



## OPEN NATURE GARDENS WEEKEND

Margaret River. October 14-15. Tickets \$15

Come and visit some amazing and inspiring nature gardens over one weekend in the Margaret River region! All profits go back into nature conservation in the community. Tour the properties, meet the gardeners and get their top tips for creating a nature-friendly, water-wise, sustainable and ecologically-rich garden packed with habitat for wildlife and pollinators. From bush blocks and rural properties to FireWise and coastal gardens, there's something for everyone! Visit all seven gardens over the one weekend or pick and choose the ones of most interest.

Tickets: <https://events.humanitix.com/open-nature-gardens-weekend->

### TIMES AND ADDRESSES AT A GLANCE

#### Garden 1 & 2 & 3: Open Saturday October 14, **10am-1pm**

1. An epic native garden – without overdrawing the mortgage!  
Address: 50 Burke Circle, Cowaramup
2. A landscaped community native garden designed for wildlife, pollinators and enhancing biodiversity in your backyard.  
Address: Community Garden - 41 Clarke Rd, Margaret River
3. A lush and landscaped native and wildlife garden on Karri Loop  
Address: 13 Karri Loop, Margaret River

#### Garden 4 & 5 & 6: Open Sunday October 15, **10am-1pm**

4. A weed success story with a keen eye for design  
Address: 94 Mentelle Road, Burnside
5. Getting rid of grass for nature, beauty and wildlife  
Address: 12 Reidle Drive, Gnarabup
6. A lovely landscaped native garden incorporating Firewise principles and design elements.  
Address: 702 Redgate Road, Redgate

#### Garden 7: Open Sunday October 15, **11am-1pm**

7. A bed & breakfast set amongst remnant bush – with orchids!  
Address: 15 Loaring Place, Margaret River

## FULL PROGRAM

Welcome to the third Open Nature Gardens Weekend! Thank you so much for supporting this Nature Conservation Margaret River Region event, which is part of the For Nature Landowner Stewardship Program – aimed at helping you give nature a hand at your place! We hope you find plenty of useful info, tips, ideas, and inspiration by visiting these gardens and apply some of them on your property. You can register with our For Nature program for free at <https://www.natureconservation.org.au/for-nature/>, where you can also find a wealth of info, resources, free workshops, equipment hire and grants for conservation work.

Please read these guidelines to help your weekend go smoothly:

- Look for the garden owners wearing high-vis vests to get all the info, tips and tricks.
- Gardens are only open during the times listed on the program.
- Toilet facilities are not available so please use the loo before your visit.
- **Dogs will not be admitted to gardens.**
- You will need to drive or cycle to each garden – please carpool with friends if possible and **park on the road or verge outside each garden.**
- When parking on the verge be mindful of private property and aware of oncoming traffic – safety is paramount here.
  - Bring a water bottle to stay hydrated.
  - The event will proceed even if it rains – just bring a raincoat or umbrella!
  - Closed shoes are recommended.
  - Children under 16 are free with an accompanying adult who has a ticket.
  - Please supervise young children at all times and be aware of hazards including steps, ponds and wildlife
- Please print out your ticket or have it ready on your mobile phone to show our volunteers upon entry to each garden. Have a great weekend!
- Please use the dieback cleaning station when directed.



