

# PLANTING FOR KOALA HABITAT IN THE GYMPIE REGION

Everybody loves koalas. Yet, they need more than love. Maintaining and strengthening their habitat will help to ensure koalas are around for many years to come.

## PLANTING FOR KOALAS

Koalas are fussy eaters. They dine on only a few tree species, with koalas in different localities preferring different tree species, perhaps due to nutritional requirements or necessity. So when planting a koala cafeteria give them the greatest choice possible.

- 1 Provide Variety:** Select from the koala tree species suited to your local land type. 80% of the trees planted should be a selection of the primary koala food species. Complement this with 20% drawn from the secondary species and even a few rainforest species.
- 2 Connect Existing Habitat:** Connect remnant habitat so that koalas can move safely and easily.
- 3 Provide a Diverse Habitat:** In addition to the species listed, koalas are seen in other companion species and nibble on several understorey plants – even tea trees, wattles and sheoaks – and soil or termite mounds. This may provide nutritional supplement, medicine or variety. So add a diverse mix of native plants.

## BEST PLANTING PRACTICES

To grow healthy and productive koala trees follow good planting practices.

- 1 Prepare the planting site:** Kill all vegetation in 2m diameter spots; manually cultivate or deep-rip to speed up initial rate of growth.
- 2 Choose the species:** Pick species suitable for your Land Type and minimise others unless you know they grow well.
- 3 Water:** Puddle in plants and water heavily about a fortnight later if no significant rain falls.
- 4 Look after young plants:** Manage weeds to reduce competition. Maintain a weed-free zone around each plant to a radius of 1.5m for the first year or so by mulching or with careful, shielded spraying on a calm day. Use mesh tree guards if livestock are present.
- 5 Provide nutritional supplements:** Fertilise plants with N:P:K + Trace Elements including Boron, Zinc, Copper & Chromium, which could greatly benefit koala nutrition and boost initial tree growth. Add soil structure improvers such as gypsum, lime or dolomite on heavy soils depending on the soil pH.
- 6 Manage the planting to achieve deep vigorous crowns:** Initially plant trees closely (up to 1,000 stems per hectare). Selectively thin to about 100 -250 spha (6m to 10m spaces between plants) by years 10 or 12 depending on the dryness of the area. Keep the trees that are vigorous and/or show signs that they are used by koalas.

## USEFUL KOALA CONTACTS

### GET HELP IF YOU FIND AN INJURED, SICK OR DEAD KOALA:

**ANARRRA** (Australian Native Animal Rescue  
Rehabilitation and Release Association Inc)  
5484 9111 or **5484 9220**

**KOALA RESCUE QUEENSLAND**  
0423 618 740 or 0431 300 729

**WILDCARE**  
24 hour Emergency Hotline:  
**5527 2444**

### REPORT KOALA SIGHTINGS:

Download the form to record a sighting from [www.mrccc.org.au](http://www.mrccc.org.au)  
This will be recorded on the State Government Wildnet database.

In addition enter your koala sighting on to [www.koalatracker.com](http://www.koalatracker.com)

### INFORMATION ON KOALAS IN THE GYMPIE REGION:

Facebook Search: **Koala Action Group Gympie region**



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## THE TREE SPECIES SUITED TO YOUR LOCAL LAND TYPE

The koala species that are best chosen for your property will depend on the underlying soil, geology and location - your 'land type'. The list of koala trees that follows is based on the ten simplified Gympie Land Types (GLT) as defined by Logan et al (2010) in "Grazing land types of the Gympie District".

These are:

- 1 Blue gum flats (Forest Red Gum, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*)
- 2 Flooded gum (Rose Gum, *E. grandis*) and fringing rainforest on creek flats
- 3 Rainforests on krasnozems (well-structured, red clay soils)
- 4 Gympie messmate (*E. cloeziana*) and tall open forest on phyllites ('polished shales')
- 5 Open forest on shales
- 6 Open forest on volcanics and serpentinites (igneous rocks of a very broad spectrum)
- 7 Open forests on coastal sandstones
- 8 Sandy coastal plains
- 9 Gum-topped box (*E. moluccana*) and spotted gum (*Corymbia citriodora* subsp. *variegata*) on duplex soils (pale soils with highly erodible clay subsoils - salt-created)
- 10 Spotted gum ridges

## Koala habitat trees

Many of these plants will be seasonally available in Gympie & District Landcare's nursery. For further advice, speak to a nursery helper.

### PRIMARY KOALA SPECIES

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ideal for Land Type	Comments
Bancroft's red gum	<i>E. bancroftii</i>	8	Heavy coastal soils
Grey gum	<i>E. propinqua</i>	2,4,5	
Grey/gum-topped box	<i>E. moluccana</i>	5,9	
Large-fruited grey gum	<i>E. major</i>	4,5,10	
Narrow-leaved red ironbark	<i>E. crebra</i>	5,9,10	Ridges & dry areas
Qld blue/Forest red gum	<i>E. tereticornis</i>	1,2,3,5	Versatile species
Swamp mahogany	<i>E. robusta</i>	8	Coastal only
Tallowwood	<i>E. microcorys</i>	2,3,4,5	Better soils

### SECONDARY KOALA SPECIES

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ideal for Land Type	Comments
Blackbutt	<i>E. pilularis</i>	6,7	Specialist sites
Broad-leaved red ironbark	<i>E. fibrosa</i>	9,10	Ridge tops usually
Brush box	<i>L. confertus</i>	2,4,5,6	Versatile species
Grey ironbark	<i>E. siderophloia</i>	1,4,5	
Qld peppermint	<i>E. exserta</i>	5,6,9,10	Ridges & silty soils
Paper-barked tea tree	<i>M. quinquenervia</i>	5,8	Waterlogged sites
Red mahogany/stringybark	<i>E. resinifera</i>	5,8	Coastal only
Rose/flooded gum	<i>E. grandis</i>	2,3	Only near water
Scribbly gum	<i>E. racemosa</i>	7,8	Coastal only
Silver-leaved ironbark	<i>E. melanophloia</i>	6,9	Usually heavy soils
Spotted gum	<i>C. citriodora</i> ssp. <i>variegata</i>	5,10	Versatile species
Sydney blue gum	<i>E. saligna</i>	3,4	Only high altitude

### NON-LOCAL SPECIES

Common Name	Scientific Name	Ideal for Land Type	Comments
Dunn's white gum	<i>E. dunnii</i>	2,3,4	Better soils
Lemon-scented spotted gum	<i>C. citriodora</i> ssp. <i>citriodora</i>	5,10	Versatile species
Poplar gum	<i>E. platyphylla</i>	1-10	Possums eat leaves

For scientific information see research papers by A. Melzer and R. Cristescu.

Grazing Land Types of the Gympie District: <http://goo.gl/Y3kXme>

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Gympie & District Landcare operate a community nursery and biocontrol raising facility. The site is attended Wednesday to Friday and Saturday mornings.



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