

# SIX SEASONS

Environment and Sustainability News from Shire of Mundaring

## Seedlings for Landcare Expressions of Interest for 2024 Opening Soon

Expressions of Interest will open in August 2023, for planting in 2024

The Seedlings for Landcare program provides approximately 20,000 free native seedlings per year for planting on rural-zoned properties, school grounds, and bushland reserves in the Shire of Mundaring.

The aim of the program is to assist the community to undertake environmental restoration including revegetating creek lines, providing habitat for wildlife and increasing tree canopy cover in rural areas.

Applicants must be:

- A resident or ratepayer undertaking revegetation on a rural-zoned property, or
- A Catchment Group, Friends Group, school or other organisation undertaking revegetation on a nature reserve or school grounds within the shire.

Keep an eye out for announcements on the Shire's Facebook page and website for more details. Once open, the Expressions of Interest online forms will be available on the Shire's website at [mundaring.wa.gov.au](http://mundaring.wa.gov.au) (search for 'Seedlings for Landcare').



Shire of  
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To celebrate Landcare Week (7 - 13 August) we have just released a short video about Landcare! To watch it, visit the Shire's website at [mundaring.wa.gov.au](http://mundaring.wa.gov.au)



### Djilba- August to September

The Noongar seasonal calendar includes six different seasons in a yearly cycle. Djilba is still cold, with less rain than Makuru. Flower stalks of balgas (grass trees) emerge and koolbardi (magpies) and djidi djidi (willy wagtails) may start swooping to protect their young.



## Winter Sprinkler Ban

### The Winter sprinkler ban runs from 1 June to 31 August - here's why

The ban applies to both scheme and bore water. Homes and businesses must switch off irrigation systems to avoid risking a fine. More importantly, it's this time of year when we don't actually need to add water to our gardens as the winter rain does the job for free!

The winter sprinkler ban is an important strategy to conserve water for the warmer months. While rainfall has always varied from year to year, there is a decades long trend of declining annual rainfall in southwest WA. At the same time, more of our rainfall is likely to fall in storms and extreme weather events which can increase the risk of flash flooding.

Water Corporation reports that since the 1970's average rainfall has fallen by 20%. Climate models are predicting a further decrease of around 15% by the 2030's as the local impacts of global warming increase. This makes it even more critical that dams and underground aquifers are given a chance to recharge through the wetter months.

For the average WA household, 35 - 40% of their water use is in the garden. What might be less obvious is that water leaks can be 4.5 - 5%. With garden irrigation systems turned off for winter, this can help you look for leaks.

Check along pipes for obvious leaks, look for wet spongy ground, and also plants or patches of grass that are taller or greener. For more Waterwise garden tips or information about climate and water supplies, check out [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au).

Learn more about rethinking household sustainability, events and discounts at [switchyourthinking.com](http://switchyourthinking.com).



## Should the Grass be Greener?

**Lawns have been a suburban standard and even a status symbol! However, in an increasingly drying climate, it's important to consider their environmental impact.**

Originating from the opulent gardens of European nobility, lawns have been seen as symbols of affluence and social status. But as we evaluate their place in a changing world, what is the reality of their sustainability in a drying climate?

Lawns provide important play spaces and well-maintained turf is necessary for sports. However, lawns also demand substantial effort and resources to maintain, particularly in water-scarce areas. Excessive water use, synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and lack of flowers for pollinators can all have negative environmental impacts. Plastic astro-turf is no solution, as it uses more water in manufacture than it ever 'saves' as well as contributing to plastic waste and pollution.

In regions experiencing declining biodiversity as well as drying climates, the unsustainability of large lawn areas is becoming more obvious. This gives us the opportunity to reimagine traditional landscaping and adopt lower maintenance and more sustainable alternatives.

Reducing lawn size, using less chemicals and embracing native plants that thrive in local conditions are key steps toward sustainability. Efficient irrigation systems and well-prepared garden beds can also conserve water and better support biodiversity.

By embracing a more natural and sustainable approach to landscaping, we can help safeguard the environment for future generations.

You can find more information about backyard biodiversity and waterwise landscaping with native plants from the Shire's website at [mundaring.wa.gov.au/environment-waste](http://mundaring.wa.gov.au/environment-waste)

# Creating A Haven for Feathered Friends

Transforming your outdoor space into a bird-friendly garden doesn't have to be complicated or expensive! Find out how to add the right plants and garden features in your backyard to support the diverse birdlife found in the Shire.

