

Guide to using the best Australian suited flowers and plants as an alternative to pesticides

Pesticide:

A pesticide can be any substance used to prevent,destroy,repel or mitigate any pest, so its best to be safe and avoid using pesticides as they may harm the pollinators and potentially harm us.

Be aware when buying plants as it is possible that some plants are treated with systemic pesticides which can last for years, some plants can even contain the Neonicotinoids in their cells after being grown from Neonicotinoid drenched seeds(these are most likely commercial crop seeds) and may transfer to nectar and pollen which could cause harm to the pollinators and the use of these pesticides are currently being reviewed by Australian and European Authorities. The latest Australian report can be found here : Neonicotinoids in Australia.

If you want to be certain that your plants do not contain harmful pesticides we recommend that you grow your own plants from seeds or purchase plants from an organic supplier.

Nature has been doing this forever, certain flowers, plants and conditions help attract predators which in turn increases the biodiversity of your garden by preying on our most common garden pests and restoring the natural balance.

Predators are great at preventing a single species from becoming dominant which includes other predators....there's always a bigger bug.

By improving the soil (natural organic methods are best) your plants will become stronger, healthier and more resistant to pests and disease, add companion plants that deter pests and benefit nearby plants as well as growing flowering plants to attract bees and pollinators are all great alternatives to pesticides.

So with all of these methods combined you can create a more vibrant ecosystem that will not only benefit you but also nature.

Keep reading to find out which are the best flowers and plants, the best predators to attract, and the most common pests that reside in our gardens. The focus on this article is for general Australian flora and fauna, due to Australia often having extreme differences in climates some species and flowering seasons may vary depending on your location.

For more info please check out our blog:

<http://blog.flowersacrossmelbourne.com.au/flowers/flowers-instead-of-pesticides/>

Common Pests and their predators:

Aphids:



Natural predators include:

- Ladybirds
- Predatory/parasitoid wasps
- Predatory/parasitoid flies
- Praying Mantis
- Lacewings
- Spiders
- True Bugs

Photo courtesy of Patrick Keogh ©

Cabbage white butterfly (caterpillar):



Natural predators include:

- Small birds
- Ladybirds
- Predatory/Parasitoid wasps
- Predatory/Parasitoid flies
- Praying Mantis
- Lacewings
- Spiders
- True Bugs
- Remove them by hand

Photo courtesy of Jon Sullivan ©

Whitefly



Photo courtesy of Jon Sullivan ©

Natural predators include:

- **Predatory/Parasitoid wasps**
- **Predatory/Parasitoid flies**
- **Praying Mantis**
- **Lacewings**
- **Spiders**
- **True Bugs**

Vacuuming them up early in the morning while its cold and they are slow (portable vacuum)

Snails and Slugs



Photo courtesy of James Niland ©

Natural predators include:

- **Birds**
 - **Lizards/Skinks**
 - **Centipedes**
 - **Frogs**
 - **Predatory beetles**
 - **Remove them by hand or set traps**
- are the most effective, predators alone will struggle to keep these guys in check.**

Scale/Mealybugs



Photo courtesy of Jon Sullivan ©

Natural predators include:

- **Predatory/Parasitoid wasps**
- **Predatory/Parasitoid flies**
- **Praying Mantis**
- **lacewings**
- **Spiders**
- **True Bugs**

Redback and Brown Widow Spiders:



Natural predators include:

- **Daddy long leg spider**
- **Black House Spiders**
- **Whitetailed Spiders**
- **Predatory wasps**
- **Remove them and egg sacks or use cordless vacuum (wear gloves, do not get bitten!).**

Tips to attract the predators:

- **Do not use pesticides (unfortunately if your neighbour uses pesticides this may affect your garden)**
- **Add a permanent source of water near your garden for predators and also other beneficial insects and creatures like bees and lizards.**
- **Keep your garden a little messy as a good layer of leave litter, organic mulch or ground cover provides predators with a good habitat.**
- **You must have a good supply pests around to attract the predators, lucky for us this is normally not an issue! studies have shown plants under attack by pests release a chemical cry for help which attracts the predatory insects.**
- **Plan your garden, canopy, middle layer, ground cover, choose shade tolerant plants under the taller plants.**
- **Plant as many herbs as possible throughout your gardens, let them bolt and go to flower as almost all herbs attract beneficial insects and their prey**
- **Plant a border of mixed native and introduced flowering plants, select plants that flower at different times throughout the year so you always have attractive flowers.**
- **Provide a range of shelters for the predators, like hollow logs, small dense shrubs, crevices under rocks and nesting boxes**

Full list of the best Flowers to attract Predators:



Marigold (*Tangetes tenuifolia*)



Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*)



Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*)



Dill (*Anethum graveolens*)



Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) **Beware that Fennel is classed as a noxious weed in Victoria so please check with your local council before planting.**



Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)



Cosmos (Cosmos bipinnatus)



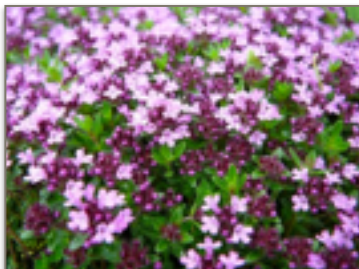
Alyssum (Aurinia saxatilis and Lobularia maritima)



Michaelmas daisies (Aster spp.)



Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis)



Thyme (Thymus spp.)



Goldenrod (Solidago canadensis .) **The import of this species has restrictions in NSW, check with your local council when planting.**

We have taken care to list species that are not considered environmental/agricultural weeds in Australia via <http://www.environment.gov.au/> unless specified.