



Plant list for waterways in the Noosa Shire

Healthy waterways play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance and supporting a thriving community.

When healthy, waterways can be biodiversity hotspots, support flood resilience, store carbon, and recycle nutrients. They also provide clean drinking water, recreational opportunities, and contribute to agricultural productivity and sustainable fishing industries in our region.

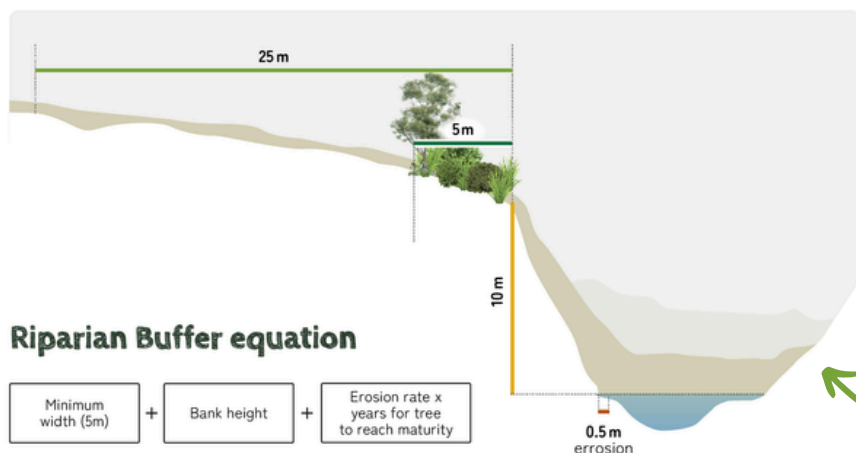
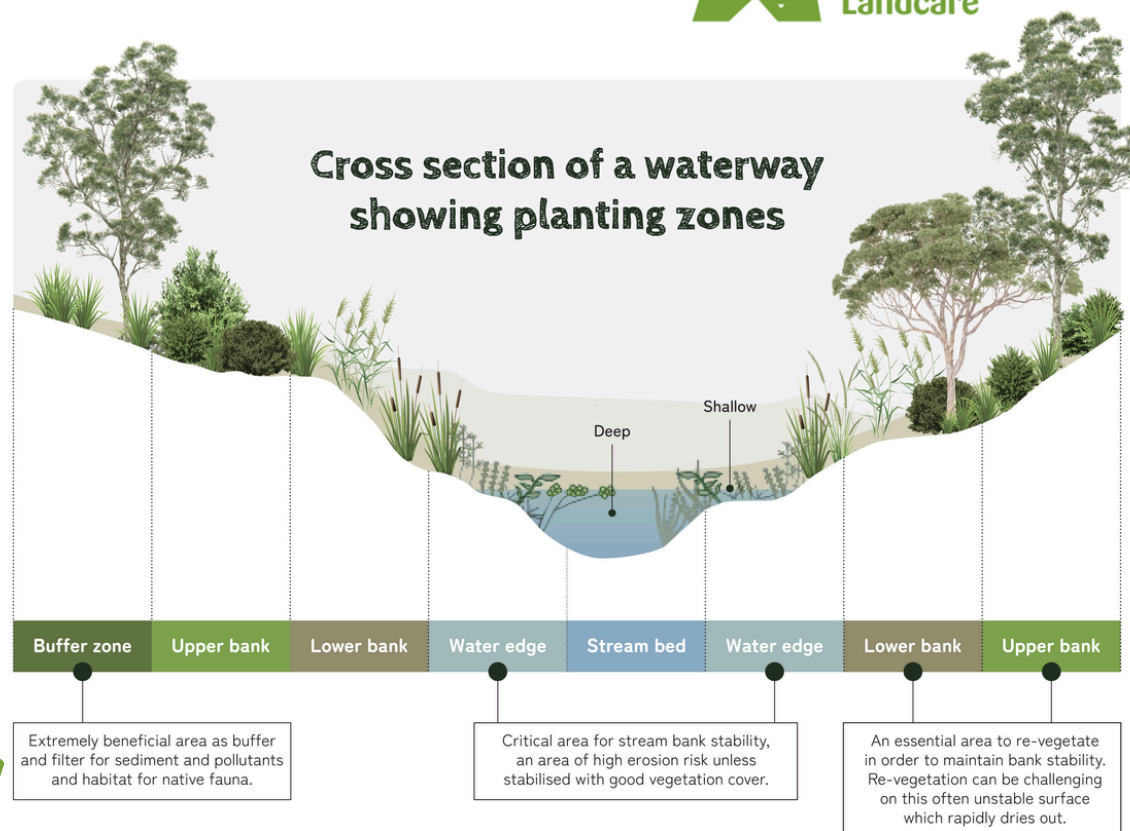
Along degraded waterways revegetation can be a useful tool to help reinstate bank stability, shade and biodiversity to a waterway system.

Selecting appropriate species is a vital step in any revegetation project. Waterway vegetation (also known as **riparian vegetation**) grows in the wetted (riparian) zone along waterway edges and is comprised of a diverse mix of native vegetation, with grasses, sedges, shrubs and trees forming complex layers of vegetation.