**Native plants are a nectar buffet** - choose local native plants that provide natural food sources like nectar for our native species. Bird feeders will mainly feed pest birds like galahs that aren't native to the region, so skip the bird seed! Look for books and guides for firewise gardening in WA to choose groundcovers, shrubs, and trees and where to plant them. You can also find the Shire's Landscape and Revegetation Guidelines free at libraries, or online.

**Just add water** - install a bird bath or shallow water feature to offer birds a safe place to drink and bathe. Remember to refill it a couple of times per week to keep the water clean and fresh, and prevent mosquito breeding. Perches at different heights near the birdbath can help shy birds approach, and sticks or rocks in the water can help bees or small lizards to climb out.

**Nesting sites and shelter** - protect large old habitat trees that have (or may form) important hollows. If you don't have any trees with natural hollows, consider installing bird nesting boxes that suit local species. You can find local scientist Simon Cherriman's 'Hollowed Out' book in the Shire libraries for information on how to build and install nest boxes for different kinds of birds.

**Limit chemicals to avoid poisoning** - insecticides and rodenticides can cause 'secondary poisoning' in birds that eat poisoned rats, mice, or insects. For birds of prey the most harmful poisons are slow acting Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGAR's). If you must use rodenticides, look for First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGAR's) products that have active ingredients like Warfarin or Coumatetralyl.

**Even small gardens and courtyards can provide a refuge for birds** - by growing a range of small colourful shrubs for small areas and pot plants can make a big difference to urban birds as well as bees and butterflies!

**Don't miss our 'Bird Havens for Small Spaces' talk in September to learn more about creating bird friendly gardens (see the What's On page).**



## New book about the Jarrah Forest

### The NATURE of the JARRAH FOREST



The Nature of the Jarrah Forest describes the plants and animals that occur in the Jarrah Forest. This book gives a glimpse into the complexity of their relationships, and some of their special adaptations for survival.

Written by Eric McCrum, naturalist, teacher, and keen photographer, also known to many as 'The Birdman' on ABC radio.

For over seventy years, Eric has devoted himself to understanding the natural world and spreading his enthusiasm and knowledge to children and adults alike. This book is the realisation of Eric's dream to spread the message to all generations on the intricacies of living things, by looking closely within the Jarrah Forest.

The animals and plants that live in the Jarrah Forest are brought to life through Eric's fascinating descriptions and fantastic photos.

Copies of the book are available from the Mundaring Visitor centre, or online at Vivid Publishing.

## Review of Shire Local Laws

**Public comment period open until 4pm on 18 September 2023**

The Shire is undertaking a review of all local laws and inviting community feedback on whether any should be amended or repealed. Consultants have recommended that the Keeping of Cats Local Law be repealed, noting that the Shire will advocate for State Government review of the *Cat Act 2011*.

You can find the current local laws, more information about the review process and a survey on the Engage Mundaring website: [engage.mundaring.wa.gov.au](https://engage.mundaring.wa.gov.au)

## Nature Walk at John Forrest National Park

**Sat 19 Aug, 9.30 am to 1 pm**

Join the Darling Range Branch of the WA Naturalists Club to learn more about the fabulous wildflowers at the park. Meet at the Rangers Office on Park Road, it will be a 4.5km walk so wear appropriate footwear and clothing. You can bring along a lunch if the weather is kind. Note there is a car entry fee to the park.

For more information and to book visit [wanaturalists.org.au](https://wanaturalists.org.au).

## Bird Havens for Small Spaces

**Sat 30 Sep, 10 am to 12 pm  
Civic Area, Shire of Mundaring**

Do you want more birds around your home but have limited space? If the answer is yes, then come along to this talk with local habitat gardener, native plant lover and bird enthusiast, Rachel Green. Learn how to create a pocket habitat that native birds will love! You'll learn how to create horizontal and vertical gardens that require little water, look beautiful and are a pleasure to look after (even for small balconies and courtyards).

For more information and to book, visit [Eventbrite](https://eventbrite.com) and search for 'Bird Havens for Small Spaces'.

## Landcare Calendar - Tips for Djilba



- Protect newly planted seedlings from rabbits and kangaroos using tree guards and stakes. You can cut the top and bottom from 2 litre plastic bottles to make your own guards.
- Try to slash, spray or remove weeds before they have a chance to grow seeds.
- Only spray with chemicals on clear days with no rain and low winds, and following directions including protective clothes, gloves etc.

*Six Seasons* has been prepared by the Environment and Sustainability team at Shire of Mundaring. To subscribe email the team at [environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au](mailto:environment@mundaring.wa.gov.au)