

Coastal

LOCATIONS:

BROKEN HEAD, SUFFOLK PARK, BYRON BAY, BELONGIL, TYAGARAH, BRUNSWICK HEADS, NEW BRIGHTON, OCEAN SHORES AND SOUTH GOLDEN BEACH

For those of us lucky enough to live in close proximity to the sea, gardening on sandy soils in salt laden winds can be challenging - until you learn the secrets of our local plants.

Before our coastline was cleared for sand mining and coastal development, a diverse ecosystem thrived in a succession of plant communities that each lent protection to the next.

On the foredunes, spinifex grass slows and traps the wind-blown sand, allowing enough security for the low coastal wattle to establish. This in turn provides shelter to the hind dunes and a complex root system that secures the coast against wave attack. In the lee of this, small, salt tolerant trees and leathery vines form a dense barricade and beyond a complex littoral rainforest can establish. Depending on the soil type (sand or clay), and proximity

of water table variations, the type of predominant vegetation could be littoral rainforest, melaleuca wetland or fire dependent heath.

The advantages of using local coastal plants in the landscape are salt and drought tolerance, and an ability to thrive in low nutrient sandy soils – a selection of these plants are detailed in the species list that accompanies this section of your guide.

WILDLIFE:

PHEASANT COUCAL, BUSH TURKEY, SWAMP WALLABY, WHITE BELLIED SEA EAGLE, OSPREY, TERN, GULL AND VARIOUS REPTILES, AUSTRALIAN PELICAN, BRAHMINY KITE, BUSH STONE-CURLEW, CORMORANT, EGRET, FLYING FOX, KINGFISHER, SPOONBILL, SWAMPHEN, WATER DRAGON, GOANNA



Bush Stone-curlew
Photo: David Taylor



Swamp Wallaby & joey
Photo: T Trivett



Eastern Water Dragon
Photo: M Crocker



CREATING A HEATH GARDEN

SOIL DESCRIPTION:

Low nutrient sand and sandy clay

The heath garden would be well suited to a highly exposed site or to frame a view. The small leathery leaves that feature in this broad grouping are salt tolerant and once established can be trained through pruning and require no irrigation. Small shrubs and trees that are fairly nondescript for much of the year will reward you with vigorous flowering in the spring and some of the heath species such as Lemon Scented Tea Tree (*Leptospermum liversidgeii*) contain natural insect repellents. This garden will look particularly good with well placed rocks - make them look natural in their setting and try to leave a few caves and crevices for our blue-tongue lizards.

The key species of this garden would most likely include the Banksias, Casuarinas, Grasses, Leptospermum, small Melaleucas and local peas. You can even replace the lawn with a low growing form of Kangaroo Grass.

EXAMPLES: Arakwal National Park and Tyagarah Nature Reserve

N.B. It should be realised before embarking on the heath garden that many of these plants are volatile; a buffer zone should be established and maintained in areas prone to bushfire. (Interestingly though, there are heath plants that are non-volatile and form natural firebreaks. Further information can be sourced from the RFS & CSIRO.)

Coastal Heath (top left)
Photo: Alison Ratcliffe
Wetland West Byron (top right)
Photo: Hank Bowers
A selection of Littoral Rainforest species (centre)
Photo: James Mayson

CREATING A LITTORAL RAINFOREST GARDEN

SOIL DESCRIPTION:

Sandy loam to sandy clay

In its natural state, such as at Broken Head, you'll see a compact forest blown into a wedge shape capable of deflecting salt laden winds and providing a surprising amount of shelter beneath. Few of us will have the opportunity to achieve this complexity in our own yards but there are some very useful species to employ in the home landscape. Utilise the sculptural forms of Pandanus, Cordyline, Bangalow Palm, Ginger, Dianella and Hoya Vine. You'll notice these are all lineal plants, which look best with similar shaped and textured plants. Lilly Pillies and other small rainforest species can provide useful hedges and background. Few of these plants flower conspicuously but can put on beautiful flushes of new growth as opportunity allows.

EXAMPLES: Broken Head Nature Reserve and Cape Byron



CREATING A WETLAND GARDEN

SOIL DESCRIPTION:

Peaty sands

If you live in the low-lying parts of the Shire, the water table may be close to the surface and wet sclerophyll plants will best suit your garden. If you have a really boggy section of the plants that will happily occupy it and turn it into a feature include: Paperbarks, *Banksia robur*, Blueberry Ash, Cordyline, strappy grasses, ferns and sedges – all can be used to great effect and will require little maintenance. Plant in groups and use your taller species in the background to maximise the impression of space, whilst encouraging the pioneer species that may volunteer to add complexity to the theme. Visit the section on water features and aquatic plants (p32) for more ideas.

