

MERCURY

Quick SMART

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GEOFF BAILEY, who owns a native plant nursery in Jamberoo, argues the case for planting Australian.

Australians love the feeling of being connected to nature. We are essentially an outdoor culture. We want to look out our windows and see green. We want to have plants that attract birds and provide habitat for wildlife.

I remember reading a book written by Don Dunstan some years ago about the importance of Australia developing its own culture and not relying on the culture that was brought here. He felt we needed to develop our own sense of identity through our architecture, food, sense of place and way of doing things.



We have come a long way since Dunstan's book. In a landscaping sense this is now happening.

For example, parklands developed as part of new housing subdivisions require the planting out of native species as opposed to exotic species. A feature of the new Barangaroo project on Sydney Harbour is the re-establishment of the foreshore with, to a large degree, vegetation that was there when Captain Cook first sailed into the harbour. When this project is finished it will be uniquely Australian and one that Australians will feel connected with and proud of. It will give you a strong sense of "being Australian".

If Barangaroo was being developed 20 years ago, would the landscape plan reflect what I have just described or would it had been centred around plane trees, rose gardens and camellia hedges?

We want to be connected to our land and feel proud that it is uniquely Australian. Native plants do all this.