

CARING FOR A NATIVE GARDEN IN WINTER

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Sure is cold down here at the minute in Willow Tree!

Having moved to a “Plantswomans” garden with a LOT of native plants, I thought I better do a bit of research and see if there were any essential tasks I need to keep in mind. Luckily, it seems pretty simple... there are a few photos below, and I take NO credit for the garden!

1. You can plant natives in the cold weather – they will be settled in and ready to boom come spring
2. Organic fertilisers are healthier for your native plants because they’re slow release. They also have low levels of phosphorus (P), which can be harmful to your plants in levels over 3%. Native plants love environmentally friendly, fished based fertiliser.

Here’s an interesting link to the Charlie Carp site:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/601ZijINVR8Gm00Hgmt06q?si=13e946b34d8d4683&nd=1&dlsi=8a579c03b5de4b6e>

3. DON’T USE manures and compost - they aren’t recommended for native plants because it’s hard to know how much nutrient will be released. Chicken manure is deadly to native plants because it’s high in phosphorous. Mushroom compost kills the soil’s bacteria.
4. Use mulch instead. Mulching native plants help reduce weeds and keeps the soil moist and cool.

Recycle any trees or shrubs you have removed by chipping and use this for mulch. Find a friend with a chipper (or start saving....!)

5. Regular pruning stimulates new growth in native plants and helps to control pests and diseases. Most Australian native plants flower from winter into early spring. Native plants should be pruned after they have finished flowering, this will give them enough to grow and bush up to protect themselves from the heat of summer. If you are trying to get a plant to be a specific size and shape, opt for more regular pruning.
6. To propagate via cuttings, take a piece that is approximately 15cm long, ensuring you have a node at the bottom. Remove the leaves at the bottom of the stem, leave one leaf but cut it in half. Lastly, dip the stem into a propagating hormone and plant into the soil.
7. And I wont mow the grass till spring....

Growing native plants has a plethora of benefits:

- Easier to grow than non-native plant species

- Require less water and maintenance

- Attract native wildlife (clue – the last photo...)

- Native plants assist in soil stabilisation