## SATURDAY

### Garden 1: Open Saturday October 14, 10am-1pm

#### An epic native garden – without overdrawing the mortgage!

50 Burke Circle, Cowaramup

Lisa Bell and Joel Hall's property at Cowaramup was landscaped on a shoestring budget and planted with native tube stock seedlings costing just a few dollars each. "Everyone who's building a house now is going over budget, and it seems no-one has any money left for landscaping," says Lisa. "We were pretty broke after our house build and had very little money for landscaping. But this demonstrates how you can still have a decent garden on a shoestring. For the size of our garden and what we've done, it was pretty cheap." The garden is five years old and began as little more than a degraded paddock (see our before pictures!). Although it wasn't an expensive garden, Lisa says the focus was on sustainability from the start. That included creating mounds, rock walls and a dry creek bed with the materials at hand (in most cases the spoil left over from site works) as well as using salvaged timbers. Features of the garden include a wide range of native plants and grasses, using a combination of endemic species as well as drought tolerant but non-weedy species from other parts of WA and Australia; a dry creek bed to add interest and beauty while channeling winter rains; earthen paths; and dry-stone walls. Proving a native garden can still be productive, there is an edible food forest and vegetable beds. Deciduous exotic species are deliberately used close to the house for passive solar measures and ember protection in case of bushfire. Plus, there's something for the kids – a cute cubby house from salvaged timbers and spotted gum bush poles which Joel milled and built himself! Lisa Bell now offers landscaping and gardening services through her business "Green Bird Gardens" she does fantastic work which can be seen in her own garden.



### Garden 2: Open Saturday October 14, 10am-1pm

#### A landscaped community native garden designed for wildlife, pollinators and enhancing biodiversity in your backyard.

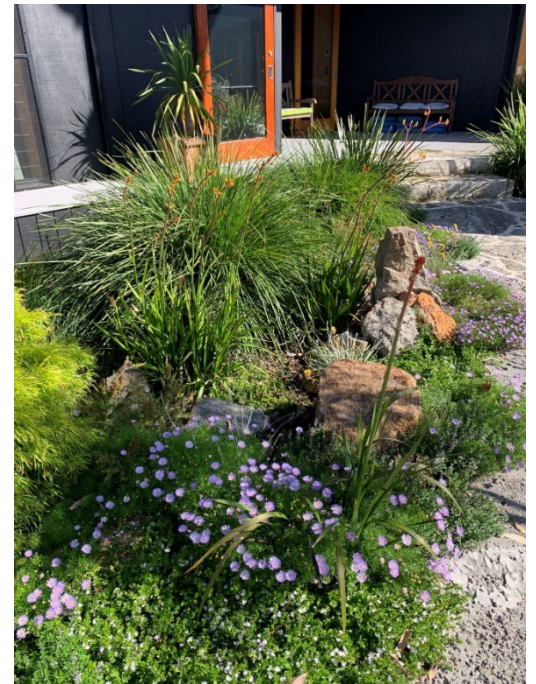
Community Garden - 41 Clarke Rd, Margaret River

Margaret River has an incredible new community native garden that is open for everyone to enjoy, while doubling as an educational space for waterwise gardening, growing natives and creating wildlife habitat. And this is a great chance to come and tour the garden while hearing from those who played a role in its creation. The tranquil, biodiverse and waterwise garden was completed by Nature Conservation earlier this year with the generous assistance of Backyard Creations and funding from the Water Corporation. Located at 41 Clarke Road, the new nature space is on the same site and compliments the Margaret River Community Garden, the Margaret River Community Pantry and the Margaret River Regional Environment Centre headquarters. "While it's still a very young garden, this space is all about showcasing our amazing local native plants and how they can be used in your garden to create visual interest and diversity of habitats," says Nature Conservation's Peta Lierich. "It promotes the 'plant local' ethos and will give you some inspiration and knowledge to put into practice in your own backyard." Backyard Creations helped out with manpower and expertise on the concept and design, site preparation and works, water management, landscaping and mulching. And Backyard Creations' director Steve Bolesta and Nina Zheleva Backyard Creations landscape architect and will be on hand to talk about the design process in more detail. You can also see the thriving 'frog bog' which was installed earlier with help from "The frog Doctor". The native plantings are easy to care for, suited to our climate, and need less water, fertiliser, pesticides and pruning than exotics, while supporting biodiversity and providing food and shelter for birds, butterflies, frogs, and other animals.



