



Alice Springs Airport

LANDSCAPING STRATEGY

FOR REDUCING THE RISK OF FIRE

REDUCE RISK OF FIRE

Efforts to reduce the fire risk around airport buildings and facilities need to be examined on a case-by-case basis, depending on other requirements incumbent on the area. For instance areas close to the runway should be discouraged from utilising plant species that attract birds or create a breeding ground for insects.

Landscaping in areas near to the Stuart highway may have a contrasting requirement for large bushy species to reduce the visibility of buildings. Table 1 lists a small selection of local native species that do not readily catch fire and many species occur within the various genera that could be suitable.

The list is far from exhaustive. In a hot fire, all plant species will burn! Table 2 provides a brief summary of

species to avoid due to their fire “accelerating” potential. Essentially, all species that contain oils and resins should be avoided in landscaping around buildings.

For maximum fire threat reduction a ‘zero vegetation landscaping technique’ is recommended. This includes using rock features, but may include herbaceous plants with a prostrate (ground cover) growing habit. Using sand mulch (free of weed contaminants especially Mexican Poppy seed) is also recommended as an alternative to traditional mulches of a more flammable nature. This method reduces the biomass available for ignition to a minimum.

*Bird Attractant code: S = Significant, M = Moderate; NS = Not significantly, L = Likely, U = Unknown.

Table 1: Native plant species recommended for their low flammability or a low level of flammable biomass.

HABIT	SPECIES	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT (m)	*BIRD ATTRACTANT?	DESCRIPTION
TREES	Acacia aneura	Mulga	Small Tree or Large Shrub (4-10)	M	Fairly quick growing, grey green, with narrow leaves. Young trees are of a conical shape, branching into an open canopy when mature. Flowers are yellow and grow in cylindrical spikes.
	Acacia coriacea	Dogwood, Wirewood	Small tree (3)	M	Hardy but slow growing. Prefers sand plain soils.
	Acacia estrophiolata	Ironwood	Large Tree (5-15)	M	Slow growing flood plain species. Leaves hang down like a willow. Globular yellow flower heads, strong timber.
	Capparis mitchellii	Wild Orange	Small tree (3-4)	M	Slow growing.
	Eremophila bignoniiflora	Gooramura, River Anjee, Creek Wilga,	Large shrub/ small tree (3)	L	White flowers. Good windbreak/hedge. Emus eat the fruit.
	Ficus platypoda	Rock Fig, Wild Fig	Small tree (5)	M	Edible fruit, smooth shiny green leaves, a wasp species often frequents this tree.
	Hakea divericata	Corkwood	Small tree (4 -7)	M	Slow growing. Yellow flower spikes, tough, thick bark.
	Santalum acuminatum	Quandong, Native Peach	Shrub/small tree (3)	M	Difficult to establish (requires a host), edible fruit.

