately.

- Seeds can be spread by birds, animals, wind, water (including stormwater) or humans (on clothing, shoes etc).
- Dumped garden waste containing seeds or plant cuttings can grow even several months later.
- Sometimes people deliberately plant non-native garden plants in our natural coastal environment.
- Non-native garden plants can grow through fences directly onto the coast.

## Yes, you can help!

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Have a good look through this guide to check which common garden plants are nasties in the coastal environment. You might like to remove any you have and replace them with the local plants suggested. Take this guide with you when you are making new plant purchases and don't buy plants that are known to be a problem.

Here are some other easy things you can do.

- Use local native species in your garden.
- Dispose of your garden waste responsibly.
- Check with your local council before you plant into natural coastal environments .
- Join a local Coastcare group to learn more about our coast and lend a hand! Call Perth Region NRM on 08 9374 3333 or go to [www.perthregionnrm.com](http://www.perthregionnrm.com) for information on how to get involved.



# Trees & tall shrubs

## DON'T PLANT a garden escapee!



### Sydney Wattle *Acacia longifolia*

(Eastern Australia)

A dense bushy shrub to 10m tall with dark grey bark. The bright yellow flower spikes are cylindrical.



### Century Plant *Agave americana*

(Mexico)

Flowers: summer

Reproduces: seed, vegetative production.



### Coastal Tea Tree

*Leptospermum laevigatum*

(East coast Australia & Tasmania)

Flowers: August to November

Reproduces: seed (woody capsule).



### White Weeping Broom *Retama raetam*

(Mediterranean)

Flowers: winter/late spring

Reproduces: seed pods shed late spring to early summer.



### Brazilian Pepper *Schinus terebinthifolius*

(Brazil)

This tree was introduced as a street tree and garden specimen. Red berries are spread by birds. It will grow vigorously from roots when cut.



### Buckthorn Bush *Rhamnus alaternus*

(Mediterranean)

Flowers: winter to early spring

Reproduces: fleshy black fruits, will reshoot from base if damaged

## GROW ME instead



### Red-Eyed Wattle *Acacia cyclops*

Large shrub or small tree with dense foliage. Yellow flowers during spring and summer and conspicuous seed pods. Short lived but tough, neat shrub that provides food and shelter for local birds and insects.



### Common Boobialla *Myoporum insulare*

Large shrub to small tree, grows 2–5m. Thick light green fleshy leaves, white flowers winter to spring, purple berry fruit. Good screening qualities. Attracts birds and butterflies. Full-sun.



### Peppermint *Agonis flexuosa var. flexuosa*

Medium tree to 10m, long lived. Beautiful and graceful plant, attractive to native insects. Accepts pruning, adaptable in gardens.



### Chenille Honeymyrtle *Melaleuca huegelii*

Tree or shrub to 5m high. Masses of white to pink flowers in summer attract butterflies, bees and insects. Fine, bright green, conifer-like foliage, makes a fine hedge. Hardy, garden worthy and adaptable. Various types available – does best in full sun.



### Rottnest Island Pine *Callitris preissii*

Cylindrical-shaped tree to 5m. Green foliage. Fruit is a dark brown cone. Great for formal gardens. Attractive foliage. Use as a replacement plant for conifers, as singular feature plant, line driveway or for screening. Responds well to pruning. Attracts birds. Does not tolerate direct coastal exposure.



### Rottnest Tea Tree *Melaleuca lanceolata*

Hardy species that grows to 5m and can develop a dense canopy. The flowers attract native bees and wasps and the trees provide bird habitat.

# Medium shrubs

**DON'T PLANT** a garden escapee!



## Marguarite Daisy

*Argyranthemum frutescens* ssp. *foeniculaceum*

(Canary Islands)

Flowers: spring

Reproduces: seed.



## Mirror Bush *Coprosma repens*

(New Zealand)

Flowers: summer

Reproduces: seed from fleshy orange/red berries.



## Geraldton Wax *Chamelaucium uncinatum*

A highly invasive weed that should not be planted near bushland outside its natural range.