**Garden 3: Open Saturday October 14, 10am-1pm**  
**A lush and landscaped native and wildlife garden on Karri Loop**  
13 Karri Loop, Margaret River

Back by popular demand! After featuring on the Open Nature Gardens Weekend in 2021, this dream native garden is back two years later – and you'll hardly recognise it. There's been some impressive growth of a beautiful range of native species, which have filled out and created loads more habitat for the wealth of wildlife that call this large suburban property home. The garden is set on a 2000sqm block just west of Margaret River and is a prime example of how to combine a stylish modern home with a healthy native garden packed with habitat for wildlife. Salli and her husband Pascal bought this property with a fully established garden, but the couple love being the custodians and have been busy learning about the native plants and animals that call their place home. "We've got bandicoots that come by in the evening and so many birds during the day," Salli says. The home and garden are set around a large karri and two mature marri trees that were retained when the property was developed. Not only are they visually amazing but are important habitat trees. However, the couple have learned some valuable lessons about how to maintain the health of big remnant trees close to a dwelling. Ask them how! Importantly, the property is free from any major environmental weed species. A water feature provides a much-needed drink for thirsty wildlife during the hot summer months. And the plantings use a wide variety of native species, some with local provenance and others originating from further afield in WA.



## SUNDAY

**Garden 4: Open Sunday October 15, 10am-1pm**  
**A weed success story with a keen eye for design**  
94 Mentelle Rd, Burnside

A native garden set on picturesque Dallip Spring and made with a keen eye for design using new and reclaimed materials such as jetty timbers, sleepers, rusty building offcuts and homemade exposed aggregate pavers. This is also a garden that's an environmental weed success story – after three years of spraying invasive arum lilies the property has been transformed and is now almost free of arums (just have a look next door where the lilies have not been sprayed to see the difference!). They've been replaced with local native species chosen so there's year-round colour with something flowering every season, with a mix of form and structure incorporating soft foliage with strappy plants and bursts of powdery blue foliage with deep greens and gentle repetition. Owners Ryan & Stacey Harvey's garden is low maintenance, waterwise and designed to blend in with the native bushland backdrop while adding to the sense of place, providing habitat for skinks, black cockatoos, phascogales, Western Ringtail possums, heath monitors and kangaroos.



While local natives dominate the planting, there are some Australian natives from further afield and a handful of Mediterranean plants. Explore the many different pathways through the garden which meander between rock walls, past a dry creek bed and amidst new beds planted this year. A new architecturally-designed addition to the house was completed this year, and this garden is a great example of how outdoor spaces planted with local natives can complement modern buildings and soften their boundaries. It wasn't all smooth sailing though – challenges included a lack of water, lots of shade, weed infestations of arum lily and bridal creeper, and infill and drainage considerations because this property was very swampy.

**Garden 5: Open Sunday October 15, 10am-1pm**  
**Getting rid of the grass for nature, beauty and wildlife**  
Surfpoint resort – 12 Reidle Dr, Gnarabup

A success story about getting rid of lawn and turning it into an inspiring native garden that's great for people and prioritises wildlife! Local ecotourism business Cape to Cape Explorer Tours runs popular Surfpoint Resort, which has resort-style accommodation and a glamping village run by general manager Nic Chirico and her partner and groundskeeper Nick Campbell. The entire garden was done on just a \$400 budget using 200 tube stock from Geographe Landcare Nursery. The nursery's Rod Carey will be at the open garden to explain more (and don't miss seeing the slideshow on the big screen at Surfpoint of the process of creating the garden). Some of the original Mediterranean plants remain because they are existing habitats for wildlife and the aloe is fire-wise. But otherwise, natives dominate, particularly species that hikers see on the Cape to Cape Track, along with a mix of large woody sculptures and rocks for reptile, insect and pollinator habitat. "Our garden started as a blank canvas of lawn which was a water sucking wasteland," says Nic. "We had shire approval to install tent sites for Cape to Cape Explorer Tours' exclusive use, so we had to incorporate the tent pads and design a garden that could bring the magic of the Cape to Cape Track into the design, whilst creating space for our campers to feel cosy in their own space." She said flowering plants were chosen based on the six seasons of the Noongar calendar and the garden survives on rainfall and an occasional sprinkler water during consecutive weeks of hot summer weather. A swag of local bird species visit, nest and feed in the waterwise garden, as well as lizards and Western Ringtail possums. "We have had many more birds make their home in our garden than we ever could have hoped for," says Nic. "Planning out the garden and planting at the right time of year gave us a 97 per cent success rate with our tube stock planting." Gardener Nick learned about native species through connecting with cultural custodians, and he's improved soil conditions by turning the resort's food waste into compost and worm castings. He's so connected to the garden he even talks to the plants!



