

# Creating a waterwise tropical garden



The information in this brochure is tailored to the North West region. This covers the Kimberley and Pilbara region, from Onslow, Paraburdoo and Newman upwards.

Developing a tropical garden involves a careful selection of mostly bold foliaged plants to provide shade, shelter and colour throughout the year. Many plants from the tropics need a lot of water on a regular basis but there are some plants from the tropics and other plants with a tropical look that can be used to create a tropical garden that doesn't need a lot of water. What's right for your garden will depend on the size and style of your garden and the overall effect you want to achieve. For your tropical garden to be successful and rewarding it is essential to carry out soil improvement prior to planting, mulch after planting, and install an efficient irrigation system.

## SOIL IMPROVEMENT

Soil improvement should be carried out prior to planting. The best soil improver is organic matter. It dramatically increases the moisture and nutrient holding capacity of sandy soil and encourages the all important soil micro fauna that are vital for healthy plant growth.

Improving the soil is a simple process:

- Dig a hole 25 to 30cm deep and, at a minimum, 3 times the width of the pot. The wider the better.
- Replace half the soil with organic matter.
- Mix thoroughly and replace in the hole in a shallow saucer shape.
- Take the plant out of the pot and place in the bottom of the saucer.
- Water in well, applying a wetting agent if necessary.
- Organic matter can be purchased as compost, soil improver or soil conditioner.

In addition to organic matter, the following can also be incorporated into the soil at planting time:

- Bentonite clay (sandy soils only).
- Gypsum (reactive clay soils only).
- Spongelite and zeolite (all soil types).
- Water storage polymers sold as granules or in sealed bags.



When looking for products for outside the home, keep your eye out for the Smart Approved WaterMark label (Australia's water conservation label, identifying and promoting products and services which help save water).



## MULCHING

Bare soil encourages weeds, wastes water and increases stress upon plants. A waterwise mulch spread to a depth of 5 to 10cm will reduce evaporation from the soil surface. It will also prevent erosion, reduce weeds, reduce temperature fluctuation in the soil, slowly break down over time to feed the soil and improve the overall appearance of the garden. A good waterwise mulch is one that has large, chunky pieces that hold little, if any, water. Always keep mulch just clear of stems and trunks and be prepared to spread more mulch over the surface as the material breaks down to feed the soil.

## IRRIGATION

The most efficient irrigation systems are those that deliver the right amount of water to the right place, at the right time, with minimal wastage. The simplest and most efficient system available to the home gardener is known variously as sub-irrigation, integrated dripper or in-line dripper. It is simple to install and delivers water directly to the root system with little or no evaporative loss. For further information and expert assistance with irrigation, contact either your local Waterwise Garden Irrigator or Waterwise Irrigation Design Shop. To find your closest Waterwise Specialist check on [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au) or call the Waterwise Helpline on 13 10 39.

## HYDROZONING





Hydrozoning is grouping plants with similar water needs together in an effort to be more water efficient. This is one of the most important tools to conserve water in the garden, and help save you money.

For information on your watering days visit our website.

