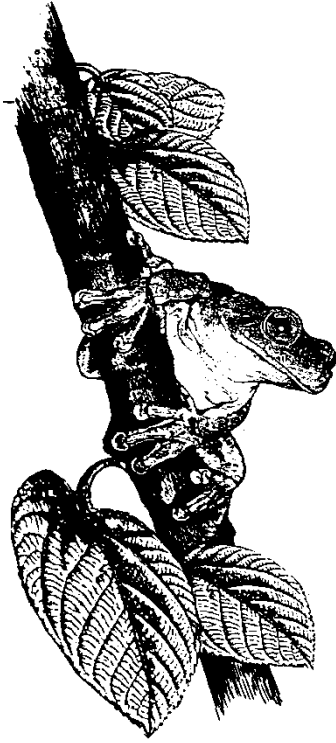




# FROG GARDENING



## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN RECLAIMING HABITAT FOR LOCAL FROGS.

*The Victorian Frog Group web site [www.frogs.org.au](http://www.frogs.org.au) should help you determine which species occur in your area and the associated habitat.*

Australia is home to over 200 species of frogs that are remarkably varied in their habitat requirements. Some need permanent water, others prefer temporary pools, while others require streams or rivers in which to lay their eggs. There are even some species that reproduce in the absence of waterbodies!

## FROG BREEDING SITES

Many people already have frogs frequenting their garden but in the absence of suitable breeding sites reproduction will not occur (males will not be heard calling to females). The provision of a breeding site helps to keep frogs in your garden while helping to sustain the local population.

## THE FROG BOG

If you are creating a frog friendly habitat it is best to use an area that is partly shaded. This helps to keep the area moist year round and allow tadpoles access to cooler waters. It is also necessary to allow access to light as this encourages the growth of algae and other plants that provide part of a tadpole's diet. However, leaves from the surrounding trees and emergent vegetation will fall into the water and decompose providing food for tadpoles. Do not place ponds under trees with toxic leaves. Check gardening books or nurseries for advice on species to avoid.

With most water bodies it is best to provide extensive shallow areas. Many frog species use these areas to call for mates or to deposit eggs. Shallows also provide refuge for tadpoles. Shallow water allows tadpoles to bask in the sunlight increasing their body temperature and speeding up their development. Many frogs species easily drown in steep sided ponds and swimming pools. It is best for the banks to slope gently to allow small frogs to escape.

## SHELTER

One breeding site may support a population of frogs that inhabits several gardens! Encourage your neighbours to provide habitat even if they are not willing to create a breeding site.

## FOOD FOR URBAN FROGS

Frogs like flooded areas where the plants on the bottom begin to die and decompose. This provides food for fungi and bacteria that in turn provide food for tadpoles to eat.



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## PLANTS

Avoid using floating aquatic plants like duckweed (*Lemna*) and water fern (*Azolla*) as these quickly encrust the surface and deprive tadpoles of oxygen. They also block out the light that is needed for algal growth. Shelter can be provided for adult frogs by placing rocks, leaf litter, shrubs, tussocks, thick ground hugging plants and logs (including hollow ones and some with loose bark) around a frog bog. These can be decorative as well as functional. The moist substrate beneath logs and rocks may be a valuable shelter for frogs during dry periods.

## WATCH OUT

Do not release Mosquito Fish (*Gambusia affinis*) into any water body! In some parts of Australia it is illegal to be in possession of this foreign pest. Although very small this fish will eat vast quantities of tadpoles. Cats and foxes should be kept out of your frog friendly habitat as they eat frogs. Natural predators such as tortoise and water birds may also cause a problem to small populations of tadpoles. It is illegal in some states to catch frogs. However, if you set up your frog friendly area the frogs will come to you.

## ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO SUPPORT FROGS

Calling, the prelude to breeding can be noisy. If it is not practical to have frogs calling in your garden try to encourage re-vegetation programs and efforts in local parklands for frog friendly habitats to be established. Your local school may even like to create a frog-friendly habitat.

## LIST OF SUITABLE PLANT SPECIES FOR A FROG BOG

### Aquatic

*Eleocharis acuta*  
*Marsilia drummondii*  
*Mimulus repens*  
*Myriophyllum crispatum*  
*Ottelia ovalifolia*  
*Ranunculus inundatus*  
*Triglochin procera*  
*Villarsia reniformis*



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## Grass / small plants

*Agrostis aemula*  
*Asperula scoparia*  
*Brachyscome basaltica*  
*Brachyscome diversifolia*  
*Craspedia chrysantha*  
*Craspedia glauca*  
*Helichrysum sp. aff. acuminatum*  
*Mentha diemenica*  
*Ranunculus lappaceus*  
*Veronica gracilis*

## Sedge

*Carex appressa*  
*Carex gaudichaudiana*  
*Carex tasmanica*  
*Cyperus gunnii*  
*Cyperus minus*  
*Juncus pallidis*  
*Juncus procerus*  
*Restio tetraphyllus*  
*Schoenoplectus validus*

## Shrub / Tree

*Bursaria spinosa*  
*Kunzea ericoides*  
*Leptospermum lanigerum*  
*Lythrum salicaria*  
*Melaleuca ericifolia*  
*Melaleuca squarrosa*  
*Olearia glandulosa*