

# Gardens for wildlife

## Patch of natural mulch

A deep mulch of leaves, bark, twigs, dead flowers and pods provides homes, shelter, breeding sites and food for a large variety of insects, beetles and worms.

These insects in turn attract insect eating wildlife such as birds, skinks, microbats, lizards and frogs.

Establish balanced layers of predator/prey wildlife in your garden and eliminate the need to use harmful poisons to protect your cherished plants from over grazing by insect pests. Insects form part of the diet for all native birds.

Even small honeyeaters eagerly devour as many as 200 insects a day. Silvereyes, blue wrens, finches, fantails and thornbills forage in the leaf litter and lower levels, feeding on insects and reducing plant pests.

The larger wattlebirds prefer to feed on larger creatures like beetles, moths and cicadas.

Skinks and lizards have a voracious appetite for snails, slugs, moths, beetles and flies, and microbats eat enormous amounts of insects each night.

Garden plants benefit from mulch because:

- **Mulch breaks down** and recycles nutrients back into the soil.
- **Mulch minimises moisture loss** at the soil surface.
- **Mulch protects roots** from temperature extremes.
- **Mulch suppresses competition** from weed growth.



Photo: Garden skink by Thomas N, Natureshare



*The local soil, leaf litter and decomposing plants matter provide all the nutrients local native plants require*

Photo: Spotted Marsh Frog by Andrew Brown, Natureshare

