Your Sustainable Garden

Gardening Mindfully

Banyule
CITY COUNCIL

This booklet was produced by Green Gecko Publications www.greengeckopublications.com.au

Text by Mary Trigger of Green Gecko Publications

Photographs by Mary Trigger, Elaine Shallue, Helen Moss, Chris Clarke, Julia Franco, Louise Anderson, James Booth, Andrea Canzano, Kevin Sparrow, Nick Clemann (DSE), Russell Best, Chris Lindorff and Suzanne Jones.

Cover pic: Elaine Shallue

Design www.nainak.com.au

Green Gecko
PUBLICATIONS

Mary Trigger
Tel: 0414 641 337
Email: marytrigger444@gmail.com

ABN: 90618914198

Contents

Introduction

A sustainable garden enhances the natural environment.

Gardening is about creating a beautiful and interesting space that we can enjoy with our family and friends. It's easy to garden sustainably for the health and well-being of our family and the environment. To create a sustainable garden you need to incorporate all or at least some of the following elements.

- Plant local indigenous plants that are naturally adapted to your local soil and climate. Many native birds, reptiles, frogs, mammals and insects rely on these plants for food and shelter and will be attracted to an indigenous plant garden.
- Avoid plants that are known invasive species in our bushland and wetlands. These garden escapees have the potential to smother and out-compete indigenous plants resulting in a loss of biodiversity in our natural reserves.
- Regardless of water restrictions, practice water conservation in the garden to have a positive impact on water levels in our reservoirs. Avoid using synthetic fertilisers and pesticides that can harm beneficial insects in our garden and potentially leach into our waterways resulting in nutrient blooms or an excess of aquatic weeds.
- If you purchase garden products made from recycled or renewable resources you support businesses that avoid harvesting from old growth forests and active river ecosystems. Buying recycled products also reduce the amount of raw materials extracted and energy used compared to making new products.
- Grow your own fresh, delicious produce and reduce food miles. Download the Home Harvest booklet at **www.banyule.vic.gov.au** and search 'Home Harvest booklet'.

Garden design and plant selection vary tremendously depending on individual taste and lifestyle. While this booklet provides general sustainable gardening information applicable to any garden, we provide '*Local Focus*' information throughout the booklet as a guide on how you can help support local biodiversity and the health of our natural environment through gardening.

Your Sustainable Garden has been designed to provide you with local information and inspiration to create a beautiful garden that respects your local environment.

Garden design

Start small but plan BIG!