## Boneseed

*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *monilifera*

(South Africa)

Flowers: late autumn to winter

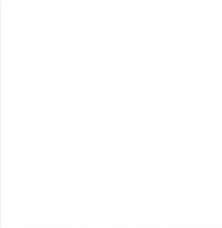
Reproduces: fleshy fruit (seed).

## GROW ME *instead*



### **Coast Daisy Bush** *Olearia axillaris*

Shrub to 3m. Leaves dark blue-green above, white below. White, daisy-like flowers occur along stems in summer and autumn. Benefits from pruning. Screening plant, foliage contrast. Full-sun to semi-shade.



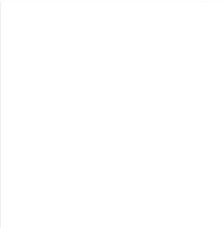
### **Berry Saltbush** *Rhagodia baccata*

Sprawling shrub with colourful flashy foliage and deep red berries that are eaten by birds and bobtail lizards. Attracts butterflies.



### **Cockies Tongues** *Templetonia retusa*

Shrub to 3m, spectacular bright red flowers in winter to spring, that attract birds. Attractive foliage that makes a lovely contrast in gardens. Hardy and lime-tolerant.



### **Cushion Fanflower** *Scaevola crassifolia*

Spreading robust shrub to 1.5m high, 2m wide. Bright green slightly serrated leaves, flowers bright blue to pale purple, fan-shaped, occur spring to early summer. Attractive flowers. Full-sun.



### **Dune Moses** *Acacia lasiocarpa*

Low shrub to 1m, grows in sunny spots in a variety of soils. Salt tolerant with attractive yellow flowers that will attract butterflies.



### **Basket Bush** *Spyridium globulosum*

Shrub can grow to 5m high, with tiny flower heads surrounded by leafy bracts.

# Ground covers, herbs & small shrubs

**DON'T PLANT** a garden escapee!



**Beach Daisy** *Arctotheca populifolia*

(South Africa)

Flowers: winter to summer

Reproduces: seed.



**White Arctotis** *Arctotis stoechadifolia*

(South Africa)

Flowers: spring to summer

Reproduces: seed.



**Hottentot Fig** *Carpobrotus edulis*

(South Africa)

Flowers: late summer to winter

Reproduces: fleshy fruit in summer,  
also spreads by vegetative production.



**Gazania** *Gazania sp.*

(South Africa)

Flowers: most of year, mainly spring to autumn

Reproduces: seed, vegetatively.



**Succulents**

(tropical & sub-tropical dry regions)

Flowers: various

Reproduces: Most species will also spread  
by vegetative growth, some set seed.

## GROW ME *instead*



### **Tar Bush** *Eremophila glabra*

Low shrub that grows on sand or limestone. Flowers between March and December, with flowers varying from yellow to red.



### **Coast Bonefruit** *Threlkeldia diffusa*

Small shrub or groundcover to 20cm high, 1m wide. Small fleshy leaves, green with purple tinge. Soil stabiliser. Tolerates saline conditions, clay. Full-sun.



### **Sea Heath** *Frankenia pauciflora*

A small spreading shrub that is salt tolerant and has adapted to harsh conditions. Small delicate flowers can be white or pink.



### **Prickle Lily** *Acanthocarpus preissii*

A low growing plant up to 1m, tolerates a wide range of soils and full sun exposure. Leaves are rigid with sharp needle-like point, white flowers.



### **Coast Honeymyrtle** *Melaleuca systena*

A very tough, erect to spreading shrub, growing to 1.5m on sand or limestone. Flowers occur August to December and are yellow or white.

# Ground covers, herbs & small shrubs

## GROW ME instead



**Coast Saltbush** *Atriplex isatidea*

Silver-grey plant to 2m high that copes well with sun, salt and wind. Attracts the saltbush blue butterfly.



**Cushion Bush** *Leucopyhta brownii*

Compact, rounded shrub to 1m. Silver-grey foliage, pale yellow ball-shaped flowers in summer. Great structural form, colour contrast. Responds well to regular pruning. Contrast plant. Full-sun.



**Grey Cottonhead** *Conostylis candicans*

Rhizomatous perennial herb with attractive yellow flowers in August to February.



