

# Tree Habitats

Some of the trees at Ginninderry are over 100 years old and many are even older than European settlement! Researchers from Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society are looking at how councils and urban developments can not only keep many of our old, mature trees, but also provide new growth, habitat and support for these trees over their lifetime and beyond.

Through this research we hope to develop a better method for protecting and restoring mature trees in urban developments, it is expected that these treatments will cost less to maintain, provide a much better diversity of birds, insects and other animals and become spaces which are adopted by the community for recreation, education and research.

There are three tree treatments being examined within Strathnairn.

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## Treatment 1: The Ol' Canberra mow

This is the 'bog standard' treatment of large urban trees in Canberra. Mulch will be placed around the trunk within the inner canopy zone to reduce compaction and damage to the root system with grass planted under the outer canopy and surrounding area of the tree and mown several times a year. Hazardous branches are trimmed and those that fall are removed. Noxious weeds are often sprayed and there are no new plantings of native trees in the area.



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## Treatment 2: Mulching and mass planting

Each mature tree is mulched under its drip line (the area which extends to the edge of the tree canopy – like the area under an open umbrella). The mulched area is then surrounded by shrub plantings and smaller groundcovers, creating vitally important habitats for small birds. New Eucalyptus seedlings are planted to eventually become the next cohort of mature trees. Fallen branches are left in place, and new logs introduced to provide habitat for insects, lizards and birds.



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## Treatment 3: Restoring native grasslands

This treatment is designed to restore the critically endangered Box Gum Grassy Woodland. It involves planting native grasses and wildflowers within the urban open space, requiring limited water and less mowing. Shrubs are also planted to provide habitat for small birds, and new Eucalyptus seedlings are introduced to replace mature trees on the site. Fallen branches from the trees are also left in place, as in treatment two, and new logs are introduced to create woody habitats.



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## What can you do?

Avoid walking through the habitat areas, identifiable by its boulders, shrubs and logs.

Leave logs and branches in place (do not take for firewood!) as these provide crucial habitat to small, native animals and birds.