

Fact Sheet #2- Central Coast Plants for Your Garden.

There are reputed to be some 2,300 Australian native plant species indigenous to the N.S.W. Central Coast in the Gosford and Wyong areas.

Many of these are especially suitable as garden plants, because they do well in our local soils and climatic conditions.

Some are very hardy and tolerant of most soil types; others, and particularly some of the spectacular favourites, are less forgiving and have special requirements for success.

Site conditions can often vary over small distances, eg. the shallow sandstone soils of Kariong, the deep former rainforest soils of the Narara Valley, and the ocean front soils along the coast provide very different growing conditions. What is admirably suited to one site may fail hopelessly in another.

Ultimate size of trees should be matched to the site. Avoid large trees on small residential blocks. Remember that what looks like a small seedling may grow to a substantial size. It would be prudent to find a mature tree of the type you wish to plant. That way you would know how large they can grow.

Reminder - Most native plants that fail to survive in our garden have been killed with kindness- over watering, too much fertiliser, too rich a soil mixture. This is why some over-zealous gardeners mistakenly think of native species as 'drop dead plants'.

Below are listed some of the local species that are regularly available in plant nurseries.

Reliable small trees or large trees

Native frangipani - *Hymenosporum flavum*: 3-8 metres. Fast growing. Cream scented flowers in spring.

Willow bottlebrush - *Callistemon salignus*: 3-5 metres. Attractive pink new growth. Papery bark.

Coast wattle - *Acacia sophorae*: 3 metres. Dense foliage. Good in sandy soil near the sea.

Grey myrtle - *Backhousia myrtifolia*: 2-4 metres. Ornamental specimen tree. Long lasting pale green bracts after flowering.

NSW Christmas bush - *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*: 5 metres. Spectacular ornamental tree. Pink/red bracts after flowering in mid- summer.

Reliable flowering shrubs and ground covers

Coast rosemary - *Westringia fruticosa*: 1 metre. White flowers. Hardy and drought resistant. Needs tip pruning.

Hairpin Banksia - *Banksia spinulosa*: 2 metres. Spectacular banksia brushes with black styles. Full of bird attracting nectar. Cultivar 'Birthday Candles' is a compact form to 600mm.

Dog rose - *Bauera rubioides*: 1 metre. Long flowering. Prefers semi-shade and moist conditions.

***Crowea saligna*:** 1 metre. Pink star shaped flowers. Thrives in semi-shade and moist conditions.

Mint bush - *Prostanthera ovalifolia*: 1 metre. Dark green fragrant foliage. Profuse mauve flowers in spring.

Cut-leaf mint bush - *Prostanthera incisa*: 1 metre. Aromatic foliage. Profuse mauve flowers in spring.

Native rosella - *Hibiscus heterophylla*: 2 metres. Large white or yellow hibiscus flowers. Needs regular pruning.

Lilly pilly - *Syzygium australe*: 3 metres. Glossy green foliage. White flowers in spring, then edible red fruits. Many new decorative cultivars are available.

Black-eyed Susan - *Tetradlea thymifolia*: 300mm. Compact ground cover. Profuse dark purple flowers. (Note There are at least 3 other plants popularly known as Black-eyed Susan. That is why botanical names are necessary.)

Hop Goodenia - *Goodenia ovata*: 1 metre. Yellow flowers. Hardy and long flowering in semi-shade.

Climbers and Trailing Plants

Wonga vine - *Pandorea pandorana*: Vigorous climber. Cream flowers in spring. Many cultivars available.

Golden guinea flower - *Hibbertia scandens*: Low scrambling vine. Large golden yellow flowers throughout the year.

Native violet - *Viola hederacea*: Ground cover. Very hardy. Useful as a spreading cover in wet areas or under trees.

False sarsaparilla - *Hardenbergia violacea*: Vigorous climber. Spectacular purple flowers in spring. A more compact cultivar 'Mini Haha' is available.

More difficult plants with special requirements

Native Fuchsia - *Epacris longiflora*: Emblem of Gosford City. Trailing stems of striking red and white tube flowers. Needs a moist spot in low nutrient stony sand.



Epacris longiflora

Swamp Banksia- *Banksia robur*: 3 metres. Bright bottle green banksia flowers. Best in swampy ground.

Common correa - *Correa reflexa*: 1 metre. Red and green tube flowers in spring. Hardy cultivars available e.g. *Correa* 'Marions Marvel' with pink and green flowers. Prefers part shade.

Box leaf wax flower *Philothea buxifolius*: syn. *Eriostemon buxifolius*. 1 metre. Clusters of pink and white star flowers in late winter and spring. Needs well drained sandy soil.

Pink wax flower *Eriostemon australasius*: 1 metre. Spectacular pink star-shaped flowers in spring. Does best in well drained stony sand with sandstone pebble mulch.



Eriostemon australasius

Pink spider flower *Grevillea sericea*: 1 metre. Long flowering. Hardy. Low phosphorus sandy soil. Many cultivars available.

Red spider flower *Grevillea speciosa*: 1 metre. Striking red flowers. Thrives in low phosphorus sandy soil.

Flannel flower *Actinotus helianthi*: Wyong floral emblem. Does best in low nutrient sandy soil. Compact forms available.

Waratah ***Telopea speciosissima***: 2 metres. Spectacular red or cream flowers. Many new cultivars are hardier and more reliable. Needs perfect drainage.

Wedding bush ***Ricinocarpos pinifolius***: 1 metre. White star shaped flowers in spring. Needs low nutrient moist sand in part shade.