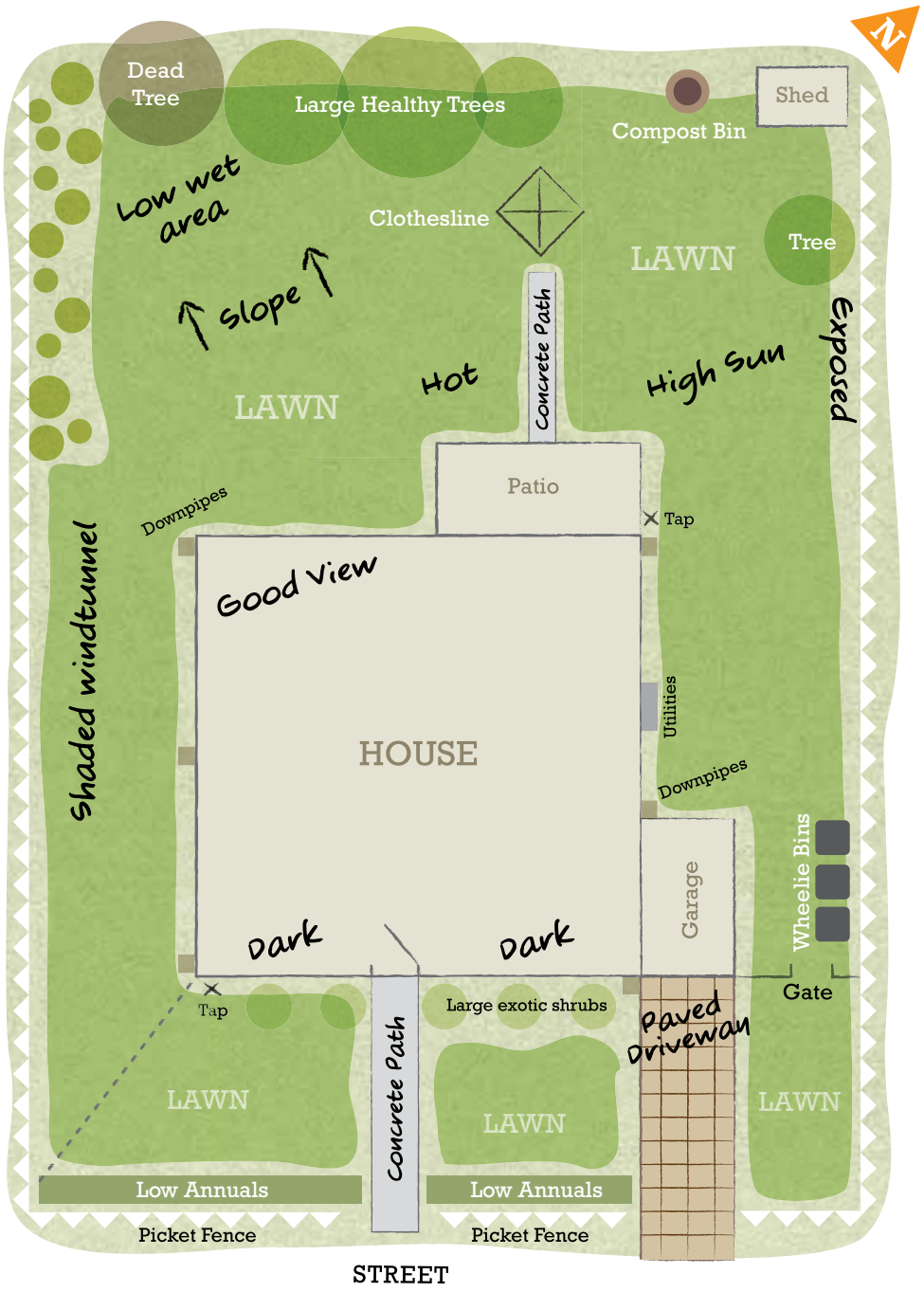
Site Analysis

If you are starting from scratch or redesigning a garden bed, one of the best things you can do is observe your garden for a year. This will give you an accurate picture of your garden through all the seasons when light and shade and moisture can vary enormously. Regardless of whether you have the patience to do this or not, the starting point with garden design is to do a site analysis of your garden. It allows you to identify the pros and cons, limitations and possibilities for your garden. It is also important to work with your site. If you know a section of your garden is shady and damp, select plants that are suited to those conditions rather than trying to change the site.

Step 1
What exists?

Create a scaled drawing of your property. Mark in the main structural and environmental features. Fences, pathways, shed, outdoor taps, clothesline, patio, rainwater tank, garden beds, major trees and lawn areas. Where are your sunny and shady areas in summer and winter? Do you have a large paved area near the windows on the north side of your house that reflects the hot summer sun into your house? Do you have any drainage issues where the ground is often too wet or dry?

Example of Site Analysis



Step 2
What are your needs?

Create a wish list. Do you want more space for the kids? A private reading nook? A more inviting outside entertainment area? A front yard that complements the architecture of the house? A herb garden near the back door? More birds visiting? Do you need a deciduous tree to provide summer shade and winter warmth to your house? Does your compost bin receive enough sun? Do you need screening to provide more privacy? Do you want to reduce or remove your lawn? Make a note of the initial major work that would need to be done with each option e.g. garden bed edges curved out; relocate clothesline; break up concrete slab.

Step 3
Look at your plants

Remember to work with your site. If you know a section of your garden is shady and damp, select plants that are suited to those conditions. Are your plants a mix of natives (low nutrient needs) and exotics (high nutrient needs)? Are your plants layered with the smallest at the front of your garden beds rising to taller plants at the back? Have they been grouped according to their water needs? Do you have any trees that may need attention? If you have a lawn do you want to keep it or reduce it? Do you want to grow vegetables? In garden beds or raised beds? Decide if you want a low maintenance garden or do you enjoy working in the garden regularly?

Step 4
What is your style?

Do you prefer a simple or complex garden? Open or private? Pretty and neat? Dramatic and structural? Natural looking? How do you want your garden to feel? Look through gardening magazines or your neighbourhood gardens. Make notes on what appeals to you.

Create a wish list

herb garden
attract birds
space for kids
privacy
compost area
summer
shade
indigenous
vegie beds
location of clothesline

Step 5
The research

Create a list of the plants you need to create the style of garden you desire. What sort of cost are you looking at? Remember you can save money if you buy plants as young tubestock. List down any major structures you want. Can you do it yourself, or will you need a professional builder or plumber? Make an estimate of the cost of materials such as pavers, rainwater tanks, raised vegie beds. Can you afford to install and maintain your garden or do you need to look at alternatives or a staged approach?

Step 6
Develop a plan

Once you have decided on what you want and what you can realistically achieve and afford, you can play with your garden plan exploring different options. Tracing paper overlays can work well at this stage. Decide what needs to be done first i.e. the big jobs such as reworking your garden bed edges or breaking up a slab of concrete. Focus on one area at a time so you are not overwhelmed. Remember, it doesn't all have to be done immediately but rather according to a well thought out garden plan.

Example of a Garden Plan

Courtyard gardening

If you have an enclosed courtyard area you need to take into account the following issues when developing a plan.