EXAMPLE: The western parts of the Tyagarah Nature Reserve or Cumbebin Wetlands boardwalk at Butler Street in Byron Bay

Coastal Botanic



Dianella

Great clumping grass. Lush, strappy leaves, dainty purple flowers & edible blue berries. Bushfood

1



Native Violet

Sprawling groundcover with delicate purple and white flower

2



Flannel Flower

An elegant white daisy-like flower throughout the year. Prune after flowering to increase bushy habit

3



Kangaroo Grass

Low maintenance tufting grass with reddish flower heads. Butterfly attractant

4



Coastal Grass Tree

Grass tree with no trunk and delicate flower spike resembling a bottlebrush

5



Hoya

Thick leaved, stunning small white fragrant flowers in spring. Suitable for hanging pots

6



Guinea Flower

Well behaved vine with large golden-yellow flowers in spring/summer – excellent screening scrambler

7



Happy Wanderer

Dark, glossy leaves with bright purple pea like flower in winter/spring

8

		COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	HEIGHT	WIDTH	SUN	SHADE	WET	DRY	SALT TOLERANT M=Medium H=high L=Low
GROUNDCOVERS & GRASSES	1	Dianella	<i>Dianella caerulea</i>	0.8m	spreading	✓	✓	✓	✓	H
	2	Native Violet	<i>Viola hederaceae</i>	0.1m	spreading		✓	✓		M
	3	Flannel Flower	<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	0.1m	0.3m	✓			✓	H
	4	Kangaroo Grass	<i>Themeda australis</i>	0.2m	spreading	✓			✓	H
	5	Coastal Grass Tree	<i>Xanthorrhoea macronema</i>	0.5m	0.5m	✓	✓		✓	H
VINES/ EPIPHYTES	6	Hoya	<i>Hoya australis</i>	na	na	✓	✓	✓	✓	H
	7	Guinea Flower	<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>	na	na	✓	✓		✓	H
	8	Happy Wanderer	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	na	na	✓			✓	H
SHRUBS & SCRAMBLERS	9	Swamp Banksia	<i>Banksia robur</i>	2m	2m	✓		✓	✓	M
	10	Snow in summer	<i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i>	2m	2m	✓		✓	✓	M
	11	Midgen Berry	<i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i>	1.5m	1.5m	✓	✓		✓	H
	12	Clumping Palm Lily	<i>Cordyline congesta</i>	1.7m	spreads	✓	✓	✓		M. Protect from wind
	13	Plum Myrtle	<i>Ptiliostigma glabrum</i>	1.5m	1.5m	✓	✓	✓		M
PALMS	14	Cabbage Palm	<i>Livistona australis</i>	20m	8m	✓	✓	✓	✓	M
TREES	15	Wallum Banksia	<i>Banksia aemula</i>	3m	5m	✓			✓	M
	16	Broad-leaved Lilly Pilly	<i>Acmena hemilampra</i>	30m (less in cultivation)	8m	✓	✓	✓		M
	17	Blueberry Ash	<i>Eleaocarpus reticulatus</i>	6m	6m	✓	✓	✓	✓	M
	18	Bennetts Ash	<i>Flindersia bennettiana</i>	30m (less in cultivation)	8m	✓	✓	✓		H
	19	Celery wood	<i>Polyscias elegans</i>	30m (less in cultivation)	8m	✓	✓	✓		H
	20	Pandanus	<i>Pandanus tectorius</i>	10m	10m	✓	✓		✓	H

For more species please refer to Native Species Planting Guide for

Tweed and Byron Shires www.byron.nsw.gov.au/native-plants

Plum Myrtle

Pretty foliage with abundant white flowers autumn/winter, then small pear-shaped purple fruit

13



Cabbage Palm

Broad fan leaves. Cream-white flower spikes in summer. Red fruit turning black – bird attractant

14



Wallum Banksia

Robust, sculptural tree with irregular growth habit. Large woody fruit

15



Broad-leaved Lilly Pilly

Attractive red-pink new foliage with cream flowers on panicles spring/summer, globulous fruit. Wildlife attractant

16



Blueberry Ash

An elegant small tree with white or pink bell flowers in summer, followed by small, round blue fruit. Bird attractant

17



Bennetts Ash

An attractive medium tree with large clumps of white flowers, ornamental woody 5-winged seed capsule

18



Celery wood

Tall, graceful tree with umbrella-like crown of leaves. Small, dark-purple flowers autumn/winter. Small dark-purple fruit. Bird attractant

19



Pandanus

Sculptural tree with large orange fruit (female only), large strappy leaves and distinctive prop roots

20



Swamp Banksia

A dramatic & sculptural small tree/shrub with large flower spikes and fruits in autumn/winter lasting months

9

My Local Native Garden

18



Snow in summer

Striking masses of white flowers born in summer with attractive paperbark trunk

10

My Local Native Garden

19

Midgen Berry

Low shrub – informal hedge.. White flowers in spring/summer with purple spotted edible berries. Wildlife attractant

11



Clumping Palm Lily

Graceful linear plant with sprays of bright red fruit and flowers in drooping panicles. Bird attractant

12

