



Local Native Plants

There are many reasons why planting native plants that are local to your area (also known as local provenance) is important.

Local native plants have adapted over a long period of time to the specific conditions in your area. They are therefore best adapted to grow in these local conditions and will be more likely to thrive than plants from a different region.

Local plant communities provide the most suitable food and habitat for local native wildlife. This is especially the case if a mixture of plants is selected to reflect the balance (between trees, shrubs and groundcovers) that originally occurred before disturbance.

There may be a whole range of benefits that local native plant communities will bring, depending on the local, regional and broader context.

Here are just some examples of the benefits of restoring native areas of bushland:

- Supporting native animals: birds, bats, possums, bees and snails and other wildlife, in many cases these are in decline or endangered (eg woodland birds in general are in decline across Australia and some, such as the Regent Honeyeater, are in danger of becoming extinct).
- Helping to combat salinity.
- Improving water quality in a stream thus promoting aquatic life (Trees for Fish!).
- Preventing soil erosion.
- Helping to save an endangered animal from extinction.
- Providing a buffer zone to reduce the impact on sensitive areas of native habitat.
- Providing clean fresh air.
- Increasing rainfall by releasing water vapour (through

transpiration) and fine particles such as pollen, which are required to seed rain drops.

- Securing our food resources: around one-third of our food comes from plants that rely on native pollinators such as insects!
- Providing a green corridor that connects up existing remnants of bushland.

In our increasingly urbanised world, much of the threat to our native wildlife is through loss of habitat due to clearing for urban development or agriculture. This can be seen as a “death by a thousand cuts” for our native bushland, which has become increasingly fragmented as a result. Take a look around your local area. Whether you live in the bush or the city, it is likely you will find the last dying remnants of once magnificent stands of trees.

Look closer - do you see any young trees growing to replace those that remain, or any of the native understorey left? If the answer is no then there is something you can do! Activities such as planting for National Tree Day and the ongoing projects carried out by groups such as Landcare and Bushcare can help to bring back what was once there. Don't take the bush for granted! See our other activities page to find out what more you can do.

On a larger scale, restoring native landscapes through planting local provenance plants is vitally important for preserving the biodiversity unique to a given area, and helping to minimise the impacts of climate change.