Plant native species

Gold Coast is home to more than 1730 species of local native plants. They come in a diverse range of textures, colours and sizes and can be used in any style of garden including formal, contemporary, tropical and cottage gardens.

Why should I grow local native plants?
- they attract native birds, butterflies and frogs to your garden
- they often require less water
- they provide a food source and habitat for local fauna
- native plants are adapted to the local conditions
- native gardens are unique and attractive and complement the City's landscape character
- gardens filled with local native plants provide much needed additional resources for wildlife
- to avoid environmental weeds escaping from your garden into waterways and natural areas.

What are local native plants and why do they matter?
Local natives are plants that occur naturally in a given location. They have evolved in the local environment, so they have adapted to local conditions and grow well in the local area.

Local wildlife has also evolved with them, so local native plants provide the most suitable food sources and habitat for local fauna and insects.

Some native plants sold in nurseries occur naturally in Australia but they do not occur naturally within the Gold Coast, therefore they are not local native plants. Just like exotic plants, non-local native plants can out-compete local natives and impact on natural areas, reducing biodiversity.

Which local native plants should I grow?
Native vegetation grows in groups of species and these groups vary depending on soil, landform, aspect and climate. It is useful to understand the vegetation that grows or has grown in the past on your property as this can be a guide to selecting the right species for your garden, landscaping or restoration project.

Growing conditions will also vary within your garden. Areas shaded by buildings may be more suitable for shade-loving understory plants.

Hardy native plants that grow naturally on exposed hillsides may be more suitable for areas exposed to full sun and wind. When you plant the right native plant in the right place, you save time, money, effort, energy and you do less maintenance.

Find out more about the plant communities that grow on the Gold Coast visit our Native vegetation groups page.

The plants listed in the plant selection guide are some of the local native species generally available from native plant nurseries and provide a starting point when planning your garden. However, your choice of plants does not need to be limited to those in the list. This page can only provide the most basic information about local native plants of the Gold Coast.

For further information, there are some excellent resources available, including Grow Natives on the Gold Coast available to borrow from City Libraries and for purchase from the Gold Coast branch of Native Plants Queensland, the wonderful Mangroves to Mountains field guide and the various web links on this page.

Resources are also available at the Friends of the Gardens Centre at the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens. Friends of the Gardens volunteers are on site every day to provide advice.

A locally produced app, GroNATIVE, can assist you to choose native plants for your location, or for a particular garden style or theme.

Where can I see local native plants and gardens?

A wide variety of local native plants are on display at the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens.

The Mangroves to Mountains Walk is a showcase of many local native plants and how they can be used in gardens. You can also get inspired by visiting the well-maintained native plant displays at the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens.

Griffith University's Gold Coast campus has over 250 local native plants in its gardens, many of which are suitable for small urban gardens. Residents are welcome to visit the campus to see how local native plants can be used in different types of landscapes including close to paths, roads, cafes, tennis courts, fences, trellises, in the shade or full sun, or even on the roof of the new aquatic centre. You can take a self-guided tour around their Rare and Threatened Plant Walk.

The Naturally GC program provides a variety of free and low cost nature-based workshops, activities and events across the Gold Coast including ones relevant to native gardening.

Visit local nature conservation areas and parks to see different plant communities including:
- Federation Walk – coastal dunes
- Broadwater Parklands – constructed mangroves and wetlands with local native plants
- Cascade Gardens – remnants of Surfers Paradise littoral rainforest
Tugun Hill Conservation Area – wet eucalypt forest (blackbutt)
Pine Ridge Conservation Park – coastal heath / wallum
Burleigh Head National Park – littoral rainforest.

Where can I buy local native plants?

Visit the Friends of the Gardens nursery at the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens. The nursery stocks a wide range of local native plants and is open from 8am to 11am on the first Friday of each month.

Purchasing plants that are local provenance is an important contribution you can make to the environment. Local provenance means that the plant is grown from local, naturally occurring specimens.

Planting these, rather than plants sourced from far afield, preserves the local gene pool of that species. It also supports local native plant nurseries, which play a vital role in contributing to the greening of the city and support the local economy.

Use the GroNATIVE app to find nurseries in South East Queensland who stock plants listed in the app.

Search for suppliers and native plant sale events online:

- The Australian Native Plants Society website provides a list of native plant nurseries.
- Native Plants Queensland has autumn and spring plant sales which are a great way to buy interesting and hard to find native plants.
- Gardening events and shows such as Botanic Bazaar (usually held in September) are held regularly on the Gold Coast and within south-east Queensland.
- There are a number of online plant suppliers which you can find by searching for plants by species names.

Ask your local nursery or garden centre to stock more local native plants today!

Special plants

As a result of the varied environment of the Gold Coast, some very special plants grow here. There are a number of plants that are endemic to the City, that is, they only grow within the City limits.

Other plants grow here at the edge of their natural distribution. There are 109 species of plants in the City listed as endangered, vulnerable or near threatened under the Nature Conservation Act 1992.

There is more information about threatened rainforest plants found in the city in the Threatened rainforest plants of the Gold Coast booklet.

In addition, the City has identified locally significant species – called City-wide significant species. There are an incredible 572 plant species with this conservation status – an indication of just how diverse our environment here is.

The species Banksia aemula, the wallum banksia, which is the floral (flower) and arboreal (tree) emblem of the City, is now very rare due to land clearing.

Its occurrence on the southern end of the Gold Coast is limited to only one location; and to Pine Ridge Conservation Park in the north. Yet this species is an amazing plant, it provides habitat, has fantastic flowers and an interesting and sculptural form.

More of these special plants are listed within the Plant Selection Guide; a curated list of local native plants suitable for horticulture and landscaping. There are many more local native species; this list should be considered as a starting point for species that are generally available.

Related information

- Gold Coast flora and fauna
- Landholder partnerships

Key information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brochures, fact sheets &amp; reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant Selection Guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

External links

- Australian Native Plants Society
- Gold Coast Flora & Fauna
Projects & strategies

Our Natural City Strategy