



## Growing Indigenous Plants

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges the contribution of the Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Cooperative in compiling this information.

### Why plant Indigenous species?

Native plants have adapted to the local environment over tens of thousands of years and are suited to the soil, rainfall and topography.

- They require less pesticides, fertilisers and maintenance
- They are habitat forming: attracting indigenous birds, butterflies other animals. They help restore wildlife corridors.
- They are varied, beautiful and many are drought tolerant. Others are water and wetland plants.
- The plants can be used to great effect in large and difficult areas such as school yards and creek frontages.

Seedlings used by the Royal Botanic Gardens Education programs are supplied by Victorian Indigenous Nursery Cooperative (VINC)

For more information about growing plants indigenous to Melbourne visit [www.vinc.net.au](http://www.vinc.net.au)



Photo: R. Helton  
An established indigenous garden bed

***Arthropodium strictum* (Family – Liliaceae)**

**Chocolate Lily**

Perennial 30cm x 30cm. Long grass-like leaves. Scented mauve purple flowers Sep - Dec. Foliage dies back during summer if very dry, reshoots in autumn. Flowering may be extended by removal of stems before seed head forms.

**Prefers:** Open position, full sun in moist well drained soil. Drought tolerant.

**Tip:** Can also be planted in rock gardens and pots.

Most effective when planted in groups.

**Indigenous People's Connection:** Tubers, taste watery and bittersweet raw. Dig up after the foliage has withered. The numerous root tubers are not starchy, in Victoria they were cooked before eating.



Photo source: VINC

***Austrodanthonia racemosa* (Family – Poaceae)**

**Clustered Wallaby Grass**

Tufted perennial 20cm x 30cm. Slender flowers with pale green spikelets. Flowers during spring and summer, wind pollinated.

**Prefers:** Full sun to part shade, dry to moist well drained soils.

Very adaptable, tolerating a wide range of conditions.

**Wildlife connection:** The seeds are bird attracting.



Photo: N. Sumner, VINC

***Chrysocephalum semipapposum***

**Clustered Everlasting**

Clump forming perennial 50cm x 40cm. Perennial wildflower, golden clusters of button-like everlasting flowers Sep-Jan, grey foliage. Aromatic herb.

**Prefers:** Full sun, dry soil. Very hardy and drought tolerant. Growth during spring. Also grows in semi-dappled shade.

**Tip:** Prune old flower heads and stems off at ground level in winter to promote dense growth.

**Wildlife connection:** Provides nectar for butterflies including Painted Lady caterpillars.



Photo source: VINC

***Daviesia leptophylla* (Family – Fabaceae)**

**Narrow-leaf Bitter Pea**

Open, erect shrub 1.5m x 1m. Showy, yellow and red flowers, Sep-Jan.

**Prefers:** Full sun/part shade, well-drained.

**Wildlife connection:** Good habitat, butterfly attracting. Flowers are a pollen and excellent nectar source for various native insects and birds.

Photo source: J. Hard, VINC



***Leptorhynchos squamatus* (Family – Asteraceae)**

**Scaly Buttons**

Delicate perennial daisy, 25 x 40cm. Bright yellow flowers Sep-Jan on slender wiry stems. Often dies back to rootstock in summer, re-appearing after autumn rains.

**Prefers:** Full sun and partial shade, moist soil. Drought tolerant once established.

**Tip:** Most attractive when planted in groups.

**Wildlife connection:** Provides food for butterflies.



***Linum marginale* (Family – Linaceae)**

**Native (wild) flax**

Delicate perennial to 50 x 40cm. Bright blue cup shaped flowers with dark blue veins Sep-Mar. Blue green leaves. Dies back after flowering to a thick tuberous rootstock.

**Prefers:** Full sun/occasional shade, moist soil, open position. Will often seed in the garden. Hardy, drought tolerant once established.

**Indigenous peoples' connection:** Leaves contain fibre to make string for fishing nets, bags, baskets and mats. Small seeds are edible and ground in large quantities.

Photo source: VINC



**Wildlife connection:** Important habitat and food source for native animals. Butterfly attracting.

***Poa labillardieri* (Family- Poaceae)**

**Common Tussock Grass**

Large dense tussock grass, 80cm x 80cm. Long green leaves, drying to silvery grey varying from fine to coarse, depending on soil moisture and situation. Green purplish flowers Oct-Mar.

**Prefers:** Full sun/part shade, open position. Grows well in most soils but prefers some moisture during summer.

**Tip:** Rejuvenate old tussocks by severe trimming or burning, water heavily to ensure new growth. Very hardy, drought tolerant.

Good for rock gardens, groundcover, beside ponds.

**Indigenous peoples' connection:** Poa grass was used by Aborigines as a fibre source to make string for nets, bags, baskets and mats.



**Wildlife connection:** Provides seed for small birds and food for butterfly caterpillars. A favourite food of the common wombat.

***Poa morrisii* (Family – Poaceae)**

**Velvet Tussock Grass**

Soft tussock to 30cm high. Perennial grass with fine velvety blue-green leaves. Flowers Oct-Jan.

**Prefers:** Full sun to part-shade, semi-moist, well-drained soil.

**Tip:** Rejuvenate old tussocks by severe trimming or burning, water heavily to ensure new growth. Most effective as groundcover, or in rock gardens, under trees, and when planted in groups.

**Wildlife connection:** Provides seed for small birds and food for butterfly caterpillars.



***Poa sieberiana* (Family- Poaceae)**

**Grey Tussock Grass**

Perennial, erect tussock, velvety grey to blue-green fine leaves, 30cm H x 30cm W. Purplish grass flower head, flowers Oct-Jan.

**Prefers:** Grows well in most conditions but prefers dry well-drained soils and part-shade. Grows well under established trees, accepts full sun. Rejuvenate old tussocks by severe trimming or burning, water heavily to ensure new growth.

Drought tolerant and cinnamon fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamoni*) resistant.

**Wildlife connection:** Provides seed for small birds and food for butterfly caterpillars.

A favourite food of the common wombat.



***Xerochrysum viscosum* (Family - Asteraceae)**

**Sticky Everlasting**

Biennial wildflower, 50cm H x 30cm W. Large papery golden flowers

Aug-Apr. Dies back during summer and reshoots in autumn.

**Prefers:** Full sun, well-drained soil.

**Wildlife connection:** Provides both food for caterpillars and nectar for butterflies. Provides food for insect eating birds.



For more information about growing Australian plants visit [www.anbg.gov.au](http://www.anbg.gov.au)