



## Benefits of planting local trees and shrubs

Local native plants (indigenous) provide many benefits when planted on rural and urban properties. These are:

1. They are used to local soil and climatic conditions.
  - Ability to tolerate frost, fire, drought, waterlogging.
  - Winter rains, summer dry.
  - Saline and / or acid soils.
2. Local species are more resistant to local diseases and insects. Immunities and defenses against these diseases and pests have been built up over thousands of years.
3. Local plants may have a special relationship with soil micro-organisms found only in very specific areas. Planting of some trees and shrubs outside of their natural boundaries may hinder their growth without these specific soil critters that work cooperatively with the trees and shrubs. Wattles and she oaks fit into this category.
4. Using nonlocal plant species could be introducing potential weed species to your area. These may be plants that have no natural pests or diseases in your area or they may have a seed that readily germinates and grows in places that locals could only dream of!
  - Sweet pittosporum, Sydney golden wattle, Cootamundra wattle.
5. Prior to the advent of agricultural chemicals, pests were controlled by natural insect predators ie birds, mammals and insects. With increased land clearing, these natural predators became rare in many farming areas. Using local plant species on your property encourages predators back to rural areas.
  - Plant bursarias and prickly tea tree which harbour the local predatory wasps who then lay eggs inside the grubs that eat blue gums. When the eggs hatch, the insect eats the grub from the inside out!
6. Many native trees and shrubs can utilise nitrogen from the atmosphere. Planting these trees and shrubs on your farm adds nitrogen to the soil (like clover and lucerne) for the benefit of other trees and crops.
  - Wattles and bush peas release nitrogen to the soil when their roots rot or the plant dies feeding other plants in the local area.
7. Local plant species are more likely to regenerate naturally and establish a self perpetuating population over generations.
8. Local species planted on properties can, in the future, be a valuable source of seed for future plantings.
9. Using local species maintains genetic integrity of local plant communities. A native tree or shrub from elsewhere can cross pollinate with local species producing hybrids that would never occur in

nature. This may have untold consequences in future generations.

10. Local character. In the early days of European existence in Australia, the local character of the “bush” was lost on many people as being drab and uniform and nowhere near as beautiful as mother England! As time went on, European Australians began to appreciate their natural surroundings and have found the Australian landscape as one that is beautiful in many subtle ways. Perhaps this beauty doesn’t hit you head on. You may have to look more closely, more deeply. The local flora (and fauna) gives our area its character- the shape of the plants, the colour, the scents, the feel.

There are just too many reasons not to plant local!