

The Australian Cottage Garden

The charm of the cottage garden has an appeal which defies fashion trends. What is it we love about the cottage garden? Is it the soft pastels and white shades, the foliage textures and changing seasonal interest. Perhaps this lush chaotic garden provides a welcome haven from our busy lives.

Alas, this style of gardening is perhaps one of the most time consuming, requiring regular water, fertiliser and pruning to keep it looking fabulous. Not many of us have such commitment.

Imagine a cottage garden which requires little maintenance and much less water. Consider the possibility of using our unique Australian plants as part of this dream. Imagine, too, colourful birds and butterflies visiting to sup the nectar of native plants.

There are Australian plants to suit all gardens and situations, in fact, there are over 2000 species found in garden centres around Australia, and even more in specialist nurseries. Each year, plants breeders release new improved and easy to grow forms of favourite Australian plants.



The design

Create an Australian cottage garden effect using the following ideas:

- Select small compact shrubs which have pretty colours and soft shapes. Pastels and white work especially well. Look for interesting foliage and textures.
- Arrange plants informally, using several plants of the same variety. Mix and match to create an informal patchwork effect.
- Ignore normal design constraints which arrange plants in order of size and shape. Use larger plants to frame views through the garden, or hide fences and roads.
- Plant closer than recommended and be prepared to prune a little to provide access. Cottage gardens are typically overgrown and crowded, as are the wildflower displays we see in the bush.
- Use meandering paths through your garden in natural material such as coarse bark, fine gravel or sawdust. Allow plants to overgrow the path.
- Use birdbaths or rustic art as points of interest. A wooden seat gives the opportunity to sit and reflect.



Cottage plants for sandy soil

Local plants:

- Swan River pea (*Brachysema celcianum*)
- Swan River myrtle (*Hypocalymma robustum*)
- Cockies tongue (*Templetonia retusa*)
- Coastal buttercup (*Hibbertia cuneiformis*)
- Snakebush (*Hemiandra pungens*)
- Grey cottonheads (*Conostylis candicans*)
- Pink calytrix (*Calytrix fraseri*)
- Sandplain bottlebrush (*Beaufortia squarrosa*)

Other Oz winners:

- Rice flower (*Pimelea ferruginea*)
- Coastal correa (*Correa alba*)
- Native rosemary (*Westringia 'Lilac and Lace'*)
- Kangaroo paws (*Anigozanthos Hybrids*)
- Native hibiscus (*Alyogyne huegelii*)
- Prostrate emu bush (*Eremophila glabra prostrate*)
- Coastal daisy (*Olearia axillaris*)
- Grevillea 'Lemon Supreme'
- Bacon and eggs (*Eutaxia obovata*)
- Emu bush (*Eremophila microtheca*)

Plants to suit hills cottage gardens

Local plants:

- Prickly moses (*Acacia pulchella*)
- Australian bluebell (*Sollya heterophylla*)
- Blue leschenaultia (*Lechenaultia biloba*)
- Coconut Ice (*Hypocalymma angustifolium*)
- Pink feather flower (*Verticordia plumosa*)
- Fringe lily (*Thysanotis multifloris*)
- Dampiera linearis
- Rose coneflower (*Isopogon dubius*)

Other Oz beauties:

- Spider grevillea (*Grevillea thelemanniana*)
- Kangaroo paws (*Anigozanthos Hybrids*)
- Fanflowers (*Scaevola 'Mauve Clusters'*)
- Astartea 'Winter Pink'
- Hairy jugflower (*Adenanthos barbiger*) red to 50cm
- Baeckea 'Miniature'
- Heart leaved flame pea (*Chorizema cordatum*)
- Leptospermum 'Pink Cascade'
- Yellow featherflower (*Verticordia chrysanthella*)
- Native daphne (*Philotheca myoporoides*)

Plants to suit those shady spots

- Native fuchsias (*Correa glabra*)
- Native buttercup (*Hibbertia racemosa*)
- Spider grevillea (*Grevillea thelemanniana*)
- Fanflowers (*Scaevola 'Mauve Clusters'*)
- Baeckea 'Miniature'
- Native daphne (*Philotheca myoporoides*)
- Heart leaved flame pea (*Chorizema cordatum*)
- Coconut Ice (*Hypocalymma angustifolium*)
- Prickly moses (*Acacia pulchella*)
- Australian bluebell (*Sollya heterophylla*)

For more information on these plants, visit the website: <http://www.zanthorrea.com.au>