

# Indigenous Plants for Ballarat Gardens



Photograph: Jenny Sedgwick

## Austral Indigo

*Indigofera australis*

### FAST FACTS

#### Shrub

Family:	Fabaceae
	Pea
Size:	1.5m H
Position:	Part shade
Soil:	Well drained
Flowers:	Spring
Fruits:	Pods
Care:	Prune

An open-branched shrub to about 1.5m high, **Austral Indigo** (*Indigofera australis*) is an Australian native plant from the Ballarat area.

**Location:** Austral Indigo prefers part shade near the protection of large trees as it can be killed by frost if out in the open.

**Flowers:** It produces beautiful purple pea flowers for a few weeks in spring which contrast nicely with its red-brown stems and blue-grey leaves.

**Attracts:** If you look carefully amongst the flowers and foliage, you may see numerous small native butterflies – the Grass Blue and the Pea Blue.

**Planting:** Austral Indigo will grow really well in your garden if planted in a hole not much larger than the pot within a few days of

purchase. Give it a good ½ bucket of water as soon as you plant it and it should be fine after that. Because it is a large open shrub, it will look best planted towards the back of a garden bed.

**Care:** Prune the Austral Indigo in late spring or early summer when it has finished flowering to keep it relatively compact and bushy. It's best to prune Austral Indigo quite hard, taking off about ½ to ⅔ of the plant's height.

**Propagation:** Collect the seeds from the pods in summer before they are released. Soak the seeds in freshly boiled water for 15 minutes. Place the seed a couple of millimetres below the surface of damp potting mix.