- Courtyards often have limited access to sunlight. If this is the case, select shade tolerant plants or use pots on wheels that can be moved about easily.
- Courtyards tend to be paved and enclosed which can create quite hot conditions. While plants will help to cool the area, make sure you include an efficient watering system as their water requirements will be high.
- Poor drainage and flooding can be problems with courtyards that are mainly paved surfaces. If this is the case use container pots with saucers and don't overwater.
- Courtyard space can be quite limited. You can create an illusion of a larger space by using mirrors and layering plants. Think about using your vertical spaces by espaliering trees on a wall, tiered shelving, hanging baskets or window boxes.
- Courtyard gardens often contain a lot of pots. Containers look great when they are grouped together.

Balcony gardening

Typically balcony gardens consist of pots and small and raised vegie beds. An excellent option for kitchen gardening. Consider the following issues when designing your balcony garden.

- If you live in a flat or unit check to see if your body corporation has any specific rules relating to what you can put on your balcony.
- Avoid putting too many large pots on your balcony. Remember pots get heavier when you water them.
- If high wind results in your pots toppling over or plants dehydrating, select wind tolerant plants that don't grow too tall and avoid light plastic pots.
- Select plants that will grow in the conditions of your balcony. If you have a south facing balcony you will need shade tolerant plants. North facing balconies will require sun tolerant plants.
- Potted plants dry out quickly so collect excess water in pot saucers or consider self-watering pots.
- Neighbours will not appreciate water cascading down from your balcony every time you water.
- Secure your pots to ensure they don't become missiles!

LOCAL FOCUS

Urban development has resulted in the clearing of our native grasslands and forests resulting in a huge loss of local plants and animals. Creating a native garden, or section of garden, is your opportunity to win back some space in your backyards for your unique flora and fauna. Habitat gardening relies on using local plants indigenous to your area and therefore suited to your local soil and climate. Indigenous plants attract local birds, animals, lizards, frogs and insects that have evolved to feed, shelter and pollinate from them.

Habitat gardens can be designed to be formal with pruned hedges and borders of local daisies; a riot of colour to provide the cottage garden look or an informal natural garden. They can be an entire front and back yard or a single garden bed. Whatever your design, try and include the following in your habitat garden:

- Natural mulch or leaf litter for beetles and worms
- Ground features, such as rocks or logs for lizards
- A sheltered water source
- Layers of local plants that include trees, shrubs, groundcovers and grasses
- You may also want to consider including a frog pond in your design or a native lawn
- What about a curved path or a dry creek bed?

There are no hard and fast rules with designing a habitat garden, other than to try to mimic nature using your local plants. (Refer to pp 38-51 of this booklet for information on Habitat Gardening).

Garden maintenance

Good gardening practices save you time and money.

Soil maintenance

Clearing of our native forests and grasslands has disrupted the natural nutrient cycle of our soils. This is why it is important to add organics and mulch back into our soil regardless of our soil type. Organic matter will improve the soil structure and nutrient levels that encourage micro-organisms and earthworms to aerate the soil and allow water to percolate down into the soil to be available for your plants.

Soils are broadly classified by the size of the particles they contain as to whether they are sand, loam or clay (and variations of e.g. sandy loam). To work out your garden soil type simply take a handful of slightly moist soil and squeeze it. If it forms a smooth ball, it's a clay soil. If it does not hold form and simply falls apart, it's a sandy soil. If it roughly holds together, but falls apart readily when squeezed, it's a loam soil.

Clay soil consists of very fine particles that stick together. They tend to hold water and nutrients well. The downside of clay soils is that they can hold water a little too well creating poor water drainage. Also, when they dry out they can become hard making it difficult for water to penetrate. The solution is to make them more friable by adding a dusting of gypsum and organic matter such as aged animal manure and compost.

Sandy soils consist of large particles that allow water to drain freely. The problem is that plants dry out quickly and nutrients are leached away. A potential problem with sandy soils is that once they have dried out they can become water repellent and water will bead on the surface rather than soaking in. To improve a sandy soil, regularly apply organic matter and mulch.

Loam soils fall somewhere in between sand and clay and are a mixture of fine and coarse particles. Loam soils drain well and have a good nutrient base for gardening. Add organic matter and mulch to replenish nutrients taken up by your plants.

In determining your soil type you need to take into account that your topsoil and underlying sub-soil may be completely different i.e. a loam topsoil sitting on clay base. Another factor to consider is that over the years there has been massive importing and exporting of soil materials across Melbourne associated with urban development.

LOCAL **FOCUS**

Australia is an ancient land with generally shallow, nutrient-poor soils. Our local plants have evolved to establish and thrive in these soils. An important task for any gardener is to get to know your local soil. Banyule soils vary considerably from the dark loams, clays and sands of the river plains, the volcanic heavy clays of the western boundary, and the light grey loams over clay of the northern and central foothills of Banyule.