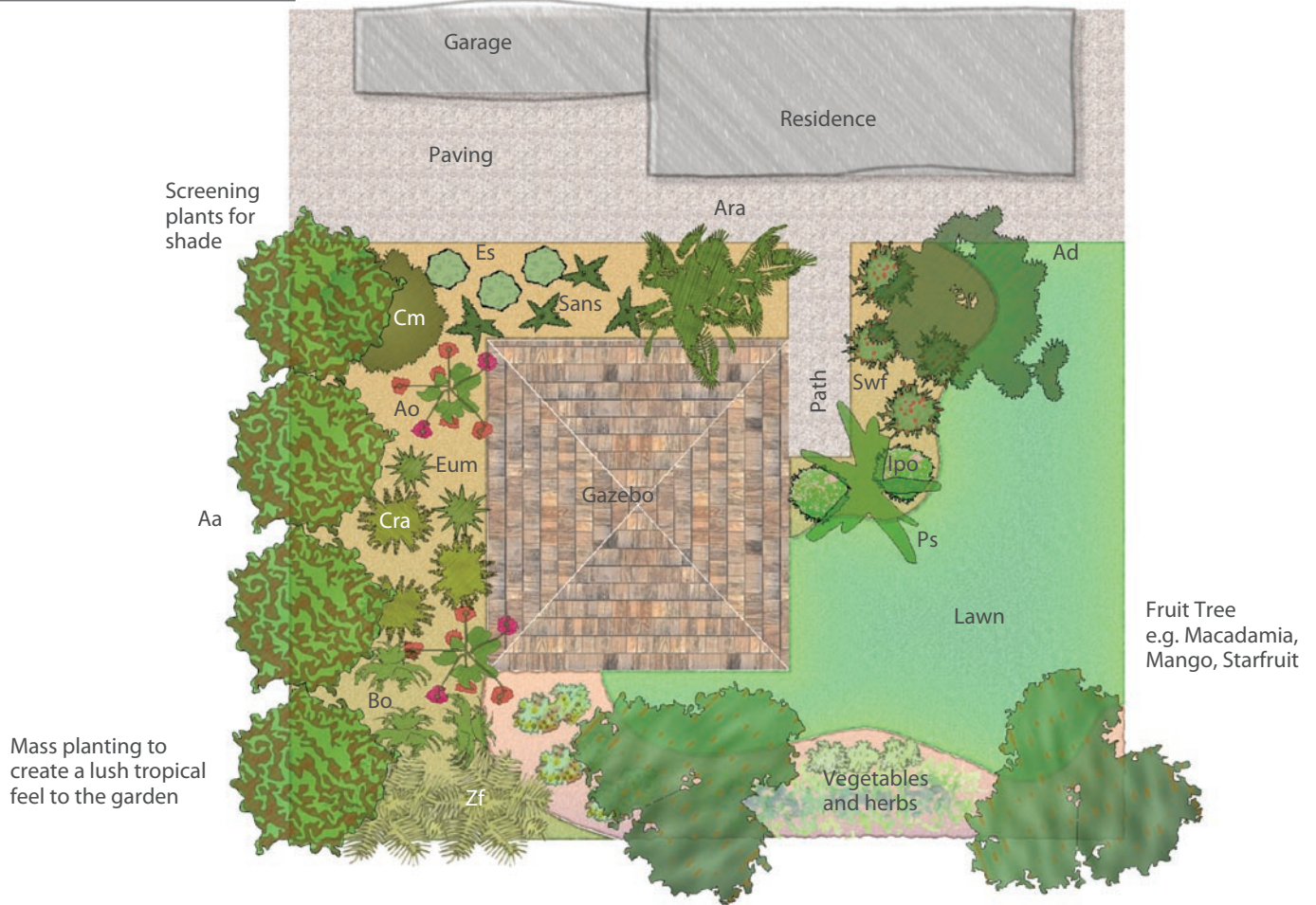
There are many waterwise plants available that are suitable for your region.

Your local Waterwise Garden Centres can assist with plant selection and water needs. To find your closest Waterwise Garden Centre, check on [www.watercorporation.com.au](http://www.watercorporation.com.au) or call the Waterwise Helpline on 13 10 39.

## LEGEND

-  Hydrozone 1
-  Hydrozone 2
-  Hydrozone 3 (including vegetables, herbs & fruit trees)
-  Lawn

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Designs provided by Josh Byrne & Associates  
([www.joshbyrne.com.au](http://www.joshbyrne.com.au))

## PLANT SPECIES

ABRV	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	ABRV	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME
<b>GRASSES/STRAPPY LEAF PLANTS</b>			<b>GROUND COVERS</b>		
Cra	Giant Crinum Lily	<i>Crinum asiaticum</i>	Es	Echeveria setosa	<i>Echeveria setosa</i>
Sans	Mother in Laws Tongue	<i>Sansevieria trifasciata</i>	Ipo	Beach Morning Glory	<i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i>
<b>SHRUBS</b>			Swf	Sturts Desert Pea	<i>Swainsona formosa*</i>
Ef	Burra	<i>Eremophila fraseri*<sup>Δ</sup></i>	<b>TREES</b>		
Aa	Jacob's Coat	<i>Acalypha amentacea</i>	Ad	Elephant Ear Wattle	<i>Acacia dunnii*</i>
Ao	Desert Rose or Impala Lily	<i>Adenium obesum</i>	Adg	Boab	<i>Adansonia gregorii*<sup>Δ</sup></i>
Cm	Natal Plum	<i>Carissa macrocarpa</i>	Ara	Alexander Palm	<i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i>
Eum	Crown of Thorns	<i>Euphorbia milii</i>	Ps	Screw Palm	<i>Pandanus spiralis</i>
Zf	Cardboard Palm	<i>Zamia furfuracea</i>	* These species are endemic to WA		
Bo	Fern	<i>Blechnum orientale*</i>	<sup>Δ</sup> Optional Species (not included in illustration)		

Remember, that by investing in waterwise planning and preparation of your garden now, you will reap the savings in the cost of water in the future. For more waterwise plants go to the Waterwise Plants for WA database on [watercorporation.com.au](http://watercorporation.com.au) under 'Being Waterwise'.