



### The New Australian Garden

After the massed planting of large native species in the 70's and early 80's, the resulting gardens were overgrown and unappealing to all but the bush garden enthusiast. When considering design options many gardeners have rejected Australian plants as "too big, too woody and unmanageable".

Despite the occasional bad press, Australian plants have widespread appeal: they are often, but not always, water-wise; they provide food and habitat for birds and other native animals; they create a sense of place by introducing a uniquely Australian flavour to the garden; most importantly they are beautiful and part of our floral heritage.

There has been interest in recent years from plant breeders both overseas and at home, who see Australian plants as potential winners in the competitive market. With plant breeding and selection, many of our wildflowers have been improved in colour, form and reliability. Many are now easier to grow and fit in with smaller or more formal settings.

Fashion and design: While the Australian bush gardens can be in or out of fashion, basic good design is always appealing. It is possible to choose any style or popular trend in gardening, and substitute suitable Australian species as an integral part of the design.

When designing the garden, consider:

- Aspect – facing north or south? Shade from buildings and fences?
- Prevailing wind?
- Soil types and structure.
- Watering plans – reticulated or drought hardy plants required?
- Function – seating area, access, entrance/ doors/gates, views from windows, views to outside.
- Water feature or dry creek bed? Create interest in the design.
- Hard landscaping – paving, raised gardens, wooden platforms.
- Scale - add a tree to provide vertical interest, and use low growing plants for the horizontal. Climbers can clothe walls or hide views.

### Plant choice

**Small trees:** Agonis 'After Dark', Eucalyptus 'Summer Red', Grevillea 'Majestic' underpruned, Callistemon viminalis.

**Climbers:** Sollya heterophylla 'Edna Walling', Hardenbergia comptoniana, Hardenbergia 'Free and Easy' Pandorea 'Ruby Bells'.

**Ground covers:** Helichrysum ramosissimum, Scaevola 'Mauve Clusters', Grevillea 'Gingin Gem' Brachyscome spp, Kennedia prostrata.

**Low plants: Silver plants** such as Leucophyta 'Canal Rocks' and Maireana oppositifolia.

**Tufted** such as Thysanotis or dwarf kangaroo paws, Dianella 'Little Rev'.

**Low hedges** such as Melaleuca 'Little Nessie', Syzygium 'Tiny Trev'.

**Bushy feature plants** such as Pimelia ferruginea 'Bon Petite', Correa 'Dusky bells' Eremophila 'Winter Gold', Baeckea 'Miniature', Grevillea 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', Philotheca 'Bournda Beauty'.