Soil

- Don't dig up your soil unless it is very compacted. Digging destroys the soil structure resulting in collapsed air holes and drainage spaces.
- Use drip line irrigation or a trigger hose with a spray setting. Water delivered under high pressure can also collapse air holes.
- Spreading compost on your soil (before mulching) will encourage worms in your garden.
- Plants grow best when the soil is within a certain pH range that they have evolved to grow in. Existing soil nutrients can be made more available by regulating the soil pH. Invest in a pH testing kit from your local garden centre and routinely test your garden soil at various locations. If the pH is too low (acid), it can be raised with an application of dolomite of lime. If the pH is too high (alkaline), it can be lowered with sulphur. However, altering pH takes time, so don't expect immediate results.

Mulch

Mulch is an important component of a garden because it smothers weeds and helps hold water in the soil. As some mulch layers break down they also add nutrients to the soil. Very fine mulches are to be avoided as they can compact and not allow water to penetrate to the soil beneath. Their fineness also means they are capable of holding a lot of water, once again preventing it from infiltrating to the soil beneath. Good organic mulch is one that is a mix of fine and coarse particles. Avoid using grass clippings as a mulch as they tend to clump together and prevent water reaching the soil. Better to compost them or spread them lightly over your lawn.

There are different types of mulch that should be used with different gardens.

- **Straw-based mulches:** are ideal for sandy soils, vegetable gardens and fruit trees. They break down quickly returning nutrients to the soil.
- **Bark mulch:** useful for weed suppression. Bark mulch has very few nutrients so don't rely on it to improve your soil.
- **Stone/pebble mulch:** are ideal in high traffic areas or succulent plant beds. Make sure your stones are sourced sustainably (Refer pg 37).

LOCAL **FOCUS**

- Bush mulch: is ideal for a native habitat garden. When spread on your garden it will create a natural leaf litter look and provide habitat for insects and lizards to shelter and feed. It is low in nutrients and preferable for indigenous plants.
- Many habitat gardeners mulch quite deep to a depth of 10cm to encourage invertebrate life.
- Never use pine bark as it will leach acid into the soil as it breaks down and can burn indigenous plants or suppress their growth.
- If you have an established habitat garden, just rely on the natural leaf litter as mulch, saving you time and money.

How to mulch

1. Remove weeds from your soil.
2. Moisten the soil thoroughly. Ensure the water is penetrating the soil. If the water is running off the soil, fork through some compost to aid water retention.
3. Spread your mulch to a depth of 5-10 cm.
4. Keep the area directly around each plant mulch-free, as contact will encourage disease such as collar-rot.
5. Top up as your mulch breaks down. Generally twice a year for fine mulches and once a year for coarse mulches.

Fertiliser

Plants such as produce, bulbs and annuals have high nutrient requirements and may require supplementary feeding. Most other plants do not provided they have the right soil pH, water, light and mulch. If your plants are showing signs of a nutrient deficiency, you may wish to consider a fertiliser. When feeding plants with supplementary fertilisers, follow instructions carefully, and do not overdo it, otherwise you may kill your plants with kindness!

Choose an organic liquid fertiliser such as worm tea, seaweed solution or fish emulsions and feed the roots of your plant, not the leaves. You can also make your own organic fertiliser by soaking aged animal manure, comfrey leaves or garden weeds in a covered bucket of water for a couple of weeks. Strain and use the liquid to make up a fertiliser tea. Be sure to dilute with water to a 'weak tea' colour to avoid over fertilising.

Avoid synthetic fertilisers, these often have synthetic nitrogen, heavy metals and the salt content can burn young plants.

Only apply as much fertiliser as your plants need. Over-application can result in excess fertiliser washing out of the soil and into our waterways when it rains. Excess nutrients can contribute to blue-green algae outbreaks that are harmful to animals and sometimes people.

LOCAL **FOCUS**

Indigenous plants generally do not require fertilising as they have evolved to suit our nutrient-poor soils. If you do fertilise, there are a range of commercial products available for native plants that are slow-release and low in phosphate.

The best way to fertilise your garden is to make your own free garden food and soil improver.

Recycling organic waste

When organic (food and garden) waste rots in landfill anaerobically (without oxygen) gases are produced as a by-product. Landfill gas is approximately 40% carbon dioxide, 55% methane, 5% nitrogen and other gases.

Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 21 times more warming than the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide. When organic waste breaks down in your compost bin aerobically (with oxygen) methane gas production is minimised. If you compost our organic waste at home, rather than send it to landfill, you help reduce global warming. Plus your plants will love you!

Composting your food scraps, grass and garden clippings can provide your garden with an excellent source of food. Compost does not have to be dug into the soil. Unless the soil needs to be improved, the compost can be laid on top.

