

Bring in the lizards!

Messy gardens are great if you're a lizard. There are places to hide and cover when hunting, feeding and resting. There's shelter when it's really hot or really cold. Messy gardens can look good too!

Did you know

New Zealand is home to more than 80 species of lizard and they're harmless.

They help scatter the seeds of some of our native plants and may also pollinate their flowers.

Lizards will love your backyard if they have food and shelter.

They'll eat invertebrates like small flies and beetles and the fruit of some shrubs and vines.



Watch out for cats. They're quick and cunning!

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Warm, dry, sunny places are good for lizards but the most important thing, is cover. They need to hide!

Rock piles

Plants can grow round or over rocks, so they can still look good! Use old concrete, bricks and stones and stack them loosely so there are plenty of cracks and holes. The spiders, slaters and beetles will head inside, especially when it's cold. That's good for the animals that feed on them... like lizards.

If you smear yoghurt on your rocks lichens might grow. Plant bulbs like crocuses between the rocks and your insects will have an early nectar and pollen supply. They'll hang around. So will the lizards.



So what do lizards like?

Lizards like to squeeze into body sized holes no more than 5 to 19 mm wide.

They like plenty of holes because they need their own space. They like their homes to stay one place too. If it's disturbed, they'll move out and they might not have anywhere else to go.

They like hiding places with heaps of exits so that cats can't lie wait by one door.



Wood piles

Pile up bits of wood and leave them to slowly rot. Let the fungi grow and the bugs come in! A good pile of dead wood is magic and an adventure playground for lizards.

Bring in the lizards - Part 2

Plants

It's best to plant thickly. Lizards need safe habitats to run to when cats are on the prowl. That means thick ground-covers and vines and bushy plants on banks.

Berry or nectar producing plants are good, especially native shrubs and if you have a range of plants the lizards will have plenty to eat, all year round.



Ferns and tussock grasses give thick ground cover for hiding places and attract insects.

Vines like New Zealand clematis and climbing rata build pathways between habitats and cabbage trees form in clumps for good cover.



Now wait patiently

Lizards need escape sites and they don't really mind what they're made of. Any old non toxic building like old roofing iron can become a good home for lizards. Plants can grow around or over them so they can look quite tidy.



So make a lizard friendly backyard and wait patiently. If your lizards have already gone, it may be a little while before they return.