



FREE GUIDE • GARDEN STYLES

Native, Classic or a Mix?

There's no wrong answer. A bush garden, a camellia walk, a cottage border or a bit of everything can all be beautiful, and all can be kind to wildlife.

Native

Local plants matched to your soil. Brilliant for birds, bees and lizards. Low water once settled.

Classic

Camellias, azaleas, hedges and roses. Structure, scent and winter flowers; at home in heritage streets.

A mix

Classic bones with native and perennial planting. Year-round interest and wildlife value.

Five questions to help you choose

- 1 What's your soil?** Sandstone sands suit banksias, grevilleas and everlastings. Shale clays suit camellias, azaleas and many natives.
- 2 How much sun?** Meadows and borders want full sun; camellias, azaleas and ferns like part shade.
- 3 What does your house say?** Federation and inter-war homes suit clipped hedges and flowering shrubs.
- 4 How much time?** Formal hedges and roses need regular work; a settled native or mixed garden needs less.
- 5 Bushland next door?** Leave out anything spread by berries or windblown seed.

Did you know?

Repeating the same plant three or more times along a bed makes a busy border look calm and planned.

✓ Do this

- Plant in layers: tall, middle, low
- Repeat key plants along the bed
- Deadhead near bushland
- Water by your soil, not the calendar

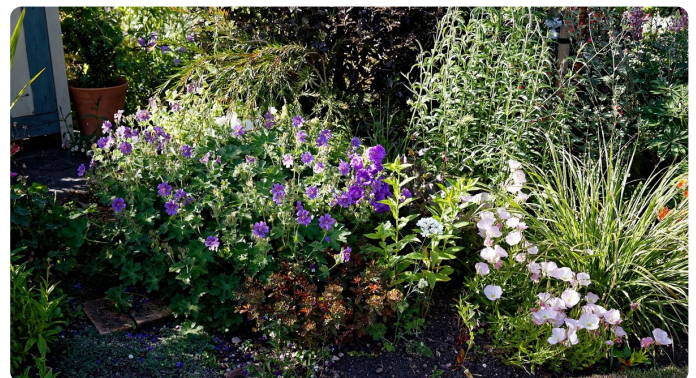
✗ Not that

- Plant agapanthus or gazania next to bush
- Use one of everything
- Feed natives and perennials the same way
- Leave the bed bare in winter

The mixed border: natives + perennials

One of my favourite looks for sunny North Shore gardens: a long bed planted in layers. **From the field**

- ✓ **Layered heights:** tall spires at the back, mounds in the middle, low plants at the front.
- ✓ **Silvery mounds** for contrast: cushion bush, coastal rosemary, common everlasting.
- ✓ **Blue grassy tussocks**, repeated along the bed.
- ✓ **Bold-leaved accents:** one or two big strappy plants.
- ✓ **Bright colour at the front edge:** annual and perennial daisies and seasonal colour.
- ✓ **Year-round structure:** tussocks, mounds and strappy leaves hold the shape in winter.



A mixed cottage border · Photo: Acabashi, CC BY-SA 4.0 (Wikimedia Commons)

Sources: Sydney Weeds Network "Garden Escapes" (2021) and Agapanthus fact sheet (2020); PlantNET (NSW Flora Online); NSW WeedWise; Aussie Bee. 'From the field' = my own professional practice.

Safe swaps for a mixed border

Agapanthus, gazania and canna are listed as garden escapes in Sydney (Sydney Weeds Network), and gazania grows wild on coastal dunes from southern Sydney to Gosford (PlantNET). These swaps give the same look:

Instead of	Try
Agapanthus <i>Agapanthus spp.</i>	Dianella (blue flax-lily), purple flag (Patersonia), or a low-seed agapanthus variety with spent stems cut off before they seed
Gazania <i>Gazania spp.</i>	Common everlasting (Chrysocephalum apiculatum), golden everlasting (Xerochrysum), native daisies (Brachyscome)
Canna <i>Canna spp.</i>	Gymea lily (Doryanthes excelsa) for a big, bold leaf; or a clump of Lomandra
Blue fescue <i>Festuca glauca</i>	Fine as it is (not on NSW weed lists I checked), or a native blue tussock: Poa (e.g. Poa labillardierei, P. poiformis) or blue Lomandra cultivars
Silver mounds <i>e.g. lavender, cotton lavender</i>	Cushion bush (Leucophyta brownii), coastal rosemary (Westringia fruticosa)
Spires at the back <i>salvias, delphiniums</i>	Most perennial salvias are fine (skip scarlet sage, Salvia coccinea); add native spikes such as Gymea lily stems or kangaroo grass seed heads

Cushion bush is native to southern Australia rather than Sydney; blue fescue is not native. Neither is on the NSW weed lists I checked. Ask your nursery which Lomandra cultivars (e.g. 'Tanika') suit your soil. Several native plectranthus make good shade-tolerant fillers. **From the field**



Blue flax-lily · Photo: Elspeth Swan, CC BY (iNaturalist)



Common everlasting · Photo: insiderelic, CC0 (iNaturalist)



Gymea lily · Photo: Tim, CC BY (iNaturalist)



Tussock grass (Poa) · Photo: Ayesha Burdett, CC BY (iNaturalist)



Cushion bush · Photo: spacegecko, CC BY (iNaturalist)



Native daisy · Photo: Elspeth Swan, CC BY (iNaturalist)



Coastal rosemary · Photo: ronavery, CC BY (iNaturalist)



Blue fescue · Photo: Sarah Adamson, CC0 (iNaturalist)

Not sure which style suits your garden?

I can look at your soil, light and house, plan a native, classic or mixed garden with weed-safe plants, and plant it at the right time of year.

Get in touch for a quote: 0481 106 188

rfhorticulture@outlook.com · or "Get a quote" on my website

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