

## Assessing Native Plant Presence and Maintenance Resource Allocations in New Zealand Backyards: A Nationwide Online Questionnaire

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**Abstract :** Domestic backyards offer a valuable opportunity to contribute to biodiversity conservation efforts and promote ecological sustainability by cultivating native plant species. This study focuses on assessing the presence and maintenance of native plants in New Zealand's residential gardens through an online questionnaire. The survey was designed to collect data on the presence of native, exotic, and lawn plants in New Zealand backyards, alongside the allocation of maintenance resources for each category. Targeting a diverse range of residents and property sizes from different regions of New Zealand, this study sought to gain essential insights into practices related to native plant cultivation. Results reveal there is a collective inclination to reduce lawn coverage and introduce a higher abundance of native and exotic species. A thorough analysis of maintenance practices reveals a significant portion of respondents embracing environmentally friendly gardening, characterized by low-intensity fertilizer usage. Homeowners, especially those residing in their properties, demonstrate proactive engagement in backyard maintenance. Native plants were found to require more time, money and fertilizer for maintenance than those of exotic and lawn species. The insights gained from this study can guide targeted efforts to enhance urban biodiversity, making a significant contribution to the preservation and enrichment of New Zealand's unique biodiversity and ecological heritage in urban settings.

**Keywords :** biodiversity, backyards, planting behaviour, backyard maintenance, native planting

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