**Snake Bush** *Hemiandra pungens*

Sprawling ground cover to 2m wide. Flowers are mauve and are scattered above the dense foliage. Can be trained over walls and sloping banks, either in full sun or part shade. Flowers throughout the year.



**Native Pigface** *Carpobrotus virescens*

Thick, fleshy ground cover. Green leaves triangular in cross-section, large bright pink flowers occur in spring. Attractive ground-cover, soil stabiliser. Suitable as trailing plant for pots or down walls. Ripe fruits are edible.



**Running Postman** *Kennedia prostrata*

Prostrate runner to 2m. Leaves pale green, bright red pea-flowers winter to summer. Eye-catching flowers, use as an attractive ground cover or plant in small to large garden pots (looks great in a feature urn). Light-shade preferred.

Sword Sedge *Lepidosperma gladiatum*



# Grasses & sedges

**DON'T PLANT** a garden escapee!

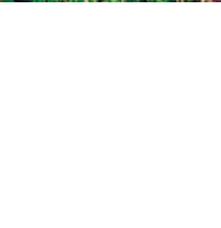


**Couch Grass** *Cynodon dactylon*

(tropics world-wide)

Flowers: late spring to early summer

Reproduces: sets seed in summer, also spreads vegetatively (including lawn clippings).



**Freesia** *Freesia alba x leichtlinii*

(South Africa)

Flowers during spring, reproduces seeds and corms in movement of soil.



**Black Flag** *Ferraria crispa*

(South Africa)

A serious perennial weed of the Iris family. Spreads by corms, seeds and rhizomes. Black carrion scented flowers in spring that attract flies.



**Veldt Grass** *Ehrharta calycina or longiflora*

(South Africa)

Tufted grass to 30cm, flowering in spring with greenish purple flower head.



**Red or Yellow Soldiers** *Lachenalia bulbifera or reflexa*

(South Africa)

A common garden escapee that spreads by bulbs and seed. Should never be grown in gardens anywhere near natural areas.

## GROW ME *instead*



### **Tall Spear Grass** *Austrostipa flavescens*

Tufted perennial grass that will grow on sand or limestone, attracts some butterflies.



### **Sword Sedge** *Lepidosperma gladiatum*

Sedge to 1m high with wide, flat leaves (like a gladiator's sword!) Brown flower heads present winter to summer. Plant in large or small clumps. Good accent plant, use in borders, foliage contrast. Suitable pot-plant.



### **Knotted Club-Rush** *Ficinia nodosa*

Attractive evergreen clumping plant to 1m high. Leaves dark-green, cylindrical and up-right. Flower heads brown ball-shaped, occur all year. Versatile plant. Use as accent, group plantings, pot-plants, around ponds. Tolerates salt spray & wet zones. Attracts butterflies. Full-sun to semi-shade.

# Climbers

**DON'T PLANT** a garden escapee!



**Bridal Creeper** *Asparagus asparagoides*

(South Africa)

Flowers: spring

Reproduces: red berries late spring, also spreading underground root system (rhizomes).



**GROW ME** instead



**Native Wisteria** *Hardenbergia comptoniana*

Twining shrub to vigorous climber. Showy pendulous clusters of purple pea flowers in winter-spring. Hardy and adaptable to sun or shade, best pruned after flowering to keep from becoming woody.



**Old Mans Beard** *Clematis linearifolia*

A vigorous woody climber with woolly, long tailed fruits.