**Garden 6: Open Sunday October 15, 10am-1pm**  
**A FireWise stunner on Redgate**  
702 Redgate Rd, Redgate

Jocelyn Evans and partner Gerard Blair attended a Nature Conservation fire-wise gardening workshop and went home inspired to put some of the principles into practice at their place at Redgate. Now, they have their own fire-wise garden which looks beautiful and is made to enhance safety should bushfire strike. Fire-wise additions to the garden include recycled rubble instead of mulch, steel edging and use of native species co-planted with the existing Mediterranean plants. At first the couple mulched the garden but then they learned embers could smoulder in mulch and be a fire risk. "Now my focus is on letting things grow, which is why we have an eclectic mix and no real plan," says Jocelyn. "My big passion is not consuming unnecessarily, so the recycled rubble really appealed." Jocelyn prefers a hands-off approach to the garden and admits: "I don't do much to maintain our garden except pull weeds. I would let most of it go wild". Gerard on the other hand has a hands-on approach and put his design and landscaping skills to use whilst planning out this FireWise garden. "I designed the front (west side first) with the idea that it mimics the ocean with a wave in the straight edging. We loved that and wanted to carry it through with arches and semi circles on the east side. We then ran out of money and had heaps of coffee rock lying around so finished the edges using things we had here!" says Gerard. Gerard likes "how the recycled brick and coffee rock melds together to deliver a compromise in urban and natural architectural products". When Jocelyn's not in the garden, she works with the Paskeville Foundation which funds some great environmental programs in the Margaret River region including Nature Conservation's Our Patch youth education program, and she also does fantastic outdoor education programs for youth through her Right Foot Forward company.



**Garden 7: Open Sunday October 15, 11am-1pm**

**A bed 'n breakfast set amongst remnant bush – with orchids!**

Margaret River Bed & Breakfast - 15 Loaring Place, Margaret River

Remnant bush abounds on Dirk and Pam Hos' property which is home to their 4-bedroom bed and breakfast built 15 years ago. The couple wanted to retain as much of the original bush as possible, complete with a bounty of wildflowers and orchids, including the endangered Giant Spider Orchid (*Caladenia exstelsia*) plus donkey orchids and other spider orchids. This is no manicured and landscaped garden and there's not a rose or hydrangea in sight! Instead, visitors can ramble up the long driveway and walk a loop around the house, taking in the untouched bushland which the Hos' treasure. The lawn was phased out and planted with waterwise native tube stock (and sparingly watered via a greywater system). The plants now blend into the bush beyond, with loads of native grasses (such as dianella and lomandra) and groundcovers (prostrate darwinia, correas, one sided bottlebrush, grevilleas, wedding bush and native rose), dotted with climbers such as kennedia prostrata and kennedia nigricans. Some weeds are present in the garden, including a single arum lily which they keep to educate guests. But primarily this garden is designed for wildlife with dense cover and green everywhere. It's home to a cacophony or birdlife such as western whistlers, red cap parrots, New Holland honeyeaters, black cockatoos, pardalotes nesting in a jarrah hollow, and fan tailed cuckoos. Ringtail possum nest and frolic alongside skinks and bob tail lizards which are great for pest control. Dirk loves orchids and plants from his background in botany and geology, but Pam is the head gardener and she says it has brought her immense joy.



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Thanks again, we hope you had a fabulous weekend! And don't forget to register with our For Nature program for free at <https://www.natureconservation.org.au/for-nature/>, where you can also find a wealth of info, resources, free workshops, equipment hire and grants for conservation work.

For Nature is proudly supported by funding from the West Australian Government's State Natural Resources Management Program, the Water Corporation and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River.