

WHAT'S IN YOUR BACKYARD

FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

As suburbs have expanded, native animals have had to adapt to living in smaller natural areas and residential backyards. Some people worry when they see these in their backyard, but remember that most are harmless, they want to keep out of your way and they are good to have around.

They are usually just looking for food and a safe place away from dogs and cats. So for example you might find lizards or snakes under old timber or sheets of metal or worms, spiders and insects under mulch or low plants.

WHY ARE NATIVE ANIMALS GOOD TO HAVE AROUND?

Native animals will eat unwanted insects from vegies and mosquitoes that breed in water.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE NATIVE ANIMALS

Create a garden with bushy shrubs, low growing plants and mulch – native animals don't like bare, 'tidy' gardens. Large lawn areas are not encouraging as they don't provide shelter and protection.

Piles of wood, sheets of metal and rocks are great habitat for reptiles, but be careful not to create a fire hazard.

If you have water for birds to drink or bathe in, make sure it's out of reach of cats. Cats are natural hunters – if you have one make sure it wears a bell and is kept inside at night. If you have a dog, try to discourage it from 'worrying' and barking at reptiles.

To create habitat for small bush birds, choose plants with small flowers. Large, scented flowers are more likely to encourage large birds such as currawongs that scare small birds away. Keeping or planting as many local native plants as possible will help native animals.

As areas of bushland are now further apart, separated by urban development, your garden can act as an oasis or temporary resting place for native animals, helping them move around more safely in their quest for food. Gardens can form a corridor for animals - can you encourage your neighbours to help too?



PHOTO: Eastern Water Dragon

If you have a large tree you could put up a nesting box for possums or birds.

NATIVE PLANTS

Only 25% of the critically endangered Cumberland Plain woodland remains and much of it is in the Penrith LGA. Only 4% is in reserves – most is on private property. Retain and plant local native vegetation in your garden where possible as they provide shelter for native animals.

For more information phone our Bushland Management Officer on 4732 7777.

