Enjoy your garden ecosystem

Make your own contribution to the conservation of our environment by preserving ecosystems in your garden.

To enjoy the presence of butterflies, ladybirds and other beneficial creatures in your garden, you need to make an ecological garden in which they will thrive. A garden for wildlife provides a number of different habitats. These provide for all the needs of wildlife – food, water, nesting sites and shelter. For a Water Wise garden, choose indigenous plants that grow naturally in your area.

Here are some plants to help you make an ecological garden:

- **Tall screen plants:**
  - Crane flower (*Strelitzia reginae*) (Fig 1) – attracts sunbirds.
  - Tree-fuchsia (*Halleria lucida*) – attracts butterflies, a variety of insects and birds, and is hardy.

- **Hedge plants:**
  - Kei apple (*Dovyalis caffra*) – fruit for birds, hardy for coastal areas.
  - Krantz aloe (*Aloe arborescens*) – nectar for sunbirds.
  - Tree fuchsia (*Halleria lucida*) – attracts butterflies, birds and a variety of insects.

- **Climbers for small gardens:**
  - Black-eyed Susan (*Thunbergia alata*) – attracts butterflies.
  - Climbing aloe (*Aloe ciliaris*) – attracts sunbirds.
  - Wild grapes (*Rhoicissus* spp.) – fruit for birds.

Rand Water conserves ecosystems

At Rand Water's head office in Glenvista is a recently constructed wetland. Built chiefly for educational purposes, the wetland is used to show school groups how water, after entering and filtering through the wetland, is purified. Surrounding the head office is the Rand Water Nature Centre, which falls within the Klipriviersberg and features plants and animals endemic to the Highveld. This is used as an outdoor classroom where a range of educational hands-on activities are offered to schools by Rand Water’s Water Wise Education Team. The wetland is planted with indigenous species, such as cyperus and arums, and is fast becoming a haven for frogs, butterflies, dragonflies and birds.

This wetland is used to show the importance of these ecosystems to our freshwater resources and to the biodiversity of flora and fauna. Additionally, the wetland emphasizes the importance of preventing water pollution and reducing our water consumption so that these ecosystems can function efficiently.

![Fig 2. Wetland ecosystem at Rand Water’s Head Office.](image)

Create diverse habitats

You can attract many different creatures to your garden with a range of habitats.

- Plant a variety of tall plants, such as indigenous trees in a large garden, which will provide a canopy and shade.
- Plant a variety of hedge plants and bushes, including aloe varieties, which provide shelter for beneficial creatures, such as spiders, birds, lizards and hedgehogs.
- In a small garden with limited space, plant indigenous climbers against walls and use plants in pots.
- Put a natural, dry rock heap under the hedge or build a rockery to offer shelter to lizards, which feed on mosquitoes, flies, beetles and many other insects.
- Plant a variety of food plants that provide nectar and pollen to attract different butterflies, bees and birds.
- Plant grasses as ground covers for seed-eating birds, or nest building material for weavers, and to attract butterflies.

By creating an indigenous garden and being water wise, you encourage the efficient functioning of ecosystems which provide us with essential services and goods such as clean freshwater.

For further information on being Water Wise please visit [www.randwater.co.za](http://www.randwater.co.za) and click on the Water Wise logo or contact us on 0860 10 10 60.