



# Frog Friendly Gardens

## Backyards for Wildlife Fact Sheet

### Attracting Frogs to Your Backyard

Adelaide once hosted numerous watercourses that meandered their way across the Plains, often ending in wetlands. Amphibians (animals with permeable skin and that lay their eggs in water), including toads and frogs, would have thrived in these moist ecosystems. The variety of their forms and functions make them key parts of our ecosystems, and they also play important roles in the food web and nutrient cycling.

Encouraging frogs is a wonderful way to bring back Adelaide's lost biodiversity and a worthwhile addition to any garden. Native frogs can be attracted or introduced to the backyard landscape in several ways. Creating a pond will encourage native frogs to visit your garden and provide a place for them to reside and breed in the correct conditions. Hearing the call of frogs on a warm summer's evening is a fantastic sound, but remember that not all your neighbours may agree, so be mindful of where you place your pond.

### Threats

Amphibians populations in urban and non-urban areas are in decline. Human activities are thought to have impacted upon the populations' viability, including insecticide use in agricultural and horticultural areas, loss of habitat and breeding sites through drainage of wetland areas and the introduction of exotic fauna such as Plague Minnow (*Gambusia holbrooki*), which are known to consume tadpoles and the eggs of frogs.



From spawn to tadpoles to frogs - sharing your garden with frogs and toads is great for natural insect control.



The presence of amphibians is a great indicator of healthy environments. Their decline over the years is due to significant impacts we have made upon the landscape.

The sensitivity of their skin to the surrounding environment makes them susceptible to chemicals and pollutants that often make their way into the environment from waterways. Overharvesting and disease also impacts the frog and toad population.

### South Australian Frog Species

It is important to learn about which frog species would have originally occurred in your area to be able to provide them with the correct habitat. Remember that ponds don't need to be large as frogs only use them to reproduce and will spend a lot of their time hiding around them in riparian vegetation and under rocks or logs. It is therefore essential you provide a mulched area that will keep the frogs moist and provide an excellent source of insects for them to eat.

### Find Out More

To listen to frog calls, see images and descriptions of local native species, or to participate in South Australia's Frog Census see [www.frogatlas.com.au](http://www.frogatlas.com.au).

## Water

Frogs have a permeable exterior that allows moisture to be absorbed through the skin. For this reason they require an environment that is permanently moist or wet to avoid dehydration (your pond will provide this). Water also plays an important role in the lifecycle of frogs - it is where they breed and spend the first part of their life as a tadpole.

The booklet "Frog Ponds for Gardens" available from the Environment Protection Authority provides comprehensive details on how to create a frog pond.

## Location

It is important to consider the location of your frog pond. The area should ideally:

- Not disturb either you or your neighbours (frogs can be vocal – especially at night).
- Receive part sun and part shade day.
- Be located near a source of insects.
- Not enter a waterway either directly or indirectly.

Also ensure no run-off that contains potential pollutants will enter your pond (such as run-off from compost bin).

## Plant Selection

Where possible select local native species that will provide suitable habitat for local frogs. Incorporating local plants will also attract insects and in turn provide a food source.

Plant taller species at the back of the pond and ensure a large variety of plants are incorporated both in and around the pond. Use species such as grasses, reeds, groundcovers, small shrubs, ferns and sedges and incorporate different heights and sizes that will provide shaded and unshaded areas to create a variety of temperatures throughout the day.

Creating a damp depression of native Tussock grasses, ground covers (e.g. native hibbertias) and clumping plants such as mat-rush and flax-lily will provide an excellent habitat. Avoid using noxious weeds that are creating havoc in our waterways such as Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) and Slavinia (*Slavinia molesta*).



Backyards for Wildlife is managed by the SA Department of Environment and Natural Resources, with support from the Adelaide & Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board and the Australian Government

Some plant species to include in your frog landscape include:

### Ground layer

Dense matting species like native violets () and Guinea Flowers (*Hibbertia* sp.)

### Clumping Plants

Mat-Rushes (*Lomandra* sp.); Saw Sedges (*Gahnia* sp.); Flax-lilies (*Dianella* sp.); Rushes (*Juncus* sp.); Sedges (*Carex* and *Cyperus* spp.); Knobby Club-Rush (*Ficinia nodosa*); and Tussock Grass (*Poa* sp.)

It is also essential to include habitat elements such as logs, rocks, leaf mulch or bark. The latter will provide a place for your frogs to seek shelter from the wind and therefore prevent desiccation during the day.

## Why a Backyard for Wildlife?

In Australia, gardening has been recognised as one of our favourite pastimes and what we do in our home gardens has the potential to benefit or harm the natural environment.

By choosing to develop and maintain a garden that follows the five basic Backyards for Wildlife principles (see below), you can help contribute to a better local environment while at the same time conserve our local flora and fauna, create important habitat, reduce your maintenance costs, and reduce the threat of invasive environmental weeds.

### Backyards for Wildlife principles:

1. USE LOCALLY NATIVE PLANTS.
2. USE PLANTS THAT ARE A RANGE OF HEIGHTS.
3. PROVIDE FLOWERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.
4. MANAGE YOUR PETS RESPONSIBLY.
5. MINIMISE CHEMICAL USE.

Please consider applying some of these principles to your own backyard, so that together we can all help grow a great living environment for Adelaide.

## Find Out More

Visit [www.backyards4wildlife.com.au](http://www.backyards4wildlife.com.au) to access more Backyards for Wildlife and biodiversity information including an interactive map with lists of what grew in your suburb prior to 1836, a plant database and contact details for specialist native plant nurseries.

## For further Information Contact

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