

Backyard Species Discovery – Weekly Challenge

Week 5

Plant a native

The Backyard Species Discovery project is a virtual expedition to continue adding to our knowledge of Australian biodiversity while field work is still difficult due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

In addition to adding observations to iNaturalist, the Backyard Species Discovery project encourages Australians to learn about the importance of biodiversity and explore ways to improve and protect it.

Here is your challenge:

This is your chance to give back to nature! Plant an Australian native plant in your garden, balcony or school grounds. It can be a tree, shrub, grass, groundcover, small flowering plant or a vine. It can be in a pot, or in the ground. Send us a photo or video of it being planted, and include a close-up of the plant. Explain why you chose the plant, and why you think it's helpful for biodiversity.

Tips:

- Select something that is suited to your local area as they are more likely to succeed – indigenous plants (those that occur naturally in your area) are great for this reason! Your local council may have a web-page with a list of suggested indigenous plants.
- Most plants like a sunny or partly sunny location, with good-draining soil.
- Winter is often a good time to plant natives due to the lack of heat stress. However, if you are worried about frosts and your plant is delicate, plant it in a sheltered position (like in a pot) or provide some protection.
- Look on the internet for information about planting native plants in your local area, for example [How to plant local natives \(SA Urban Forests – Million Trees Program\)](#)
- iNaturalist only accepts naturally occurring plants, so you won't be able to upload this plant as an observation. However, if your plant flowers, keep an eye out for pollinating insects to photograph and upload to the project.
- Get creative with your entries! It can be fun and quirky, or more professional.

Due date:

Email your entry with your name (or group name) to bushblitz@awe.gov.au by midnight AEST on Wednesday 15 July.

Applications will be judged by a panel and the winning entry will be announced on Friday 17 July, on the Bush Blitz website and social media platforms.

Don't let your location put you off. Even balconies are great for native plants! Here are some indigenous plants thriving on a balcony in Melbourne: *Einadia nutans* and *Brachyscome multifida*

