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## going native

**M**any Australian gardens feature introduced plants that aren't suited to the Australian climate: they can require a lot of water, soil additives and pesticides to really thrive. Or worse, they can escape your garden and become an invasive pest. Growing your region's native plants is a great way to ensure minimum water usage and maximum gardening success, because these plants are meant to be there. Ask your council for a list of natives, to restore the natural habitat of your suburb, starting with your own backyard. Or ask your local nursery for advice on plant types from similar climates that will work well.

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## friendly plants

In the wild, many varieties of plants grow in the same location, sharing their resources to help each other thrive. Use the principles of companion planting and let nature do some of the hard work of helping your garden thrive and stay pest-free. By researching and planting the right combinations of plants, you can naturally control pests by attracting the right insects and discouraging the wrong ones. Insects, after all, are natural recyclers, pruners and composting machines.

Photo: Corbis Australia