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Native Plants for Local Gardens

Here is a list of some of my favourite native plants for local gardens:

1. Fan Flower (*Scaevola aemula*)

This groundcover is widely planted in streets and road verges. The flowers may be white, blue, purple/mauve or pink.

2. Yellow Buttons (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*)

This 20cm high groundcover has been selected for larger flowers and more compact growth (look for new varieties in nurseries in spring), but the seed grown species is also attractive with its bright yellow blooms. You will be hard pressed to find a tougher little plant.

3. Bower Vine (*Pandorea jasminoides*)

A vigorous, evergreen vine that flowers throughout spring and summer. Ideal in full sun positions on a trellis or as a groundcover.

4. Sarsaparilla Vine (*Hardenbergia violacea*)

*A tough, evergreen vine that produces a mass of small pea flowers with in winter and spring. Requires good drainage and full sun. Generally used as a groundcover or potted plant. Look for '**Happy Wanderer**' (vigorous with purple blooms), '**Mini Haha**' (shrub-like with purple flowers), '**Alba**' (white flowers) and '**Bushy Blue**' (shrub-like with blue/purple flowers).*

5. Prostrate Casuarina (*Casuarina* 'Cousin It' or C. 'Free Fall')

This hardy groundcover Casuarina covers an area of several metres with its intriguing foliage.

6. Teatree (*Leptospermum* 'Cardwell' or 'Pacific Beauty')

A proven selection with beautiful weeping foliage. Plants grow up to 1.5m and are covered in white flowers in spring.

7. Candlestick Banksia (*Banksia spinulosa* 'Birthday Candles')

This is one of the most stunning newcomers to the local lineup of native plants. It bears large yellow/orange flower cones in autumn and winter. Birthday Candles is sometimes hard to find and a bit slow growing, but well worth the wait. It is used as a groundcover or potted plant. It needs good drainage.

8. Bottlebrush (*Callistemon* cultivars)

Bottlebrush are one of our most recognisable natives and if you have a sunny spot with clay soil, they are an ideal choice. The main flowering period is in spring and early summer, but spot flowering also occurs during the year.

'Little John' or 'Better John' grows to around 1.5m. and bears red flowers.

'Dawson River Weeper' - grows to around 5m. and has bright red brushes with yellow tips.

'Hannah Ray' - grows to around 4m and has red flowers.

'Rose Opal' - grows to 2m and bears red flowers that turning rose-coloured with age.

'Captain Cook' - This bottlebrush has been around for decades but remains one of our most popular. It reaches 2m, has a weeping habit and bears red flowers.

'Kings Park Special' - This 3-4m high dense upright grower is notable for its long flowering period. Bloom are red.

9. Blue Tongue (*Melastoma affine*)

This native plant is closely related to the exotic tibouchina. Fortunately, it is much tougher, but has the same mauve/blue saucer-shaped blooms.

10. Grevillea (*Grevillea* cultivars)



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Grevilleas are popular for their long flowering and bird attracting characteristics. If you have a sunny spot and well drained soil, they are the perfect choice.

'Superb' - bears apricot blooms throughout the year on plants that grow 2m high and 3m wide.

'Honey Gem' - A 3-4m high plant with apricot/orange blooms.

'Moonlight' - This tall selection can grow to around 6m. You can keep it to 4m by pruning after each flush of ivory/cream blooms.

'Robyn Gordon' - An old, but proven selection, it grows to around 1.5m that grows well in full sun, but is adaptable to a range of climates and soil types.

'Misty Pink' and **'Sylvia'** (bright pink) also do well locally.

Grevillea baileyana grows into a 10m high tree notable for the attractive bronze undersides of its new growth and its stunning white blooms.

11. *Syzygium 'Pink Cascade'*

This is arguably the best of the lillypilly available - no psyllid pests, just beautiful weeping foliage and gorgeous, soft pink powerpuff blooms. It tolerates clay and grows to 3m, copes with sun or shade and does well in large pots.

12. *Pittosporum rhombifolium*

This 8m high rainforest tree has insignificant flowers, but its bright orange fruit hang in attractive clusters from late summer until spring.

13. Ivory Curl (*Buckinghamia celsissima*)

This popular street tree bears large, scented cream flowers during mid to late summer. It grows to 10m or more, but pruning when young creates a more compact, bushy, easily managed growth habit.

14. Golden Penda (*Xanthostemon chrysanthus 'Expo Gold'*) - Cultivar varieties of the golden penda are popular street trees. Their rounded, golden yellow flower heads are stunning. Trees grow 6-8m but flower best if pruned after blooming.

15. Little Penda (*Xanthostemon verticillatus*) - *If you do not have room for the larger golden penda, try the little penda which bears pale lemon blooms throughout the year.*

16. Tree Waratah (*Alloxylon flammeum*) - *This stunning rainforest tree has dark green foliage and stunning, contrasting red blooms. It is tall (10m) and spreading (6m) tree, but definitely worth growth if you have room.*

Some thoughts for gardens with shade or those needing understory planting: Purple pea (*Hovea acutifolia*), Bandicoot berry (*Leea indica*), native mint bush (*Prostanthera species*).

For more gardening information visit www.annettemcfarlane.com; listen to 612 ABC radio gardening talkback on Saturday morning from 6am and read my gardening column in the Sunday Mail each week.

For more information and images of native plants visit the Australian Native Plant Society Australia at

<http://asgap.org.au>

Annette McFarlane's Website – www.annettemcfarlane.com