



The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia

Australian Native Plants for use in Finch Aviaries

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The reason for restricting this article to native plants is simply that Australian finches show a marked preference for them, as evidenced by large numbers of red-browed and double-barré finches resident in the Canberra Botanic Gardens. These species rarely turn up in the suburbs where most of the plantings tend to be of exotics. As a planted aviary is, of necessity, outside and Australian birds make up a great majority of the finches that can be kept outside in Canberra, it would seem pointless to consider the exotic species of plants.

The plants suggested have been selected primarily for the protection afforded the birds due to the dense foliage. Finches are by nature wary of wide open spaces and will appreciate being provided with the conditions that they have evolved to survive and breed in.

Some of the plants are included because of their ability, when flowering, to produce an abundance of nectar which will entice insects in the cage - saving you much trouble when breeding time comes around. Although finches are seed eaters, at this time of the year, insects are a vital ingredient in the parent birds' diet in raising the young. It is suggested that species of plants are selected such that flowering coincides with the breeding season of your birds.

Finally the list has been limited to plants reaching a height no greater than two metres and those species which have proved hardy in Canberra conditions. All can be seen growing in the Canberra Botanic Gardens and are easily obtained through local nurseries dealing in native plants.

The addition of coarse river sand to the soil will ensure good drainage for your plants and with regular watering; one hundred percent success could be reasonably expected with the species listed. All respond favourably to regular pruning and this practice is recommended to keep the plants from becoming "leggy".

Planting for Quail

It is the opinion of many fanciers that quail, with their spontaneous and erratic flights, prove to be nothing more than a nuisance and a danger to their finches. However, with the provision of tussocks of native grasses, the quail live peacefully alongside the other species, emerging only to feed, and scurrying back into the safety of their grass when startled. Another dimension is introduced to the aviary when the quail form their network of tunnels and begin nesting amongst the tussocks.

PLANT	FLOWERING	HEIGHT X WIDTH (in metres)
Banksia ericifolia (N)	Large orange/red brushes - autumn/winter	2 x 2 (w/pruning)
Banksia robur (N)	Bronze/green brushes - winter/spring	2 x 2
Banksia spinulosa (N)	Large yellow brushes - winter	2 x 2
Callistermon "Captain Cook" (N)	Red bottle brushes - autumn/spring	1.5 x 2
Callistermon sieberli (N)	Pale yellow bottle brushes - spring/summer	2 x 2
Callistermon subulatus (N)	Deep red bottle brushes - spring/summer	1.5 x 1.5
Correa reflexa (N)	Red bells, tipped yellow - winter	1 x 1
Grevillea baueri (N)	Deep pink spider flowers - spring	1.5 x 1.5
Grevillea dimorpha (N)	Scarlet spider flowers - spring	1.5 x 1.5
Grevillea rosmarinifolia (N)	Red, pink spider flowers - autumn/spring	1.5 x 2
Hakea sericea (N)	Pink, white spider type flower - late winter/spring	2 x 2
Indigophera australis	Pink pea flowers - spring	1.5 x 1.5
Leptospermum rotundifolium	Large pale pink flowers - spring/summer (All leptospermums / ti-trees are favourite nesting sites for finches)	2 x 2
Leptospermum jumperina	White flowers - spring/summer	1 x 1.5
Leptospermum squarosum	Large pink flowers - autumn	1.5 x 2
Melaleuca alenca fulgens (N)	Scarlett bottle brushes, gold tipped - spring	2 x 2
Melaleuca pulchella	Mauve claw flowers - summer/autumn	1 x 1
Melaleuca thymifolia	Mauve claw flowers - summer/autumn	1 x 1
Melaleuca violacea	Violet flowers - summer	0.5 x 0.5
Melaleuca wilsonii	Pink/mauve tufts and long stem - spring	1 x 2

(N) = produces large amounts of nectar

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