ADD TO YOUR COMPOST

- **Fruit and vegie scraps**
- **Coffee grounds**
- **Tea bags**
- **Herbs**
- **Leaves**
- **Egg shells –** crushed
- **Pizza containers**
- **Egg cartons**
- **Vacuum cleaner dust**
- **Onion** – outer skin
- **Finely chopped citrus peel**
- **Grass clippings**
  – thin layers 3 to 4cm
- **Chopped prunings**
- **Weeds**
  – not bulbs or seed heads
- **Shredded newspapers**

KEEP OUT OF YOUR COMPOST

- **Meat and fish scraps**
  – they can attract vermin
- **Dairy**
  – again they attract vermin
- **Office paper**
  – bleached or glossy
- **Weed seeds and bulbs**
  – you will only spread them around your garden
- **Bird, dog and cat poo**
  – can be a health risk
- **Large tree branches**
  – unless you've put them through a chipper
- **Citrus fruit**
  – too acidic in large quantities, okay in small quantities
- **Diseased plants**
  – spreads disease

Kitchen fermentation kits

If you have a small garden or live in a flat and produce a small amount of mainly kitchen scraps, a kitchen fermentation kit is small enough to sit on your kitchen bench or under the sink. These kits are a fermentation system that converts waste to a nutrient rich soil conditioner for your garden. The system is air tight and requires you to sprinkle a handful of the manufacturer's rice husk and wheat bran that has been infused with micro-organisms over a layer of kitchen waste to rapidly break down food scraps. The fermented product is then dug into the soil where it continues to breakdown.

Compost bins

Compost bins are compact and a closed system restricting vermin access. Locate in a position that is shaded in summer and sunny in winter. Under a deciduous tree is ideal. Place on soil so that liquid drains well and worms can enter the bin to aid composting. Fasten a piece of mesh wire under the bin to prevent rats and mice digging underneath. Add alternate layers of high nitrogen ingredients (e.g. food scraps, manure, grass clippings, soft prunings) to low nitrogen ingredients (e.g. dry leaves, straw, garden waste, shredded newspaper). Aim for layers of 1 bucket of high nitrogen followed by 3 buckets of low nitrogen. Keep moist but not too wet. Cover with a layer of hessian to retain heat and moisture. The compost should be ready in 12-16 weeks.

Compost heaps

This is an open system that requires more space and will attract vermin if kitchen scraps are added. The system needs to be a minimum of $1m^3$ in order to generate enough heat to work. Build a large heap of organic materials 1.2m high by 1.2m wide. This can be on soil or on a hard surface. Alternate your organic materials between high nitrogen (e.g. garden cuttings, lawn clippings and aged animal manures) and low nitrogen (e.g. dry leaves, straw, shredded newspaper) with each layer being 10-20cm deep. As you build, spray each layer so that the materials are moist but not saturated. Cover your finished heap with hessian and secure. Turn your heap twice a week. The heap should generate enough heat to obtain compost in 6-8 weeks.

Worm farms

Worm farms are a great option if you have limited space and predominantly want to dispose of food scraps. You can buy worm farms that come with instructions, bedding and special composting worms. They consist of 3 containers that sit within each other and a lid. The bottom layer has a filter and tap and this is where the nutrient-rich worm wee accumulates. The middle container is for collecting the worm castings, another rich fertiliser. The top layer is where the worms live. You can also build your own worm farms from polystyrene fruit boxes or an old bathtub.

Worm farm

Location

It is important to locate your worm farm in a place that is convenient to access and is away from direct sunlight and rain. Too hot (over 30°C) and your worms will die. Cover your worms and kitchen scraps with damp newspaper or hessian to keep them cool and moist. Too cold (less than 10°C) and wet, they will die. Add a layer of old carpet to the top layer in winter and add shredded newspaper to the bottom layer if you notice dead worms there, or a lot of small vinegar flies buzzing around your top layer.

Food

Worms love finely cut or blended fruit and vegetable scraps, tea leaves, coffee grounds, wet shredded newspaper and aged manures. Avoid citrus, onion peel, garlic, meat and bread. Don't overdo it, especially when you first set up your farm, and monitor regularly. If your farm starts to smell the food is rotting rather than being eaten.

Worm Fertiliser

Worm wee is very strong and needs to be diluted 1 part wee to 10 parts water before you add to your plants. Worm castings are less potent and can be scooped up and added directly to your soil.

When you introduce worms to your worm farm they may take a few weeks to start eating and slowly build up their appetite. Monitor and adjust the amount of food you are giving them.

Green cone

The Green Cone is an in-ground system where your food waste breaks down and releases nutrient-rich liquid into the soil. Once the system has been set up in the ground it remains in that location, there is no need to move it. Simply fill a kitchen container with food waste and empty directly into the Green Cone. It is low maintenance as the internal warmth and soil bacteria and earthworms do the job for you. Green cones should be located next to heavy feeders in a sunny position with good drainage. It is ideal if you have limited need for garden compost. It is not suitable for garden waste.

Telephone Council's Waste Education Co-ordinator on **9490 4588** to discuss how the cones can assist with reducing waste.

Watering

Australia is one of the driest continents on earth and our gardens have suffered through some very extreme dry periods.

Climate change modelling suggests we are in for ongoing lower rainfall and an increase in hot days. It is estimated that currently up to 35% of household water use is on the garden. Improving our soil and mulching our gardens helps, but if you haven't already, you should consider using alternative water sources, other than mains (tap) water for your garden. Significant water savings can be made by installing rainwater tanks, greywater diverters, building raingardens, directing surface water onto the garden and installing efficient irrigation systems.

