

LIZARDS



Photo by Melina McDowell

HOW TO ATTRACT LIZARDS TO YOUR GARDEN

Australia has over 650 native reptile species – more than most other continents and many are only found in Australia. Many goannas, skinks, dragons, lizards and geckos spend most of their time on the ground but regularly climb trees mainly to look for food and to find safe resting places. Some are almost entirely tree dwelling.

Many lizard species will climb trees to seek protection under loose dry bark or in hollow branches or in cracks in the wood. Several species of goanna are skilled climbers and use trees to escape harm and to hunt for food such as eggs and insects. Other lizards, like some of the geckos, live beneath pieces of loose bark and go out to forage for spiders, insects and other small animals on the trunk, branches and leaves. Some snakes, such as pythons, are tree dwellers and seldom come down to the ground except to move to a new tree or to lay their eggs.

Once shown on the two cent coin, the frill-neck lizard is common in well wooded parts of northern Australia and grows to about 900mm long. It spends much time on the ground but climbs trees skillfully to run from predators such as goannas and dingoes, to bask on a tree trunk in the almost horizontal rays of the early morning sun, and to find food such as insects. To provide a safe habitat for baby frill-necked lizards, all you need in your garden are plants with thin branches. Frillys like to look for food from behind the safety of a branch. And they always choose a branch that they can glance from side to side. As they grow bigger, they move to an appropriately sized branch.