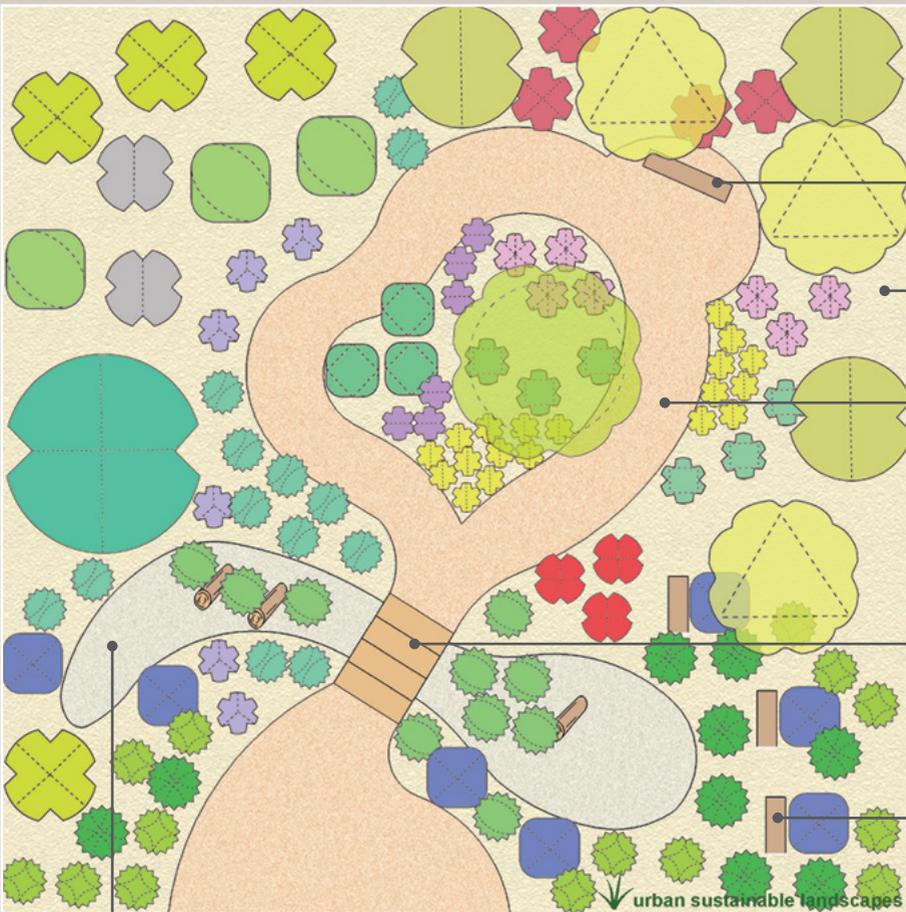


Tar Bush *Eremophila glabra*

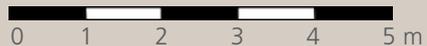


# Natural cottage garden design

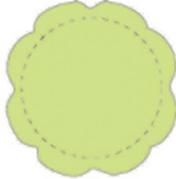
A natural cottage garden is easy to achieve with local coastal plants as many species flower in winter, providing a colourful garden all year-round. These gardens are relaxed and flowing and are a wonderful place for local wildlife. To achieve a natural cottage garden, mimic the flow and mix of plant species in natural coastal areas. Allow plants to cascade over paths and lace through one another. Utilise weaving paths and rustic furniture. Add bird-baths, hollow logs, and nesting boxes to attract and support local wildlife.