LOCAL **FOCUS**

Most indigenous plants (unless they are wetland plants) are suited to dry conditions. They generally do not need additional watering once they have established. Monitor them during heat waves and give them a deep soaking if they show signs of wilting.

Alternative water sources

Rainwater

Collecting rainwater from your roof is a logical way to reduce the amount of mains water used on your garden. The ideal tank size will depend on the size of your garden, your roof catchment area and your local rainfall patterns. The larger the tank the more expensive it will be and the more room it will need.

Most rainwater tanks for a garden range from 5,000 – 10,000 litres. They need to be installed on a firm base at least 1m from your property boundary and be connected by a licensed plumber. You may need to consider whether a pump is needed to move water around your garden, as there is less water pressure from a rainwater tank.

For more information visit: **www.sgaonline.org.au** search 'rainwater tanks'.

Greywater

Greywater is domestic wastewater, excluding toilet waste. It can be an excellent alternative source of temporary water for the garden, but care needs to be taken when using it. Greywater can contain a number of bacteria and viruses, as well as chemicals from cleaning agents. If greywater is to be applied to the garden, low phosphorous and sodium washing powders need to be used and only greywater from your washing machine rinse cycle and bathroom hand basin, shower and bath used. Greywater can only be stored for 24 hours, must be applied sub-surface and cannot flow from your property or enter the stormwater system.

Greywater cannot be used to water produce, other than fruit trees. When applying it to your garden, rotate the areas where it is being applied and 'flush' the soil periodically with mains or tank water to prevent a build up in the soil.

For more information visit: **www. epa.vic.gov.au** search 'greywater'.

Stormwater

Stormwater is rainwater that 'runs off' across hard surfaces instead of seeping into the ground. In the natural environment rain slowly percolates into the soil and eventually into our waterways through the groundwater table. The water flow rate is slowed down and as the water seeps through the soil excess nutrients and pollutants are removed. This process results in high quality water entering our streams and creeks. These days much of our urban landscape is covered with hard surfaces such as roads, driveways and parking lots that are impervious to water. Consequently when it rains, large volumes of water rapidly enter our stormwater system carrying pollutants, affecting flow rates and often resulting in the erosion of river beds and banks. Melbourne's Water Future states that more rain falls on Melbourne than we use from our dams. Stormwater represents a valuable resource that can be captured and utilised by gardeners.

Raingardens

A raingarden is a gravel filled trench designed to receive stormwater directly from a disconnected downpipe or runoff from surrounding hard surfaces. Water entering a raingarden is slowed and filtered helping to protect our waterways.

Raingardens consist of layers of soil for filtration, gravel for drainage, and plants that can tolerate both extreme wet and dry conditions. There are many different types of raingardens from planter boxes to a trench.

