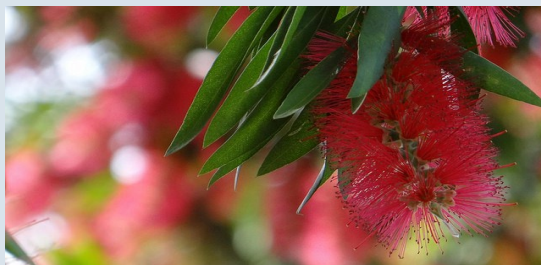




GARDENING GUIDE FOR THE GEOGRAPHE BAY REGION



Does your soil do this? **DON'T DESPAIR!**



Soils in the Geographe Bay area are notoriously dry, sandy and lacking in nutrients. This means gardening can sometimes be a chore rather than a joy, and can mean you feel in summer you are fighting a losing battle to keep things alive.

The City of Busselton in conjunction with the South West Catchments Council and Geocatch are working on water quality issues in the area and are keen to promote beautiful gardens and healthier waterways in the City by empowering you this summer to;

- **ADD CLAY**
- **KNOW YOUR FERTILISER**
- **MULCH LIKE MAD**



ADD CLAY

Add Bentonite clay granules to any garden bed areas. Clay improves the soil itself, so your plants will grow stronger and more resilient to survive and thrive on less water and long hot dry summers.



This is because clay **HOLDS NUTRIENTS** and **WATER** around plant roots and can change the pH of your soil to help plants grow better.

Clay is a permanent solution, once added; you **NEVER NEED TO ADD AGAIN.**

Products like Sand to Soil, Sand Remedy, Coastal Cure, or just Bentonite clay bags are great for adding in to any existing garden beds. Add as much as you can and watch your plants flourish, and your water bills plummet. You can pick clay up at any nursery or stock feeds.

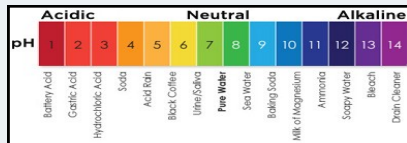


KNOW YOUR FERTILISER

Think twice about whether you need fertiliser at all.

Check for nutrient deficiency and soil pH before fertilising, often there are issues with the soil rather than nutrients. For example, the addition of clay by itself can solve your garden woes, as well as adding good composts, these organic materials add nutrients that your plants can easily digest.

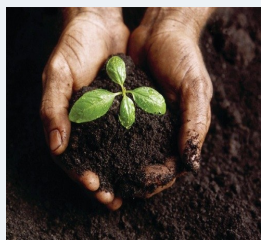
Test your soil's pH – low or high pH can be the cause of nutrient deficiencies. You can fix these with other soil additives, often clay is one of the solutions.



In sandy soils, fertiliser washes into drains and moves through the wetlands, rivers and to the ocean. They make our waterways fill with toxic green algae and contribute to fish kills, so using less makes sense.

If you do choose to use a fertiliser,

- Look for low N, P K types that are SLOW RELEASE and Swan River Trust approved. If you aren't sure what is a good brand, then consider using compost, or organic Rock Dust. Lawns love it.
- Apply in Spring or Autumn at the recommended rate, it saves on costs and keeps our rivers free of algae.
- Remember manures are fertilisers too, so only apply what you need, (too much can burn plants) and remember to dig it into the soil so plant roots benefit.



MULCH LIKE MAD

This time of year soils need coverage so plant roots don't burn. Mulch also suppresses weeds, adds organic matter and protects precious plant roots and stops water evaporating away.

Good mulches are made of broken down plant material from tree lopping. This mulch has no additives and is cheap to buy. Mulch will save you water and weeding time, so put it on at a rate of 7cm thick to make it work best for you.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

The City of Busselton has fantastic guides on gardening, native verges and water use so you can protect our waterways and garden better. Click on the links below:

- Information on nature verges. Removing some of your lawn and considering some local plants can help save water and fertiliser use.
- Nature Verge booklet– landscaping with a difference! Water wise plants are diverse, beautiful and can handle the climate here without needing a lot of fertiliser. They also provide valuable habitat for some of our iconic species such as critically

endangered ringtail possums and Red Tail Black cockatoo.

- Are you new to town? We can provide you with free street trees. Just ask! Contact City of Busselton for application form.
- Water Sensitive Urban Design guidelines These guidelines can help you use water in your garden better and help improve water quality around our waterways and ocean.
- LOOK OUT FOR OUR NEW PROGRAMS. NEW EVENTS are planned for 2015. We have guest presenters and workshops coming soon to encourage you to enjoy your garden and get more from it with up to date advice and tips.

The South West Catchment's Council

[Homeriverocean](#) Is a great link on how you can 'Save the Crabs, then eat them' this year through great garden tips and becoming a fertiliser expert. Click on the link and have a look on how you can get involved.

Geocatch

Geocatch also has some information for you on gardens and fertiliser, check out the [Bay OK Garden Guide](#) for more information.

For more information contact the Environmental Planning staff at the City of Busselton. Happy Gardening!



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