Swale with 14mm quartzite gravel and habitat logs



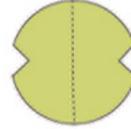
### Trees & tall shrubs



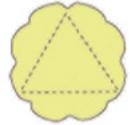
Peppermint



Common  
Boobialla



Red-eye  
Wattle



Chenille  
Honey Myrtle

### Medium shrubs



Coast  
Daisy-Bush



Cockies  
Tongue

Bench

Mulch

White wash  
sustainable  
pebble

### Ground covers, herbs & small shrubs



Cushion  
Bush



Tar  
Bush



Running  
Postman



Coast Bonefruit



Cotton Head



Ruby  
Saltbush



Basket  
Bush



Saltbush



Native  
Pigface

Flat sleepers  
set in gravel to  
give boardwalk  
appearance

### Grasses & sedges



Sword  
Sedge



Beach  
Spinifex



Knotted  
Club-Rush



Tall  
Spear Grass

Recycled  
hardwood  
timber post,  
upright 2m high

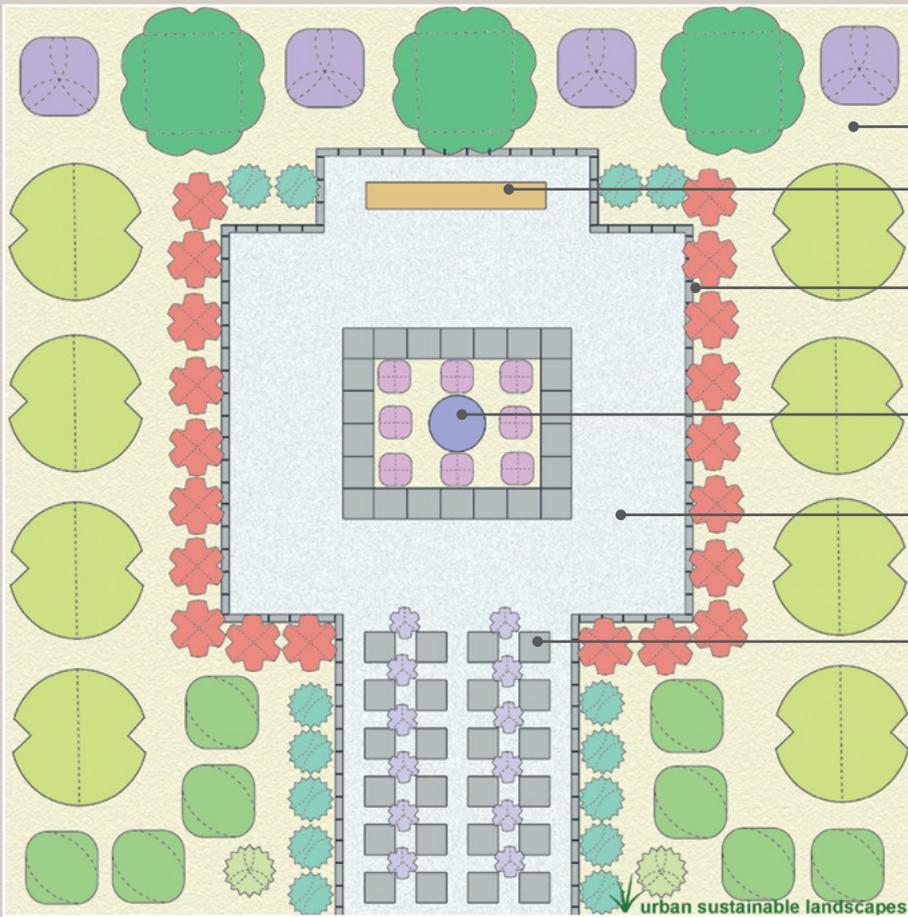
### Climbers



Native  
Wisteria

# Formal garden design

A number of local coastal plants can be grown into clipped hedges or shapes to form the basis of the formal garden. Sedges and grasses can be used in mass plantings and accent borders. Use local climbers or trailing plants in a feature urn, terrace or retaining wall. To achieve a formal garden style, emphasise symmetry and borders and use gravel or sustainable pebbles to create and highlight landscaping features.

