

## De-Bunking Native Myths !!!

### Myth - You can't mix natives and exotics

You sometimes hear that you can't mix native and exotic plants in the same garden. In fact, most gardens are a mix of plants from the four corners of the world, and there is no reason why Australian plants should be kept separate, unless you want to. In fact you can get fabulous effects by mixing and matching - the key is to group plants together by the growing conditions they need and combine them in a way that you personally find pleasing. Overseas gardens don't hesitate to mix in and feature an ever-growing range of Australian plants - keep an eye out on your travels!

### Myth - Native plants are short-lived

Every country in the world has evolved both short-lived and long-lived plants and a typical garden has a mix of these. Australian native plants are no different. Like most garden plants, their life span will be extended if they are pruned and fertilised regularly and given the water and growing conditions they need to keep them healthy.

Some of our favourite long-lived Australian natives plants are Callistemon (Bottlebrush), Banksias, Melaleucas (Paperbarks), Leptospermum (Tea Trees), Tree Ferns, Eucalyptus and Xanthorrhoea (Grass Tree).

### Myth - Native plants don't need pruning

If you prefer your garden plants to be bushier and smaller, then prune native plants just the same as any other - many take happily to formal clipping too. Pruning is about extending the life of plants as well as just for appearance. The rule of thumb is to prune straight after a plant finishes flowering, but there are exceptions - usually the label will tell you about these, but otherwise we are happy to advise on special cases!

### Myth - You can't fertilise Australian native plants

All plants require a good balance of nutrients to thrive. Many Australian plants have adapted to low-nutrient soils to get by, but most will do much better if they get more food!

The myth that you shouldn't fertilise native plants is to do with a minority of natives that prefer small amounts of phosphorus. Species that prefer low phosphorus fertilisers include Waratahs, Grevilleas, Banksias, and some wattles. Just like the Protea plants from South Africa, these plants have evolved very efficient 'proteoid' roots so that too much phosphorus can be toxic to these species. Most native species such as Anigozanthus (Kangaroo Paw), Callistemon, Lomandra, Dianella, Melaleucas, Leptospermums, Eucalyptus, etc don't mind more fertiliser to help them grow better.