

COASTAL GARDENING

Living close to the sea has many lifestyle advantages. Cool winds in Summer and Warm breezes in the cooler Winter months make living on the coast rewarding. Gardens on the coast need a little more planning and attention to plant choice.

The main challenges the coast presents are the salt laden wind, sand blast and usually poor sandy soils which are often quite alkaline due to limestone in these areas.

Before pulling out any existing vegetation to "open up views of the ocean" It would be wiser to pause and reflect on what nature has provided to withstand these conditions. Where possible extend planting with the same and similar seaside type species. All Waldecks Nurseries offer indigenous species, and other attractive coast tolerant trees, shrubs and ground covers. With forethought your garden can be charming and colourful and attractive to birds.

WIND SCREENS

If the site is very exposed the first need will be for shelter. Screens made from trees and shrubs are more effective than solid walls and fences. Vegetation will filter the wind, breaking it up into many small eddies, reducing its speed for a distance of at least ten times the height of the screen. On the other hand a solid wall merely redirects the wind for a short distance and then it bounces down again at its original speed.

You will need more than one line of plants for an efficient screen. Using three lines, the centre should be composed of trees. At about 100 m to 150 m from water's edge On the windward side plant a continuous belt of one of the

following VERY tolerant plants

Melaleuca nesophylla(1.5 m apart)

Grevillea olivaceae

Metrosideros exelsa green form (1.5.m apart)

Coprosma repens (1 m apart)

Westringia fruticosa (1 m apart)

The central line can be:

Callitris preissli (3 m apart) or Tamarix aphylla

(4 m apart) or Eucalyptus platypus 'heterophylla' (3 m apart) or Lagunaria petersonii(3 m apart)

On the lee side you either repeat the windward line or introduce a few others such as:

Pittosporum crassifolium (1.5m apart)

Melaleuca huegelii (1.2 m apart)

Plagnus pungens (1.2 m apart)

Bougainvillea glabra (1.5 m apart)

Rosmarinus officinalis (70 cm apart)

Raphiolepis delacourei(1 m apart)

At 150 m to 300 m from the water's edge, and at greater distances, select from the list of plants on page 5 & 6.

ESTABLISHING PLANTS AT THE COAST

Provided this soil is well drained (usually it is) the main need will be to incorporate lots of organic matter into the soil. This will help to hold moisture and nutrients - most coastal sands are very deficient in plant food.

Do not use more than normally recommended amounts of fertiliser. Concentrate more on improving the physical nature of the soil. In addition to digging in organic material, apply it to the surface as a thick mulch - to 10 cm depth.. Do this three or four times a year with mulching compost or wood chips. Besides mulching between the young plants in a wind screen it is a good idea also to treat the soil for 1 m either side of the screen where winds are very strong. Hold the mulch in position by covering it with wire mesh layed flat and pegged down, or plant a suitable groundcover.

WATERING

When you plant provide 10 litres of water per plant, form a 50 cm wide dished "saucer" around each plant to hold this water. You can water over the mulch. Subsequently in warm weather at least 5 litres per plant twice a week; 10 litres would be better if possible. In cooler weather it's still best to continue watering, but not as frequently. Do not give a light sprinkling each day this encourages roots to grow on the surface where they suffer severely in hot weather.. It helps young plants to spray the foliage if there has been a salt laden wind blowing.

SAND BLAST

Strong winds pick up grains of sand and pepper soft growth. New shoots can be killed and leaves cut. Obviously it is worse on the windward side of exposed new plantings - that is, on the ocean side. You can reduce this damage to new plants by deep mulching. Alternatively lay and fix cut branches in and around plants or if that is not possible make a "fence" with shadecloth. For a few individual plants slip a strong cardboard box or bottomless bucket around the plant until they are established.

LEANING

Trees and shrubs develop a lean away from prevailing wind; this is unavoidable. You will see that they develop a sturdy compact habit too. Just plant seaside plants closer together so that they will give mutual protection to each other and stake them for the first year or so. It is very important to use loose ties with a soft material which allows some movement of the stem, so that this will develop greater strength in later years than if a rigid "splint" type stake were fixed.

PLANT SELECTION OF COASTAL AREAS **COLOUR**

Melaleuca nesophilia; purple honey myrtle
Metrosideros excelsa (M.tomentosa);
N.Z.Christmas tree (3-4 m shrub)
Gazania; low growing daisy type perennial.
Carpobrutus; pig face trailing ground cover..

LOW GROWING/GROUND COVERS

Arctotis stoechadifolia; african daisy
Agapanthus africanus, lily of the Nile
Cineraria maritima; dusty miller
Juniperus conferta; shore juniper
Hemiandia pungens -snake bush

SMALL SHRUBS

Acacia Lasiocarpa; large flowered prickly moses
Argyranthemum frutescens; marguerite daisy
Coprosma kirkil; trailing mirror bush
Correa alba; white correa
Hebe -several species; veronica
Lavendula dentata; french lavender
Pimelea ferruginea; rice flower
Rosmarinus officinalis; rosemary
Santolina chamaecyparissus;
Calothamnus quadrifidus - one sided bottle brush.

MEDIUM SHRUBS

Coprosma repens; NZ. mirror bush
Elaeagnus pungens
Melaleuca Heugelii - chenille honey myrtle
Olearia axillare; beach sage
Raphiolepis delacourei; R.indica; Indian hawthorn
Agava Attenuata Sucsint
Templeona Retusa - Cockies Tongue

TREES

Acacia Saligna; golden wattle
Araucaria heterophylla; Norfolk Island pine
Banksia integrifolia; coastal banksia
Casuarina glauca, C.obesa; swamp sheoak
Casuarina equisetifolia; beach sheoak
Casuarina stricta (Allocasuarina verticillata); weeping sheoak
Tamarix aphylla; Athel tree
Eucalyptus platypus 'heterophylla' coastal moort
Lagunaria patersoni; Norfolk Island Hibiscus
Olea europaea; olive.
Callitris preissii; Rostnest cypress,
Agonis flexuosa; peppermint,
Melaleuca lanceolata; Rostnest Island tree