

Waterwise Tips for Your Soil



Adding organic matter (animal manure, compost, peat, and mulch) to your soil will improve both its moisture and nutrient holding capacity. This means you can apply less water and fertiliser and it will last longer. You will also notice better plant growth.

It is particularly important to improve the top 15-20cm of your soil where the feeder roots of plants can be found.

Organic matter when added to loamy/clay soils (which we have in the Goldfields) opens it up and allows better water infiltration and moisture retention. Gypsum can also be added to open up clay soils

A good covering of mulch can save up to 70% of your gardens watering needs. However you will need to apply at least a 75mm covering of shredded vegetation mulch to all plant beds. Thicker is better, and spreading it thinly does nothing to achieve the desired results or obtain the benefits your garden requires

Prepare and clear your ground of weeds and ensure your soil is tilled over to break up soil crusts before applying mulch.

A common problem is that both sandy and loamy/clay soils can form crusts on the surface and become non-wettable. When water is applied it pools on the surface before filtering down in one or two spots leaving most of the soils dry. This is found commonly in hanging baskets and in pot plants and also can lead to dry patches in lawns.

The use of soil wetting products, tilling the soils, adding organic matter and aeration of soil will fix the problem. This will enable your lawn and garden to make the most of your watering.

Weeds should be removed from the garden as they will use moisture from the soil at the expense of the other plants and weeds make the garden look untidy.

It's worth remembering that a well-maintained garden will use less water and also compliment your property.

DESERT LOVERS

Common Name: Emu bush

Scientific Name: *Eremophila*

Description: *Eremophila* (pronounced air-rem-off-fill-a) comes from two Greek words 'Eremos' meaning *desert* and 'Phileo' meaning *loving*.

Eremophilas are very attractive native plants which are ideal for your home garden.

Flowers: They have tubular flowers which range in colour from bright yellow, pink, red, orange, white and purple and have a variety of leaf shapes and colours from grey to bright green.

Size: There are some low growing ground cover type *Eremophilas* through to quite tall bushy shrubs.

Types: A list of the different types of *Eremophilas* and their flowering times is available from the Landcare Office.

Waterwise: *Eremophilas* prefer full sun and only need to be watered once or twice a week, so are an excellent waterwise plant.

Occurrence: There are many different species of *Eremophila* in the Goldfields. At least 15 different species can be found in Karkurla Park and over 20 species can be found labeled in KBULG's Native Plants Garden in Killington Crescent, Fairways.

Availability: Visit your local nursery to see if they have any *Eremophilas* in stock or if not, they may be able to get some in for you. If you have any questions, please contact the Landcare Office.



Landcare items available from the Landcare Office

- a selection of **polo shirts** for \$20 each and **hats** for \$10 with the KBULG or Karkurla Bushland Park logo;
- original design hand-painted with **pressed wildflower cards** made by local resident Sue Burger for \$6 each;
- books on native trees and shrubs;
- a series of **local pamphlets**. The latest one is on "Common Weeds of Kalgoorlie-Boulder".

For more details on any of the articles or to find out more about the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group call or visit the Landcare Office located in Lotteries House (Cnr Wilson & MacDonald Streets, Kalgoorlie). Phone: 9091 6233 or 0418 935 498 or email: kbulg@emerge.net.au