

Preparing a new garden in Canberra

Coping with Canberra's soil

The first step is to have a little dig in your soil to determine its capacity for growing plants.

If you are on a slope, and your soil comprises both clay and rocks, you are lucky.

All you will need to do is shatter the rock, dig it through with a little compost or cow manure, and mulch the surface after planting.

If you have trouble digging into your soil and it all seems like too much gluggy mess, you will need to improve it. See our pamphlet on Clay soils in Canberra for more information.

Be prepared before you go shopping!

Spend time digging through your soil. Add compost, rotted leaves and other organic material, so your plants get a good start.

Unless you are planting out annual flowerbeds or a vegetable garden, **resist the temptation of bringing topsoil in and simply applying a layer on the surface.** Your plants will grow nicely until their roots reach the old ground, then they will either struggle along, stop growing or simply die!

If you need to import soil, dig it in with your existing soil so you get a consistent ½ new, ½ old mixture. This way the plants will get a good start, and will be acclimatised to the soil on your block.

After digging through your soil, add a thick layer of mulch to the surface at this point. Even if you are not intending to plant for a while, this layer will keep weeds from growing, and keep your soil in good condition.

Maintenance

Prune your shrubs from a young age. This will encourage bushiness and a sturdier plant. You can do this through the active growing months and after flowering.

When you plant, give them a good water. After this, a good soaking every 7 days (Spring/summer) or every 10 –12 days (Autumn/Winter) until they are established (about 3 years).



Plant selection

Listed below are good plants to establish your garden.

A=Australian, E=exotic

<u>Groundcovers</u>		<u>Small Shrubs up to 1.5m</u>	
<i>Grevillea lanigera</i> ‘Mt Tamboritha’	A	<i>Agapanthus</i> species	E
<i>Baccharis pillularis</i> Twin Peaks	E	<i>Coleonema</i> sp (Diosma)	E
<i>Brachycome multifida</i> Break of Day	A	<i>Correa</i> Dusky Bells	A
<i>Grevillea</i> ‘Bronze Rambler’	A	<i>Dianella tasmanica</i> (shade)	A
<i>Convulvulus sabatius</i>	E	<i>Grevillea diminuta</i>	A
Rosmarinus ‘Blue Lagoon’	E	<i>Phebalium squamulosum</i> var. <i>argenteum</i>	A
<i>Grevillea</i> Bronze Rambler	A	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i> MiniHaha	A
<i>Grevillea lanigera</i> Mt Tamboritha	A	<i>Hebe</i> sp	E
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	A	<i>Lavandula</i> sp (Lavender)	E
<i>Kunzea</i> Badja Carpet	A	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	A
<i>Correa reflexa</i> var. <i>nummulariifolia</i>	A	<i>Grevillea victoriae</i>	A
<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	A	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> (Rosemary)	E
<i>Scaevola</i> ‘Sunfan’	A		

For further information and plant selection, see our pamphlets on Hedging Plants, Screening Plants, Low Water Gardens, Climbing Plants, and Deciduous Shade Trees.