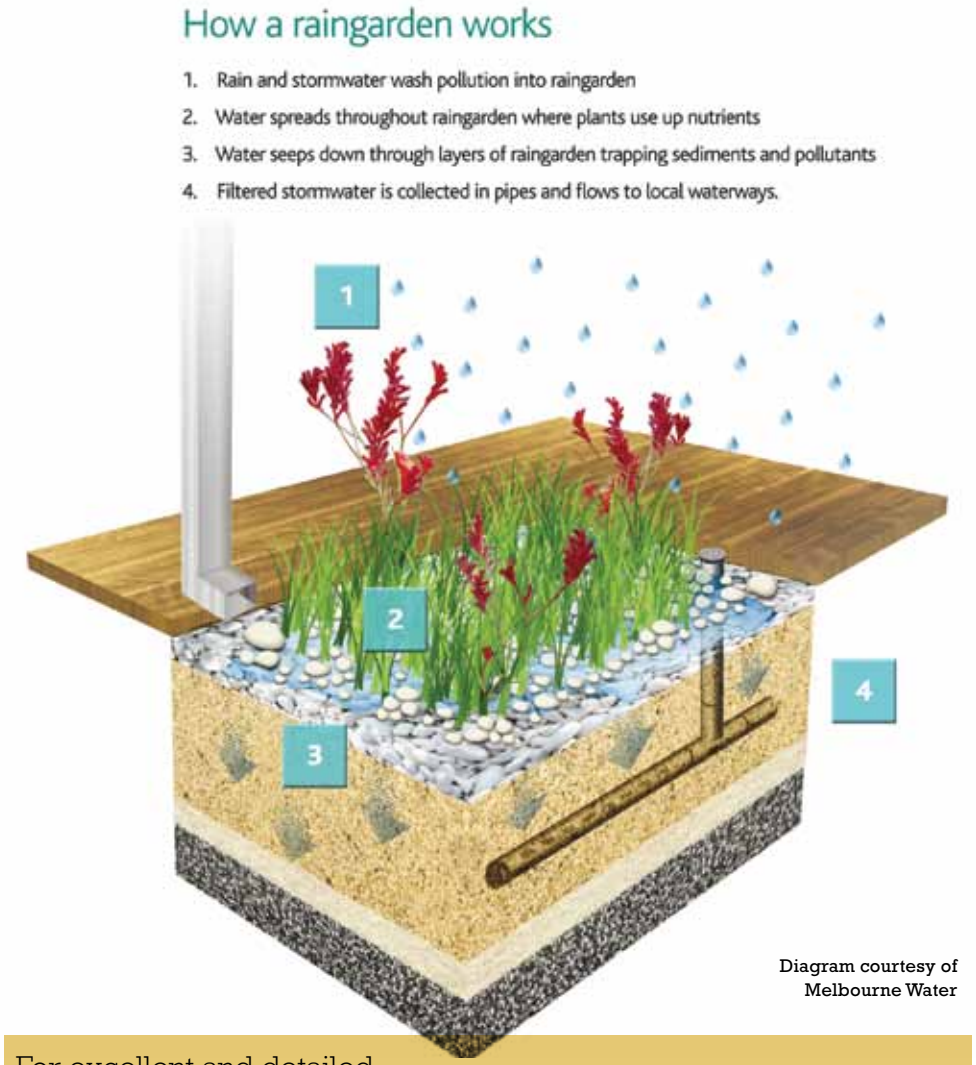
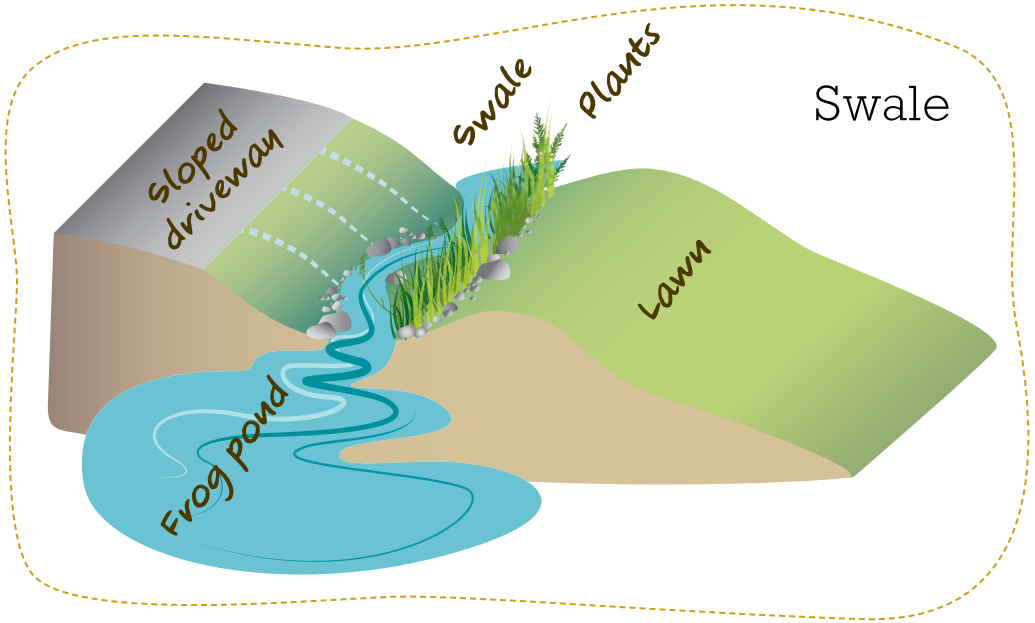


Diagram courtesy of Melbourne Water

For excellent and detailed instruction sheets visit: **www.melbournewater.com.au/raingardens**

Downpipe diversion

By diverting one or more downpipes around your property you can direct stormwater onto your garden beds or lawn utilising a valuable resource and allowing that water to slow and filter before seeping back into the groundwater table. A downpipe diversion can easily be fitted to your downpipe by a licensed plumber.



Landscaping

Water can be directed onto your garden beds by gently sloping the surface of driveways and patios. This stormwater run off from your hard surfaces can be collected in a swale which is essentially a shallow, mounded ditch laid across a contour with a shallow gradient directing run-off towards your garden or a small wetland.

If you are laying pavers consider creating a space between that will enable water to percolate into the soil. There are also commercial concrete grid and modular plastic blocks for paving available. Granitic and sand paths require more maintenance than concrete but will allow water to seep into the ground.

Irrigation

How water is delivered to your plants is very important. Use a drip line watering system which reduces waste by ensuring that the water only goes to the base of your plants where it is needed. Check and clean your irrigation system every spring to ensure it is working efficiently. Install garden tap timers to reduce over-watering and monitor. Use a rain sensor so that watering doesn't occur automatically and ensure the system is turned off if rain is predicted. Water in the early morning so your plants are not distressed through the heat of the day, and you will also prevent fungal diseases and moulds. Give your plants long, deep watering and make sure they are grouped according to their water needs.