This list is a guide to common plants suitable for the different zones of a waterway – water edge, lower and upper bank. This plant list is for freshwater river and creek systems.



Noosa & District
Landcare



Example

$$5\text{m (width)} + 10\text{m (height)} + 0.5\text{m} \times 20\text{yrs till maturity} = 25\text{m riparian buffer from the bank crest.}$$

How wide should your riparian buffer be?

The appropriate width of a riparian buffer can vary depending on the size of the waterway, the steepness of its banks, and the extent of erosion.

Use this simple calculation to determine planting width from the bank crest onto the floodplain:

5m + vertical height of the bank (from toe to bank crest).

Where active erosion is occurring use the equation to the left to factor in the time trees take to mature and effectively hold steep bank material.

Where reducing sediment and nutrient runoff into the stream from adjacent landuse is also a goal, it's recommended to include a grassed filter strip in addition to the riparian zone.

Waterway Plant list

The species listed are common, locally occurring plants that are widely available through community native nurseries or can be reliably propagated.

The dots shown across the three planting zones indicate the areas where each species is most suitable, helping you achieve the best establishment and greatest benefit to your waterway.

			Planting Zone		
Botanical name	Common name	Description	Water edge	Lower	Upper
Groundcover species					
<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tussock Sedge	Perennial clumping grass-like plant to 1 meter. On water edge.	●		
<i>Juncus usitatus</i>	Common rush	Freshwater rhizomatous rush to 1.2 meters. On water edge – requires consistent wet ground.	●		
<i>Lomandra hystrix</i>	Matrush	Clumping grass 1.5 meters high. Can be inundated.	●	●	
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny-headed mat-rush	Clumping grass 1.5 meters high.			●
<i>Alpinia caerulea</i>	Native Ginger	A multi-stemmed, clumping herb with upright arching stems to 3 meters.		●	●
Vine species					
<i>Pandorea pandorana</i>	Wonga Vine	Vigorous, woody climber that will ascend into the rainforest canopy.		●	●
<i>Parastolochia praevenosa</i>	Richmond Birdwing Butterfly vine	Large and vigorous woody climber – Host plant for the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly			●
<i>Parsonsia straminea</i>	Monkey Rope	Vigorous, woody climber.	●	●	●
<i>Smilax australis</i>	Barbwire vine	Wiry climber with prickles.	●	●	●
<i>Cissus antarctica</i>	Kangaroo Vine	Robust and vigorous woody, climbing vine.	●	●	●



Lomandra longifolia



Carex appressa



Cissus antarctica



Neolitsea dealbata



Ficus coronata



Casuarina cunninghamii

			Planting Zone		
Botanical name	Common name	Description	Water edge	Lower	Upper
Shrub/Small tree species					
<i>Casuarina cunninghamii</i>	River Sheoak	Medium tree 10 to 30 meters. Can tolerate drought, and seasonal waterlogging.	●	●	
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	Shrub or small tree, 3-10 meters tall.		●	●
<i>Acacia disparrima</i>	Hickory Wattle	Shrub or small tree, 3-10 meters tall.		●	●
<i>Tristaniopsis laurina</i>	Water Gum	Rainforest tree ±8 metres. Hardy in diverse conditions including wet soils.	●	●	
<i>Melaleuca viminalis</i>	Weeping bottlebrush	Large shrub or small tree 6+ meters. Hardy and adaptable.	●	●	
<i>Ficus coronata</i>	Sandpaper fig	Small rainforest tree 8 to 10 meters.	●	●	
<i>Ficus fraseri</i>	Sandpaper fig	Small to medium rainforest tree 6 to 15 meters.		●	●
<i>Syzygium australe</i>	Scrub Cherry	Small rainforest tree ± 6 meters. Fast growing, hardy and adaptable, prefers moist well-drained soils in full to part sun.	●	●	
<i>Polyscias elegans</i>	Celerywood	Small rainforest tree to 15 meters. Fast growing in sun or shade.		●	●
<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>	Native Frangapani	Large shrub to small rainforest tree 5 - 15 meters.		●	●
<i>Alphitonia excelsa</i>	Soap tree	Tree to 10-25 meters in height.		●	●
<i>Neolitsea dealbata</i>	Bolly Gum	Small rainforest understory tree to 10 meters.		●	●
<i>Alchornea ilicifolia</i>	Native Holly	Shrub or small tree to 6 meters.		●	●