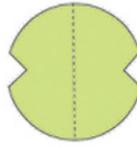


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## Trees & tall shrubs



Rottneest  
Pine



Red-Eye  
Wattle

## Medium shrubs



Cockies Tongue

## Ground covers, herbs & small shrubs



Ruby  
Saltbush



Tar  
Bush



Cotton Head



Native  
Pigface

## Grasses & sedges



Sword  
Sedge



Knotted  
Club-Rush

Mulch

Bench

110mm x 220mm  
linear paver divider

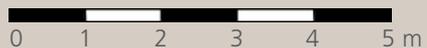
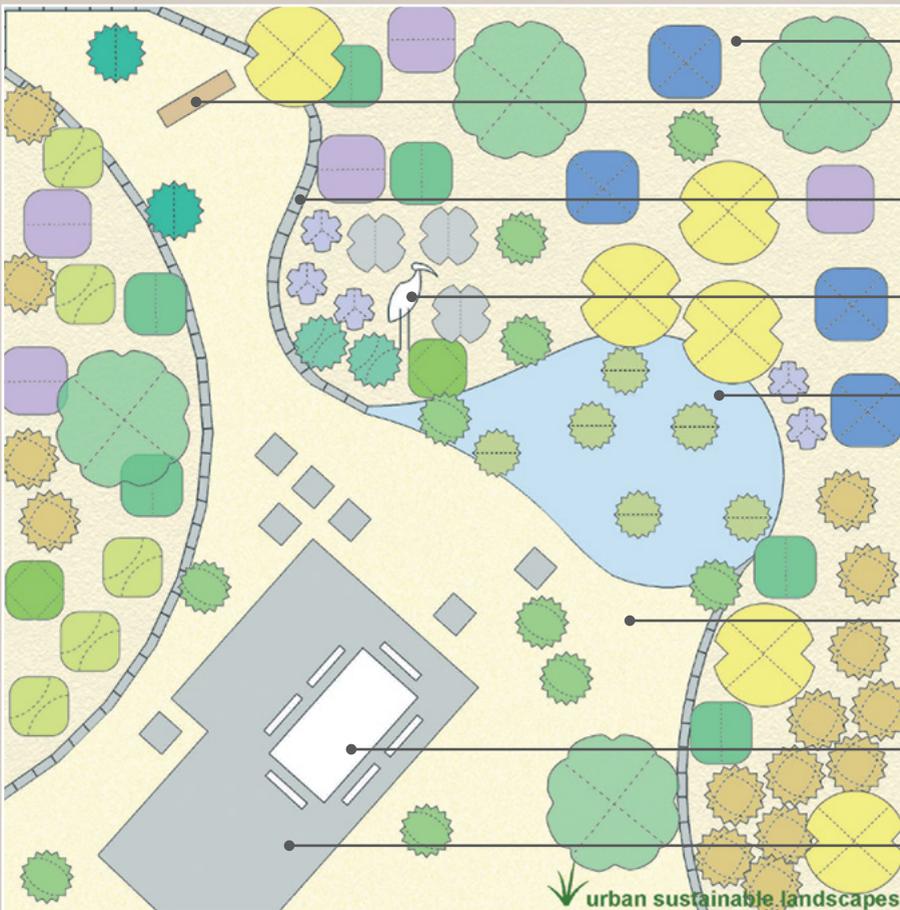
Birdbath feature

14mm dolomite  
gravel

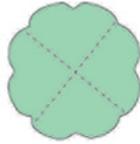
500mm x 500mm  
charcoal pavers

# Japanese style garden design

Local coastal plants are well suited to the minimalist style and reflective feeling of Japanese gardens. Aim to create a garden that mimics the natural balance and flow of nature. Clumps of local grasses can be used to compliment raked gravel areas. Incorporate natural elements such as plants with graceful habit, water features, stepping stones and gravel areas to achieve a Japanese-style garden.

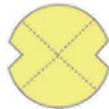


### Trees & tall shrubs



Peppermint

### Medium shrubs



Dune  
Moses

### Ground covers, herbs & small shrubs



Cotton Head



Cushion  
Bush



Basket  
Bush



Snake  
Bush



Tar  
Bush

### Grasses & sedges



Knotted  
Club-Rush



Tall  
Spear Grass



Sword  
Sedge



Sword  
Sedge



Sword  
Sedge

### Climbers



Old Man's  
Beard



Native  
Wisteria

Mulch

Recycled wooden  
bench

110mm x 220mm  
linear paver divider

Feature sculpture

Clay or plastic lined  
wet/dry stormwater  
fed pond coated  
with quartzite gravel  
at a maximum of  
200mm depth