For information on current permanent water use rules and rebates visit: **www.yvw.com.au**

Planting

The most important first step is to ensure you have the right plant for the right spot. Make sure you know the conditions of the place in your garden where you need a plant i.e. full sun, low water use, and then find a plant that will thrive in those conditions.

Buy from a reputable nursery to ensure the canopy and roots are well formed and free from pests and diseases. Avoid plants that have long, woody roots protruding from the base, as this will lead to root girdling that can result in the plant toppling over on a windy day.

You can plant into your garden with seeds, cuttings or potted plants of various ages. In general buying younger stock in tubes (tubestock) is better as the roots will not girdle and the plant establishes well.

LOCAL **FOCUS**

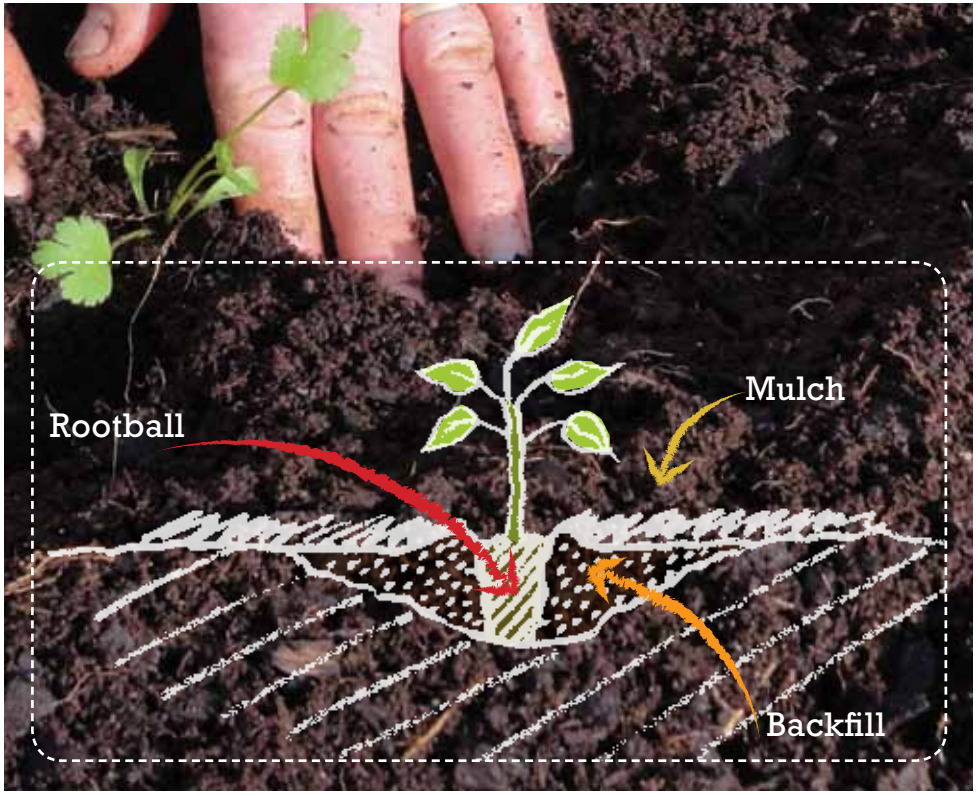
Generally planting out indigenous plants after the first heavy autumn rain is the best time, particularly for dry areas. For frost prone areas, spring may be a better time. Many indigenous plants are sold as tubestock which enables strong establishment and root development at an early age, which is ideal.

Staking

A plant will grow with greater strength if it is not tied to a stake. When a plant is blown around by the wind the plant hormones released by this movement make a stronger plant. Plants only need to be staked if they are in danger of toppling over. If staking is required, ensure that the ties allow for some movement- three stakes in a triangle formation works best for advanced plants. Add a tree guard if pests or active pets are a problem. Remove the tree guard once the plant has become established.

Planting out

1. Give your potted plant a good soak in a bucket of water prior to planting.
2. Dig a sloping, shallow hole 2 to 3 times the width of the root ball and as deep as the root ball.
3. Remove any weeds in the planting hole as they can emit a chemical that inhibits root growth.
4. Fill the hole with water and allow it to drain before planting.
5. Upend your pot. Any roots protruding through the bottom can be pruned before removing from the pot. Remove the plant from the pot by holding it upside down and gently tap it out of the pot.
6. Place the plant in the hole so that the top of the root ball is flush with the surface level.
7. Backfill loose soil around the plant and press down firmly.
8. Fashion a circle of raised soil around the edge of the root ball to form a watering basin.
9. Water thoroughly to settle the soil around the plant.
10. Mulch up to the edge of the root ball. Do not mulch up to the stem as this may cause collar rot.



Banyule
CITY COUNCIL

Address: 275 Upper Heidelberg Road,
Ivanhoe, Vic 3079

Postal Address: PO Box 51,
Ivanhoe, Vic 3079

Telephone: (03) 9490 4222
Fax: (03) 9499 9475
Email: enquiries@banyule.vic.gov.au
Website: www.banyule.vic.gov.au

Your Sustainable
Garden