			Planting Zone		
Botanical name	Common name	Description	Water edge	Lower	Upper
Tree species					
<i>Waterhousea floribunda</i>	Weeping lily pillly	Small to medium rainforest tree >10 meters. Well drained soil with adequate moisture; part shade to full sun.	●	●	
<i>Grevillea robusta</i>	Silky Oak	Medium sized tree to 25m. Prefers deep moist alluvial soil but is hardy in a variety of soils.		●	●
<i>Harpullia pendula</i>	Tulipwood	Small to medium rainforest tree to 15 meters. Hardy and adaptable.		●	●
<i>Aphananthe philippinensis</i>	Rough leaved elm	Grow up to 20-25 meters in height. The tree is adaptable to different soil types but prefers well-drained, alluvial soils.		●	●
<i>Castanospermum australe</i>	Blackbean	Tall rainforest tree >20m. Prefers well-drained alluvial soil but is clay tolerant; hardy in sun or partial shade.		●	●
<i>Ficus macrophylla</i>	Moreton Bay Fig	Large standing fig >20m. Hardy. Not suitable next to fences.			●
<i>Commersonia bartramia</i>	Brown Kurrajong	Small pioneer rainforest tree ± 9 meters. Hardy and fast growing.		●	●
<i>Glochidion sumatranum</i>	Cheese Tree	Small to medium-sized rainforest tree to 15 meters. Prefers fertile moist soil; sun or part shade.		●	●
<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i>	Queensland Blue Gum	Tall tree >20m.			●
<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i>	Flooded Gum	Tall tree >20m.		●	●
<i>Araucaria cunninghamii</i>	Hoop pine	Large tree that can grow up to 60 meters in height.			●
<i>Flindersia schottiana</i>	Bumpy Ash	Medium to large tree ± 20 meters. Fast growing, hardy.		●	●
<i>Cryptocarya triplinervis</i>	Brown Laurel	Small to medium tree to 15 meters.		●	●



Castanospermum australe



Eucalyptus grandis



Aphananthe philippinensis

			Planting Zone		
Botanical name	Common name	Description	Water edge	Lower	Upper
Tree species					
<i>Syzygium francisii</i>	Giant Water Gum	Medium to tall tree, 10-45 meters.		●	●
<i>Mallotus philippensis</i>	Red Kamala	Medium rainforest tree ± 10 metres. Hardy in a range of conditions and poor soil; full sun or part shade.		●	●
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	White cedar	Small rainforest tree to 10 metres.			●
<i>Elaeocarpus grandis</i>	Blue Quandong	Quick growing rainforest tree to 40m.		●	●

When to plant or not to plant

When planning a restoration project, it is important to ask: should you actively plant, or allow nature to take its course?

The answer depends on your site's condition. If native vegetation is already present, consider whether it can regenerate on its own. To make an informed decision, assess which species are currently on site and their ability to self-seed or regenerate naturally.

Sites with a diverse mix of native trees, shrubs, and grasses, good canopy cover, and minimal threats (like grazing, erosion or invasive weeds) often regenerate successfully without planting. In these cases, simple actions like fencing to manage livestock and managing weeds may be all that's needed.

If you're unsure, it's a good idea to seek advice from local Landcare and Catchment groups, or experienced restoration practitioners.





Grow-How: Planting Tips

Timing of planting

Revegetation is most successful in summer and autumn, when rainfall is more reliable and soil moisture is high.

Try to schedule planting just before or after a rainfall event for the best establishment.

Because summer flooding can occur, plant tubestock slightly deeper to help prevent young plants from being washed away.

If you're able to water the site, planting can also be done outside the wet season.

Keep an eye on BoM weather forecasts to choose the optimal planting window.



Prep the site

Prepare the site before planting to give new vegetation the best chance of establishing.

Brush-cut or slash grasses to reduce competition, and control woody weeds and invasive vines that can smother young plants. Use pruning, targeted removal, or staged weed control to create space for natives to establish.

Good preparation supports healthier revegetation and reduces future maintenance.

Care for it

Maintenance is crucial for the first 2 years.

With consistent care, planted tubestock will become more self-sufficient, growing above the surrounding grass and developing the resilience needed to withstand waterflow and dry periods more effectively.

- Brushcut or slash grass around plants
- Water plants (if possible) in dry spells
- Carry out regular weed management, particularly for invasive vine species
- Remove debris around plants after flood events
- Replace any plants lost to drought or flooding



Plant spacing

In the Noosa Region, we want to achieve a dense riparian vegetation buffer of a diverse mix of vegetation types, groundcovers, shrubs and trees.

We recommend spacing shrubs and trees at 2 to 2.5m. If you are using a slasher or mower to help maintain your planting, space the plants to allow for your machine to fit between plants.

Groundcovers can be spaced 0.25–0.5m apart, depending on the species and slope position. They can be added later, once trees and shrubs begin forming a canopy.

Alternatively, plant a groundcover in the same hole as a tree.

Tree guards

Care should be taken when using tree guards along waterways. Only use tree guards in the upper bank zone of the waterways where flooding is less frequent.

Consider using cardboard guards instead plastic corflute guards, as these are biodegradable and won't pollute our local waterways if they are washed away in a flood.

Stakes alone can be valuable to help identify planted tubestock in your revegetation area and aid with maintenance on the site.



Access more land management information via our online

Noosa Shire Landholder Guide

Access practical tools and information to manage your land with confidence. Explore the variety of resources to all designed to help you make informed decisions that protect biodiversity and promote sustainability on your block.

This resource was proudly supported by:

