Build it and they will come!

Native plants can attract birds, such as this New Holland honeyeater.

The structure and design of a garden can determine what wildlife species will visit or make a home. Vertical structure, built from multiple layers of different plant heights, provides more spaces for wildlife to co-exist. Small plants and shrubs provide good shelter for insects and very small birds, while larger trees will attract visits from more mobile birds and mammals.

Large trees with rough or shedding bark that creates lots of cracks and crevices are excellent shelter for insects and small lizards. Trees that produce resins and sap flows, such as conifers, acacias and eucalypts, are also useful for some native bee and wasp species that use resin to seal their nest cells.

Constructed insect hotels can provide homes for insects that usually nest in dead wood. However, about 75% of bee species dig their nests into the ground, usually in sandy, uncompacted soil.

It can be difficult to build all of this into small gardens, but landscape composition can also influence the wildlife potential of an individual garden. A high proportion of paved areas can reduce the number of wild bees or native birds in the neighbourhood. Highly manicured green spaces can also have a negative effect on wild bee species.