



Plants provide escape cover for birds

- Put low growing species near the water's edge with occasional tall trees overhanging the water and some gaps to provide waterfowl escape cover.
- Choose suitable trees and shrubs to blend in with cover species. Choose a variety of plants that will fruit at different times of the year and provide a continuous food source.
- Don't plant trees and shrubs on the dam wall. Roots will become seepage lanes and weaken the dam.
- Don't plant pampas grass as it provides ideal shelter for possums, rats, stoats, ferrets and weasels.



NEW ZEALAND
GAME BIRD
HABITAT TRUST

Wetland Planting



Fish & Game New Zealand

Level 1

2 Jarden Mile

Ngauranga

PO Box 13 141

Wellington

New Zealand

Telephone 04-499 4767

Fax 04-499 4768

www.fishandgame.org.nz



Key Points

What you plant in your wetland is a vital factor in its appearance and effectiveness. Before you start, think about the best kinds of plants for your objectives.

If you want to develop a game bird habitat, a mix of native and exotic plants that will provide food and shelter is best. If a natural wetland is the aim, then only native plants should be used.

Before you begin, consult with people who know about plants, such as a horticultural expert, your local nursery, Fish & Game Council, regional council, Department of Conservation, Landcare or botanical groups.

Fence off an area at least the same size as the pond. Make sure the fence is strong enough to keep stock out so that trees can survive in the early stages.

Avoid planting so as to shade the wetland, especially at its northern end. Too much shade will prevent the growth of food plants.

Trees and shrubs are best planted in late autumn to take advantage of the first rains. This will allow roots to be well established before the dry summer season. During the first two years, keep plants free of weeds and grass and stake if necessary.

Don't overdo the planting. Leave room for birds to fly in and out. Plant shrubs and grasses close to the water's edge and most tall trees further back. An exception can be a weeping willow or two overhanging the water.

What to Plant

Following are some examples of the kinds of trees and shrubs that will enhance your wetland. It is by no means exhaustive and you should read and consult further to make sure you get the best results.

Shelter: alders, coprosma and pittosporum species, and olearia. Kahikatea, cabbage tree, mahoe, ribbonwood, manuka and flax.

Low cover: at the water's edge – carex, long grasses, rushes. Raupo is not recommended because of its ability to invade open water.

Amenity, food and cover: oaks (pin, turkey, English, sessile, holm, red and willow), maples, berry trees (cherries, white mulberry, chokeberry, hackberry), ash, dogwoods.

Damp areas: swamp cypress, black tupelo, kahikatea.

Note that many native species also provide food for birds.

Planting guidelines

The wetland should be attractive to you. Planning will help decide the mix of trees: tall and short, deciduous and evergreen, flowering and non-flowering and colour for all seasons. Diversity planting will lead to a more natural, botanically healthy and attractive wetland.

Identify your priorities – shelter, cover, food or amenity. Plant trees and shrubs suited to your location and if possible choose locally sourced plants. They will do better in the local conditions and ensure your pond fits well into its environment.

- Plant a mix of trees and shrubs in groups or clumps, rather than a ring around the pond edge that will impede flight paths.
- Make sure plantings conform to natural features. Plant along gullies and ridges, not across them.

