

# FACTS SHEET No. 9

## A Native "Cottage" Garden

By Carl Fulton

(Landcare Vegetation Officer)

Unfortunately, with the smaller size of many house blocks and town-house /villa developments around Lake Macquarie, not everyone can plant large native trees in their backyard. The good news is that there are many low-growing, local native plants that can be grown in a "cottage" garden situation that will not destroy your sewer pipes, block your winter sunshine or fall on your house in a storm.

These recommendations are aimed at restoring some "bushland" values to a mulched garden area. The native garden would consist of low-growing indigenous plants, sourced from local provenance seed, and would be both bird-attracting and decorative. Combined with a bird-bath, a winding path and a garden seat from which to view your feathered visitors, the result would be a cottage garden with a local spirit.

### Mulched Bed (plant species to 1/1.5 metre approximately):

***Acacia myrtifolia***- Myrtle Wattle Small shrub, with red tinged foliage and pale-yellow flowers in late winter **Sun**

***Acacia terminalis***- Sunshine Wattle Small shrub with bright yellow flowers in late summer and winter **Sun**

***Banksia spinulosa***- Hair-pin Banksia Smaller growing Banksia with yellow /orange flower-spike- good bird attractor **Sun**

***Brachycome multifida***-Cut-leaf Daisy Attractive blue/mauve flowering ground cover or in-fill plant **Sun**

***Commelina cyanea***- Creeping Christian, Scurvy Weed Vigorous groundcover with blue flowers **Sun or Shade**

***Correa alba***- White Correa Small rounded shrub with white flowers in winter/early spring **Sun**

***Correa reflexa***- Native Fuchsia Small shrub with attractive, tubular red and green, rarely white, flowers in late winter/early spring **Sun**

***Dianella caerulea***- Blue Flax Lily Blue flowered, blue fruited iris-like plant **Sun or Shade**

***Eustrephus latifolius***- Wombat Berry Gentle climber or scrambler with orange fruits in spring/summer **Sun or Shade**

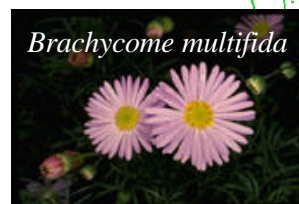
***Hardenbergia violacea***- Native Sarsaparilla Vigorous groundcover or climber with purple pea flowers in spring- can be invasive **Sun**

***Hibbertia dentata***- Twining Guinea Flower Gentle climber or scrambler with toothed leaves and bright yellow flowers in spring **Sun**

*Acacia terminalis*



*Brachycome multifida*



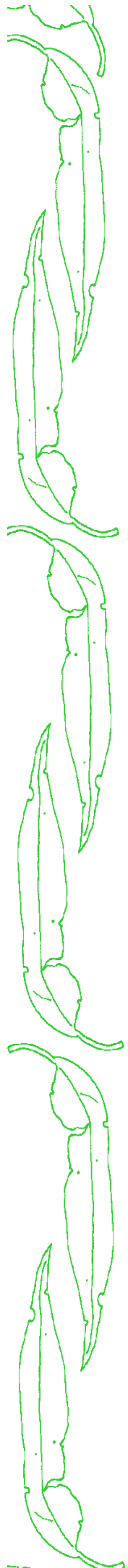
*Correa alba*



*Commelina cyanea*



*Hardenbergia violacea*



**Hibbertia scandens- Climbing Guinea Flower** A more vigorous relative of Twining Guinea Flower with larger bright yellow flowers in spring and summer **Sun**

**Indigophora australis- Native Indigo** Small shrub with pink/mauve/sometimes almost blue pea flowers in spring **Sun**

**Lambertia formosa- Mountain Devil** Red-flowering shrub with woody capsules that resemble a horned devil- good bird attractor **Sun**

**Lobelia alata- Native Lobelia** Small herb with white to sky-blue flowers- likes moist soil **Sun or Shade**

**Lomandra longifolia- Spiny-headed Mat Rush** Tufted, grass-like plant with strongly scented, inconspicuous flowers in spring - good edge plant **Sun or Shade**

**Melaleuca thymifolia- Thyme Honeymyrtle** Very attractive, small Melaleuca with scented leaves and delicate, purple flowers in spring **Sun**

**Pittosporum revolutum- Rough-fruited Pittosporum** Shrub with yellow flowers in summer- prominent seed-capsule with sticky, red seeds **Sun or Shade**

**Plectranthus parviflorus- Plectranthus** Scented perennial with white to blue flowers for much of the year- likes a moist, sheltered position and self-seeds readily **Shade to Sun**

**Prostanthera incana- Velvet Mint-bush** Shrub with scented leaves and mauve flowers- likes a moist position **Shade to Sun**

**Pultanea daphnoides- Large-leaf Bush Pea**

**Pultanea euchila- Bush Pea**

**Pultanea villosa- Hairy Bush Pea** The Bush Peas have typical yellow and red, "egg and bacon" flowers mostly in spring **Sun**

**Viola hederacea- Native Violet** Vigorous groundcover in moist areas - pretty white/blue flowers for much of the year **Shade to Sun**

**Westringia fruticosa- Coastal Rosemary** Hardy shrub with white, sometimes bluish, flowers for much of the year - makes an attractive hedge if pruned regularly **Sun**

As with traditional cottage gardening, gardeners could experiment with combinations of flower colours, leaf shapes and plant forms, but there are some of the above plants that lend themselves to companion planting. For instance, a lightly shaded area surrounding a water feature could be planted with Native Violet and Creeping Christian along with some native ferns as groundcovers, the blue to mauve flowering Blue Flax Lily, Plectranthus and Velvet Mint-bush, and **Elaeocarpus reticulatus Blueberry Ash** if there is room for a small tree. A sunny, bird-attracting area could have Sunshine Wattle, Myrtle Wattle, Hair-pin Banksia, Native Fuchsia and Mountain Devil surrounding a bird-bath with the Cut-leaf Daisy as the groundcover, and the yellow -flowering **Tristaniopsis laurina Kanooka, Water Gum** if there is room for a small tree.

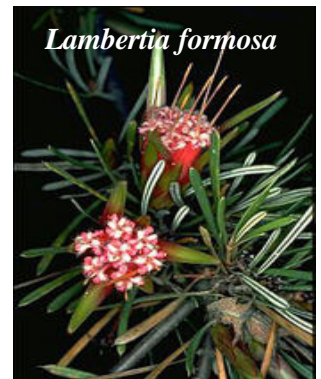
Images are from Australian Plant Image Index ,Australian National Botanic Gardens <http://www.anbg.gov.au>, except Viola hederacea and Hardenbergia violacea



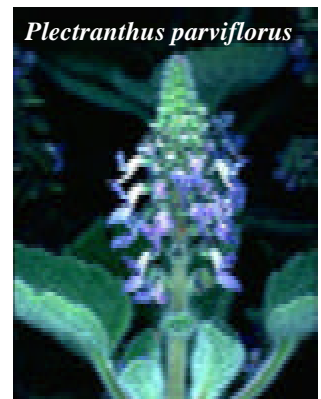
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