

Bird Garden

Redland City's sub-tropical climate and variety of habitat types make it home to an impressive variety of bird species. The area boasts over 350 species of resident and visiting birds, including some threatened species such as Glossy Black-Cockatoos, Powerful Owls and Lewin's Rails.

One of the great joys of gardening is attracting birds into your yard to observe. Birds have varying diets of nectar, fruits, seeds and insects or a combination of these. By choosing a wide variety of local native plants that produce flowers, fruits and seeds at various times of the year you are sure to have many birds call in for a snack. This is a better alternative to feeding birds which can lead to ill health, dependency and unnaturally large populations of the birds being fed.

The modern day backyard, with uniform garden beds containing nectar-rich shrubs, and expanses of lawn, provides the perfect environment for the larger, more aggressive birds such as Noisy Miners to dominate. The key to attracting the less common, smaller birds is to provide them with a safe sheltered place to go about their daily rituals. This can be done by planting an assortment of shrubs and groundcovers fairly densely, creating a layered garden with plenty of places to hide. For larger yards, the huge canopy of Eucalypt trees provides birds with an abundance of flowers, seeds and insects. The big old Eucalypts with hollows, dead and alive, are also invaluable for providing homes for hollow nesting birds such as parrots.

Bird baths are guaranteed to entice the local birds into your backyard. If you place a shallow dish of water up off the ground near shrubs for perching, the birds will soon come to enjoy a drink and bath. You will be amazed by what birds you will find in your garden once you have taken these few simple steps to make it 'bird friendly'.



Photo: A. Caneris

Redlands is home to one species of black parrot, the rare Glossy Black-Cockatoo. They have a specialised diet consisting entirely of seeds from Black She-oak, *Allocasuarina littoralis*, and Forest She-oak, *Allocasuarina torulosa*, trees.

You may be lucky enough to have a Lewin's Honeyeater visit if you provide plenty of shelter in your garden.



Species in the garden

	<p>Melaleuca quinquenervia Broad-leaved Paperbark</p> <p>Tree to 20m with distinct papery bark. Great for attracting wildlife. The flower brushes will attract birds with a nectar diet and the papery bark provides nesting materials. Oil extracted from leaves is used to treat colds.</p>		<p>Banksia serrata Saw-leaf Banksia</p> <p>Attractive tree to 8m that requires a sunny location in well drained soil. All six species of local Banksia produce flower brushes that are a real favourite of nectar feeding birds.</p>
	<p>Cymbopogon refractus Barbed-wire Grass</p> <p>Tall, tussock-like grass with long flowering stems that look like barbed-wire (but are not hard to touch). Looks great during spring and summer but best cut back in autumn. A fabulous plant for creating habitat for birds and lizards; button-quail have been seen in this garden.</p>		<p>Acacia fimbriata var. perangusta Eprapah Wattle</p> <p>Hardy, fast growing tree to 6m with attractive weeping foliage and masses of yellow flowers in late winter. It won't require watering once established.</p>
	<p>Lomandra longifolia Mat Rush</p> <p>Tufting grass-like plant with prickly, lemon scented flower spikes. Extremely hardy and will grow in virtually any situation once established. It is great for stabilising soil on steep banks or where water flows. Attracts butterflies and provides habitat for wildlife.</p>		<p>Ficus coronata Sandpaper Fig</p> <p>Small tree that produces soft, edible fruits. The figs are attractive to birds with a diet that includes fruits. The rough, sandpaper-like leaves were used by Aborigines to get a smooth finish on their weapons.</p>
	<p>Bursaria spinosa Spiny Box</p> <p>Prickly shrubs like this are perfect for providing small birds with a safe place to hide and nest in. It is hardy so suitable for most situations. Grows up to 3m and has sprays of small white flowers.</p>		<p>Eucalyptus curtisii Plunkett Mallee</p> <p>A small multi-trunked tree that grows to about 5m. It is fast growing and bears a mass of white blossom in spring that attracts insects and birds. Attractive shiny bark is deciduous. Pruning will encourage the formation of multiple trunks.</p>
	<p>Breynia oblongifolia Coffee Bush</p> <p>Hardy shrub with attractive foliage that grows to 2m. Produces bright red fruits in summer that will attract fruit-loving birds.</p>		<p>Melaleuca saligna Pink Tips Bottlebrush</p> <p>All three local species of Bottlebrush produce nectar-rich flower brushes that are highly attractive to birds. This one grows to about 8m, bears cream-white brushes in spring, has papery bark and the new growth is pink.</p>
	<p>Allocasuarina littoralis Black She-oak</p> <p>A short lived tree that plays an important role in restoring cleared bushland by adding nitrogen to the soil and suppressing weed growth. Produces woody seed cones that are a vital food source for the rare Glossy Black-Cockatoo.</p>		<p>Eucalyptus tereticornis Queensland Blue Gum</p> <p>A tall, fast growing Eucalypt that is favoured by the local koala population. The large volume of flowers and seeds they produce when mature and the insects they attract are a great food source for birds. Vital for providing hollow homes too.</p>

Some other species to consider

Trees		Herbs, small plants	
<i>Cryptocarya</i> species	Laurels	<i>Pultenaea villosa</i>	Hairy Bush Pea
<i>Ficus</i> species	Fig Trees	<i>Dianella brevipedunculata</i>	Blue Flax Lily
<i>Acmena</i> / <i>Syzygium</i> species	Lilly-pillies	<i>Calochlaena dubia</i>	Soft Bracken
<i>Melicope elleryana</i>	Pink Euodia	<i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i>	Midyim Berry
Shrubs		Vines & Creepers	
<i>Hovea acutifolia</i>	Pointed-leaf Hovea	<i>Geitnoplesium cymosum</i>	Scrambling Lily
<i>Clerodendrum tomentosum</i>	Lolly Bush	<i>Stephania japonica</i>	Tape Vine
<i>Leptospermum polygalifolium</i>	Wild May	<i>Rubus moluccanus</i>	Native Raspberry
<i>Melaleuca sieberi</i>	Small-leaved Paperbark	<i>Morinda jasminoides</i>	Morinda