



A garden for frogs



Tasmania has eleven species of native frogs, including tree frogs, marsh frogs, froglets and toadlets. They range in size from small froglets which are usually less than 3 centimetres long to the large, beautifully coloured Green and Gold frog (*Litoria raniformis*) which can reach 10 centimetres. Although the different species use a wide variety of habitats, they all need moist environments to live and breed.

Breeding sites

Frogs have different needs depending on the stage in their breeding cycle. Many require clean flowing or still water in which to lay their eggs while others will lay eggs amongst moist vegetation which will be flooded during winter. Some species prefer shaded water while others, such as the green and gold frog, like to bask in the sun and will move away from areas where too much vegetation shades the water.

After breeding

After breeding, frogs leave the water and will live almost anywhere provided there's suitable habitat. They are extremely sensitive to drying out. To prevent this several species bury themselves deep in the ground, others hide in rock piles, under bark or at the base of sags, rushes or sedges. The high moisture content of logs makes them especially important as habitat and as vital refuges during and after fires.

Food for frogs

Tadpoles feed mostly on the aquatic algae they scrape of the surfaces of rocks or weeds with their rasping mouthparts. They also occasionally feed by scavenging on dead animals. Adult frogs are carnivorous and will eat almost anything of a suitable size that is moving. Smaller species eat a

variety of insects and other invertebrates including ants, mosquitoes, beetles and mites. Large frogs eat larger insects, lizards, other frogs and sometimes baby snakes.

Frogs are an important part of the food chain, and are themselves food for a variety of animals including snakes, birds and native fish.

Creating a frog friendly garden

Frogs need much more than just water. Changing an area that is already important post-breeding habitat into a wetland may be detrimental, not just to frogs, but to other species as well. A small sunken pool, even an old bath, will provide enough water where several species can breed. Fill a portion of a sunken bath or similar with rocks so that frogs have an escape route out of the water. Moist areas around a breeding site, provided by logs, sags and ground cover plants are important hiding places for frogs and they are also important habitat for the insects and other species that form the major part of their diets.

Frogs travel long distances from their breeding sites and will soon move into an area as long as there is suitable habitat. There is no need to collect tadpoles from another source and doing so risks the importation of disease.

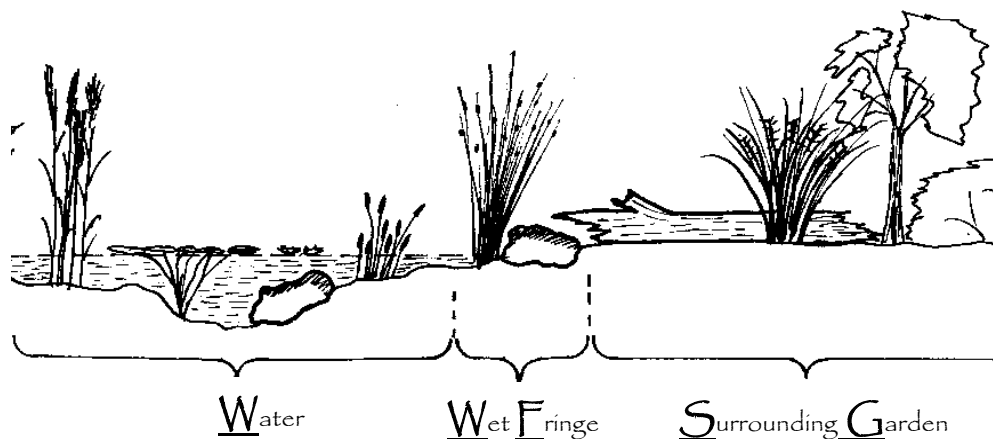
Frogs are sensitive

Eggs, tadpoles and adult frogs are extremely sensitive to pollutants. A thin porous membrane surrounds the eggs and the skins of tadpoles and adults are also thin and permeable. This makes them especially sensitive to pesticides, fertilisers, salinity and other pollutants.

Compiled by Sarah Lloyd

happy frog gardening

Frog garden



To create a frog friendly garden

- mix a good range of plants, rocks, logs and a dash of water.
- **Water** – a place to lay eggs and for tadpoles to live, feeding on algae growing on rocks, logs and plants.
- The **Wet Fringe** – a place to shelter, feed on insects, hang out, do some vigorous calling and meet the opposite sex.
- The **Surrounding Garden** – a place to move when things get crowded around the pond, do some more calling, hide out while things are tough (dry/hot), explore the world and migrate to the neighbours' garden.

There are of course a multitude of plants suitable for the **Surrounding Garden** but some rocks, logs, dense low growing tufted plants e.g. *Lomandra*, *Diplarrena*, *Dianella* and ferns should be part of it.

Some plants suitable for the **Wet Fringe** and **Water**

Common Name	Name	Zone
Cord Rushes	<i>Baloskion</i> spp.	WF, W
Water Ferns	<i>Blechnum</i> spp.	WF
Sedges	<i>Carex</i> spp.	WF, W
Leafy Flatsedge	<i>Cyperus lucidus</i>	WF, W
Kidney Weed	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	WF
Western Flag Iris	<i>Diplarrena latifolia</i>	WF
Cutting Grass	<i>Gabnia grandis</i>	WF
Creeping Raspwort	<i>Gonocarpus micranthus</i>	WF
Lanky Goodenia	<i>Goodenia elongata</i>	WF
Heart Leaved Gunnera	<i>Gunnera cordifolia</i>	WF
Button Grass	<i>Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus</i>	WF
Swamp Clubsedge	<i>Isolepis inundata</i>	W
Knobby Clubsedge	<i>Ficinia nodosa (Isolepis nodosa)</i>	WF
Rushes	<i>Juncus</i> spp.	WF
Creeping Lobelia	<i>Lobelia anceps</i>	WF
Swamp Mazus	<i>Mazus pumilio</i>	WF
Variable Watermilfoil	<i>Myriophyllum variifolium</i>	W
White Purslane	<i>Neopaxia australasica</i>	W, WF
Floating Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton tricarinatus</i>	W
Matted Pratia	<i>Pratia pedunculata</i>	WF
Tunbridge Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus prasinus</i>	WF
River Club Rush	<i>Schoenoplectus vallisus</i>	W
Shiny Swamp Mat	<i>Selliera radicans</i>	WF
Water Ribbons	<i>Triglochin procerum</i>	W
Marsh Flower	<i>Villarsia reniformis</i>	W