



**Bushrock
belongs
in the
bush**

**not in
gardens**



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However, the demand for bushrock has in many cases depleted naturally occurring sources of bushrock and has serious implications to the plants and animals that depend on bushrock as a key component of their habitat. Therefore, efforts should be made keep bushrock where it belongs.



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Since the early European settlement of NSW, bushrock has been used in landscaping and gardens to re-create natural bush settings, build fences or retaining walls, line pools, create waterfalls and other features, and as a base for orchids, lichens and mosses to grow on.

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To minimise the impacts to threatened or protected native plants and animals in NSW, the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*, lists the removal of bushrock from rock outcrops or from areas of native vegetation as a key threatening process. More information is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/.



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Bushrock is loose fragile rock found on rock or soil surfaces and takes many lifetimes to develop. Many animals use these rock environments for shelter, to hide from predators, find food, avoid extreme weather and escape bushfires. Bushrock can also provide egg-laying sites for reptiles and habitat for many different plants, mosses, liverworts and lichens. The removal of bushrock can cause soil compaction, increased water runoff and turbidity, and sedimentation of water courses. It may also cause loss of plants and the reduction of seed germination, introduction of exotic seeds, soil erosion, and the reduction in shelter sites for animals.

Bushrock and bushrock removal

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- **Only buy from reputable sources:** If alternatives are not suitable, buy rock only from a reputable supplier. Nurseries and landscaping suppliers are encouraged to display signage promoting alternatives to bushrock as well as verify the legality of their collected bushrock. If bushrock is disturbed during approved construction, try to re-integrate it back into the landscape in a natural way once construction is finished.
- **Report sightings:** Inform DECC if you see interesting animals or plants or come across any suspicious activities like bushrock collection or someone turning over rocks and/or collecting animals. This information will help DECC take measures to address these threats that cause harm to the survival of various species. Any sightings or reports can be made either via the web at www.environment.nsw.gov.au or you can ring the DECC Environment Line on 1300 361 967 and a DECC officer will follow up your call.
- **Think before you lift:** By not lifting or removing bushrock you will avoid disturbing the fragile habitat that bushrock provides. Remember insects, frogs, snakes, lizards and geckos might reside under bushrock. The best way to observe them is to sit, watch and listen. This will allow them to move about freely. Visit zoos and wildlife parks near you – they have a variety of interesting exhibitions of many varied and wonderful animals. In addition, interest groups such as the Frog and Tadpole Study Group and herpetological societies can broaden your interest in frogs and reptiles.

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DECC/M. Lebrunian

Disturbance or removal of bushrock could result in a fine or prosecution. For instance, lifting or moving bushrock in a national park or other conservation reserves can incur fines of \$300. Furthermore, the damage or removal of bushrock carries greater penalties of up to \$1,000, six months imprisonment or both. Similarly the collection or removal of bushrock from state forests and Crown land reserves is prohibited. Some local councils regulate bushrock removal. Blue Mountains City Council and Hawkesbury City Council have prohibited the collection or removal of bushrock from bushland areas.

It's illegal

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How you can help

The Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) is coordinating various programs for the protection of biodiversity and species habitat. State and local government agencies and research institutions are undertaking various actions to contribute to these programs. More information on the recovery and threat abatement actions is available at www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au.

- **Use alternatives to bushrock:** To ensure that bushrock stays in the bush where it's needed as habitat for a variety of species, DECC encourages the use of alternatives for natural bushrock in and around your garden. Quarried rock or artificial rock are both readily available, and have been used to restore habitat for frogs and lizards. Railway sleepers, treated pine or concrete products may also provide alternatives to bushrock for retaining walls and the like.
- **Tread gently:** Whether you are bushwalking, mountain biking, rock climbing or 4WD driving, be mindful of where you tread or drive. Sandstone environments are fragile and bushrock can easily break if disturbed, contributing to habitat disturbance and loss. Keep to existing tracks and trails and obey signs for road closures or prohibited activities such as 'No motorbikes' or 'No dogs'. Don't move rocks around for use as cairns, seats, jumps or any other purpose. Minimal impact recreation is desirable and sustainable.

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