

Property Focus

Bringing you the latest news, fact and figures from the world of Australian real estate.

Hardy Plants for a Wondrous Winter Garden



When we think of the winter garden we mightn't be thinking of beautiful blooms and splashes of colour. But one of the best parts of living in a country with fairly mild winters is there is a huge array of annual plants and flowers that bloom in the cooler months. Needing only a bit of extra watering and a little more attention in summer, these plants can actually be a part of your garden all year round.

WHAT TO PLANT

There are plenty of colourful, gorgeous winter

plants suitable for our climate, known as 'annuals'. Here are a selection best suited to autumn planting:

- Marigolds
- Petunias
- Cosmos
- Queen Anne's Lace
- Primrose
- Pansies
- Snapdragons

WHEN TO PLANT

Planting time is very important when it comes to certain varieties of plants best suited to winter, as they need to of reached maturity by the time the weather turns warm. The good news is, autumn isn't too late, and planting at this time means you'll also have the benefit of a more established looking garden this winter.

If you live in a climate known for harsh summers, this doesn't mean your winter plants won't be suitable, although if planting in the summer they will need daily watering if they haven't reached maturity – older, more established plants will be more robust.

The best times for planting annuals tends to be autumn to early spring. It's obviously quite cost effective to plant seeds over seedlings, but buying slightly older plants does mean your garden will be established more quickly.

PLANTING TIPS

Annuals need top quality, well-draining soil, that you can prep by adding compost or manure. Plant seeds/seedlings in rows and cover seeds with a light layer of soil before watering lightly.

THE BENEFITS

The above-mentioned flowers come in a range of dazzling colours and whilst they don't necessarily flower year-round, during the winter, they can ensure your garden looks colourful and vibrant at a time when other varieties may be dormant. They can also live side by side with summer-flowering plants, meaning your garden will be balanced throughout the year.

A beautiful garden is one of the very best ways to give your home instant street-appeal, and is the first thing a visitor will notice.

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10 Signs You Live in a Truly Special Neighbourhood

It's true that what makes a great neighbourhood differs from person to person, but all great neighbourhoods do share some common factors that are universally appealing. Here we explore 10 signs the neighbourhood you live in (or would like to live in) is truly special.



GREAT SCHOOLS

Even if you don't have children now, buying a property within an area renowned for great schools has a very positive affect on property prices. In Australia, you generally need to live within a public school's catchment area in order to send your child to that particular school, and some parents are willing to pay top dollar to ensure they live in the catchment area of a great public school.

LOW CRIME RATES

This is a pretty universal sign of a good neighbourhood. We all want to live in an area where we feel safe and secure and savvy property buyers will do their research and look at crime rates when it comes to moving to a new area, with this information readily available online.

LIFESTYLE OPTIONS

A well-rounded neighbourhood is one that offers different things to different people. This could mean they're plenty of nearby cafes and bars for foodies, walking and hiking trails for active locals, or even local clubs and leagues for engaged community members.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Living in an area where residents don't have to travel too far to get out and about and enjoy the great outdoors makes an area more appealing. Think of parks, playgrounds, golf courses, tennis courts, public pools and even nearby lakes and rivers.

WELL-PRESENTED HOMES

Not only does a neighbourhood look amazing when each house is well presented, but it also shows that your neighbours take a lot of pride in their home, a good sign for any prospective property buyer or seller. This doesn't have to mean you live in a street of luxury properties either, great presentation starts with a mowed lawn, neat and tidy yard, freshly painted façade and clean, well-maintained footpaths.

LEAFY AND WELL ESTABLISHED

Even in inner-city areas, a leafy main road, with well-established older buildings and homes can look really inviting. It shows the area has a bit of heritage given the age of the trees that line most streets and the age of the buildings which have been maintained over time.



FAMILY FRIENDLY

Aside from great schools lots of factors play a part in making an area appeal to families. Funnily enough, most are listed above. In addition to these an area which has larger homes on potentially larger blocks is probably going to appeal more to families than say the heart of the city, where units run significantly smaller, with little to no outdoor spaces available.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND WALKABILITY

Living close to public transport is a must with a huge number of commuters relying on buses, rail and ferries to get them to work every day. Walkability is also a big factor though, being able to leave the car at home to get to nearby attractions like markets, shops and cafes makes an area really desirable.

NIGHTLIFE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Not everyone loves the idea of travelling into the city to have dinner, see a movie or catch-up for drinks, so residential areas that also boast great nightlife and entertainment have a definite advantage.



SHOPPING

Being close to the shops is not just convenient it can be a drawcard that gets people to visit a neighbourhood. Weekend markets are popular neighbourhood attractions, as are large-scale shopping centres. Think a weekend jaunt to Bunnings, or Ikea.

This weekend, why not look around your local neighbourhood and see what makes your area special. It's great to be aware of the major selling points in your location, and if you're interested in buying in a particular area, why not see how it stacks up in the desirability stakes?

Market Facts

Capital cities home value index - 31 March 2017

	ALL DWELLINGS		HOUSES		UNITS	
	% Change Year on Year	% Change Month on Month	% Change Year on Year	% Change Month on Month	% Change Year on Year	% Change Month on Month
Sydney	16.04 ▲	-0.04 ▼	17.4 ▲	0.19 ▲	9.82 ▲	-1.19 ▼
Melbourne	15.27 ▲	0.5 ▲	16.52 ▲	0.64 ▲	4.12 ▲	-0.91 ▼
Brisbane*	3.36 ▲	0.61 ▲	3.61 ▲	0.88 ▲	1.09 ▲	-1.92 ▼
Adelaide	2.15 ▲	0.78 ▲	2.35 ▲	0.87 ▲	-0.19 ▼	-0.27 ▼
Perth	-6.03 ▼	-0.96 ▼	-6.04 ▼	-0.9 ▼	-5.89 ▼	-1.75 ▼
Hobart	13.59 ▲	0.95 ▲	13.26 ▲	0.43 ▲	17.23 ▲	6.25 ▲
Canberra	8.39 ▲	-2.76 ▼	8.73 ▲	-3.05	3.76 ▲	1.72 ▲

*Brisbane results are for the combined Brisbane and Gold Coast region

Source: CoreLogic