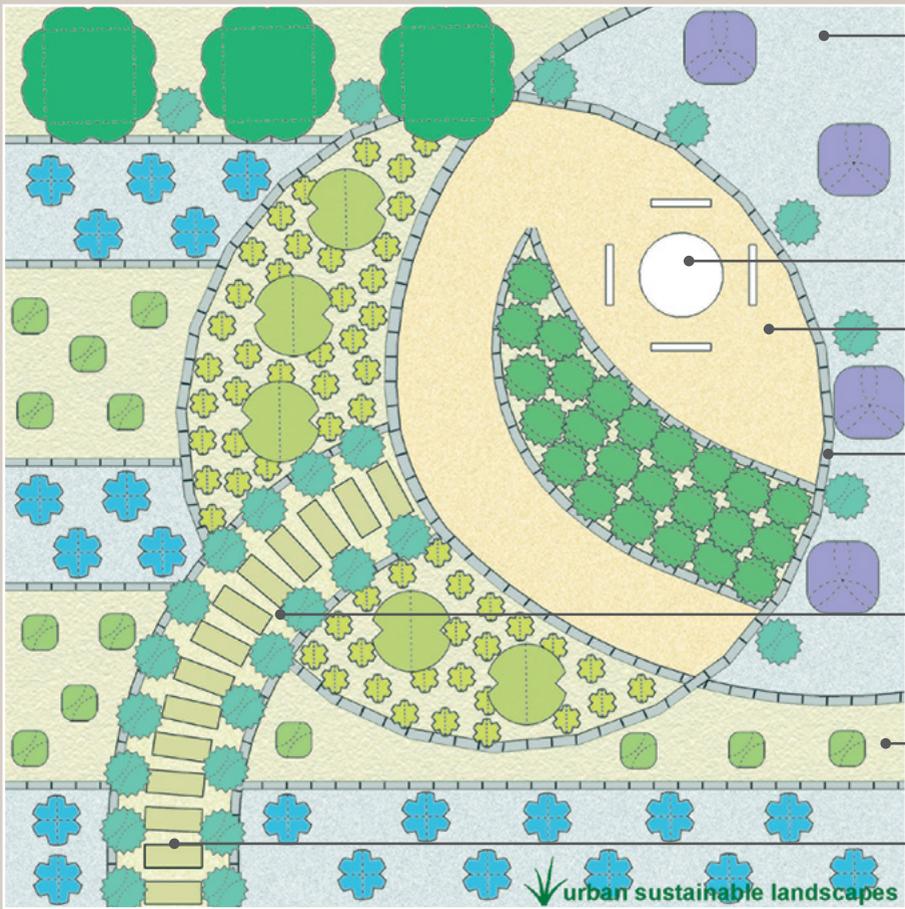
14mm quartzite  
gravel

Table & chairs

400mm x 400mm  
charcoal pavers

# Contemporary garden design

Contemporary gardens feature bold modern designs, with an emphasis on contrasts of colour, texture and form. Many local coastal plants offer excellent colour and texture for these bold designs. To develop your own contemporary garden, create interesting garden bed shapes using a mix of plants and landscaping materials that provide strong contrasts. A simple outdoor setting suits contemporary garden design.



0 1 2 3 4 5 m

### Trees & tall shrubs



Rottneest  
Pine



Red-Eyed  
Wattle

### Medium shrubs



Berry  
Saltbush



Dune  
Moses

### Ground covers, herbs & small shrubs



Coast  
Honey Myrtle



Tar  
Bush

### Grasses & sedges



Sword  
Sedge



Knotted  
Club-Rush

Dolomite gravel

Table & chairs

White wash  
sustainable pebble

110 x 220mm  
linear paver divider

14mm quartzite  
gravel

Mulch

800mm x 300mm  
paver stepping  
stones

# Growing local coastal plants

## When to plant

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Planting is best done in the cooler months through autumn and winter. The ideal time is after the autumn opening rains when the soil is moist and plants have ample time to establish roots before the warm weather kicks in.

## Watering

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Water your new plants. Over the first summer they may need an occasional deep watering, but no more than once a week. After their first summer they should cope on rainfall alone. Prior to severe heat waves, give your plants a thorough watering so the water penetrates deep into the ground.

Your aim is to establish strong, deep root systems that are water-efficient and drought-tolerant. Over-watering leaches nutrients from the soil and creates excessive growth, less flowering and shorter-lived plants.

Be mindful of current water restrictions and the prescribed times allocated for watering.

## Mulch & gravels

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A layer of mulch added to your garden can reduce evaporative water loss. Organic mulch keeps soil temperatures down, benefits root density, suppresses weed growth and helps to promote good soil structure and productivity. Mulch can also be used as an ornamental design element.

Apply 5–10 cm of mulch or gravel, creating a bowl shape around the plant to help retain water. To avoid plant disease keep mulch away from plant stems.



## Fertilising

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Fertilisers are not usually needed with local, native plants however there are suitable slow-release fertilisers available. Seek advice from your nursery.

## Maintaining your local plants

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Pruning is beneficial for many local plants. Most species will appreciate a light trim to keep their shape, promote new growth and encourage flowering. Pruning is best done after flowering, usually late spring or early summer. Young plants can be pruned lightly and regularly. Older plants can be refreshed with a more extensive prune after flowering. Replace old plants that die or become straggly.

Potted local plants need a little more care than those planted out in gardens. Water your pot plants more regularly in summer and apply a low-phosphorus fertiliser in spring and summer (check with your local nursery which product is best). Do not over-apply fertiliser as it can harm local native plants. Some plants may need re-potting in the future.

## Sustainable landscaping

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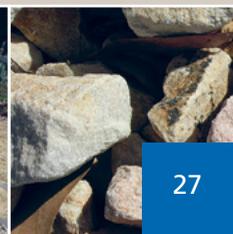
You can help the environment by using sustainable and locally-sourced materials and avoid materials taken from natural ecosystems such as moss rocks, river stones and fallen logs.

## More information

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For further information on establishing local native plants and how you can make your garden wildlife friendly, visit:

- [www.cottesloecoastcare.org](http://www.cottesloecoastcare.org)
- [www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/horticulture/growing-plants](http://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/horticulture/growing-plants)
- [www.australian-backyard-wildlife.com/](http://www.australian-backyard-wildlife.com/)



# Sourcing local coastal plants

Unfortunately, not all nurseries around Perth stock local coastal plants. Native plant nurseries can be found at:

- Men of the Trees Rockingham, Elanora Drive, Cooloongup WA
- APACE, 1 Johanna Street, North Fremantle WA
- Carramar Coastal Nursery, Lot 5 885 Mandurah Road, Secret Harbour WA
- Zanthorrea Nursery, 155 Watsonia Road, Maida Vale WA
- Oakford Native Nursery, 141 King Road, Oakford WA
- Lullfitz Nursery, Caporn Street, Wanneroo WA and 1071 Thomas Road, Oakford WA

Ask your local plant nursery for plants that are of 'local provenance' meaning plants grown from seeds or cuttings collected from your local area, catchment or neighbourhood. These plants have adapted to local conditions; they are the best plants for your garden.

You can often place orders in advance with local nurseries in late spring – early summer to collect for autumn/winter planting. Advance orders are recommended if you want larger quantities of plants or do not want to substitute if species are not available. Many growers are also able to supply plants for commercial orders such as councils, schools, other nurseries, industries and landscapers.

Keep an eye out for local plant giveaways that are sometimes run by your council in winter. These will be advertised in your local newspaper and are extremely popular!



# Useful resources

For more inspiration and information. Happy planting!

## Websites

- Perth Region NRM [www.perthregionnrm.com](http://www.perthregionnrm.com)
- Cottesloe Coastcare Association [www.cottesloecoastcare.org](http://www.cottesloecoastcare.org)
- Water Corporation [www.watercorporation.com.au/save-water/in-the-garden](http://www.watercorporation.com.au/save-water/in-the-garden)
- Australian Native Plant Society [www.asgap.org.au](http://www.asgap.org.au)
- An Introduction to Coastal Gardens [www.stirling.wa.gov.au](http://www.stirling.wa.gov.au)

## Books

- *Coastal Plants: A guide to the identification and restoration of plants of the Perth region*  
– K. Dixon
- *Coastal Plants: Perth and the South West Region*  
– E. Rippey and B. Rowland
- *Western Weeds: A guide to the weeds of Western Australia*  
– B. Hussey, G. Keighery, J. Dodd, S. Lloyd and R. Cousens
- *A new image for Australian plants*  
– G. Lullfitz





**Perth Region NRM**  
80 Great Northern Hwy  
Middle Swan, WA 6056  
[www.perthregionnrm.com](http://www.perthregionnrm.com)



Coordinating sustainable  
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