HABIT	SPECIES	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT (m)	*BIRD ATTRACTANT?	DESCRIPTION
SHRUBS	Acacia kempeana	Witchetty	Large Shrub (3-4)	M	Fairly quick growing, with broad, grey green leaves and yellow flower spikes.
	Acacia ligulata	Dune Wattle, Umbrella Bush	Large shrub (3)	M	Hardy, reliable, quick growing. Good for stabilising sand dune areas.
	Atriplex nummularia	Old man salt bush	Large shrub (3)	M, Galahs	Hardy, dense, responds to pruning. Good windbreak. Grows best in the sandy loams of saline flood plains.
	Capparis spinosa var. nummularia	Wild Passionfruit	Low shrub (1-2)	NS	Grows quickly in flood plains, Strong attractant to ants. Frost sensitive with attractive flowers.
	Eremophila duttonii	Harlequin Fuchsia Bush	Large shrub (1.5-2)	NS	Prefers saline flood plain soils. Bell shaped flowers, red on the outside and yellow inside. Drought tolerant with grey/green leaves.
	Eremophila maculata var. brevifolia	Spotted fuchsia, Lipstick bush.	Small shrub (1)	NS	Small red spotted prolific flowers (early spring). Green shrub.
	Eremophila polyclada	Flowering lignum	Small shrub (1-1.5)	NS	Grows near claypans. Large white spotted flowers in Summer.
	Eremophila most species		Large shrubs	Emus, honeyeaters	Hardy, reliable.
	Frankenia cordata	Salty-heath, Sea-heath	Small shrub (0.5)	NS	Perennial plant forming small hummocks. Pink flowers. Prefers saline flood plains.
	Goodenia grandiflora	Mountain primrose	Small shrub (0.5)	L	Purple/white flowers.
	Gossypium sturtii	Sturts Desert Rose	Small shrub (1-2)	NS	Purple tube flowers, large leaves, hardy. Not long lived
	Hibiscus species	Hibiscus	Small shrub	NS	Quick growing low shrub with large purple or white tube flowers. Grows well in disturbed sandier soils.
	Maireana aphylla	Cottonbush	Low shrub (1)	NS	Low growing saltbush. Many Maireana species would be suitable.
	Ptilotus species	Pussytails	Low shrubs	NS	Many species would be appropriate.
	Radyera farragei	Bush Hibiscus	Low shrub (1-1.5)	NS	Large purple tube flowers, quick growing flood plain species.
	Senna artemisioides subsp artemisioides	Silver Cassia	Large shrubs (1.5)	NS	Bright yellow, sweet scented, flowers. Small bird attractant.
	Senna artemisioides subsp fillifolia	Desert Cassia	Small shrub (1.5)	NS	Bright yellow, sweet scented, flowers. Small bird attractant. Highly variable in form. Grows well after rain.
	Senna artemisioides subsp helmsii	Blunt leaf Cassia	Small shrub (1.5)	NS	Strongly scented, yellow, cuplike, flowers. Pale grey, hairy leaves.
	Senna artemisioides subsp oligophylla	Oval leaf Cassia	Small shrub (1.5)	NS	Strongly scented flowers (5 petals/10 stamens). Leaves are oval shaped and blue-green in colour.
	Senna artemisioides subsp sturtii	Dense Cassia or Sturt's Cassia	Small shrub (1.5)	Y	Similar to Grey Cassia, scented yellow flowers.
Solanum species	Wild tomatoes	Small shrubs	NS	Wide variety of species, very hardy, short or long lived.	
Stemodia viscosa	Sticky blue rod, Pinty-pinty	Small shrub (0.3)	U	Purple flowered, aromatic herb (mint scent).	

HABIT	SPECIES	COMMON NAME	HEIGHT (m)	*BIRD ATTRACTANT?	DESCRIPTION
GROUND COVER	Enchylaena tomentosa	Ruby salt bush, Sturts Saltbush, Plum Puddings, Berry Cottonbush	Ground cover (0.5)	M, parrots, honeyeaters	Hardy/drought resistant. Produces red berries, grows in saline floodplains.
	Eremophila ovata	Kirchauff Ranges Fuchsia	Ground cover (0.5)	NS	Lilac coloured flower, hairy fruit. Grows quickly and flowers for a long time but not long lived.
	Ipomoea costata	Rock Morning Glory, potato vine, cow vine	Ground cover/ vine (1)	NS	Fast growing, edible tuber, large trumpet shaped flower, requires deep sand.
	Sarcostemma viminalis subsp Australe	Caustic vine, Pencil Caustic, Milk Bush, Milk Vine	Ground cover climber (1-3)	NS	Slow growing cylindrical branches with no leaves and a milky sap, which is caustic.
	Swainsona formosa	Sturt's desert pea	Ground cover (0.2)	NS	Likes dry conditions. Bright red flowers. Many species would be appropriate decorative ground cover. Relatively short-lived.

Note: Only some of the above species are likely to be available from commercial nurseries in Alice Springs. However Alice Springs Desert Park, Greening Australia, Tangentyere Nursery or Olive Pink Growers Group may grow seedlings on contract.

Further information:

Olive pink Botanic Gardens

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PO Box 8644 Alice Springs
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Fax: 89535522

Greening Australia (NT) Inc

7 Parsons St
Alice Springs
Tel: 8953 882

Table 2: Species to avoid

SPECIES/TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Eucalyptus spp. (Family Myrtaceae)	Eucalyptus (and all species in the family Myrtaceae) have a high oil content in their leaves. Dead leaves burn well and a hot fire will set living trees alight.
Callistemon pauciflora	Bottle Brush (Family Myrtaceae). Oil glands in the leaves mean that this plant can become a fire hazard.
Callitris glaucophylla	White Cypress Pine. Burns well.
Grasses including Spinifex	Burn well when dry.
Various	Any species producing large amounts of leaf litter. Avoid non native and deciduous species in particular.