

Blue tongue lizards and your garden - information about blue tongue lizards and your garden

No animals are more misunderstood or feared than Australian reptiles. Unfortunately people regard reptiles as a threat and, as a result, many reptiles, both harmless and dangerous have been killed. There has been a steady decline in reptile numbers in suburban areas in recent years. During the warmer months, reptiles are more active and fall prey to dogs, cats, motor vehicles and lawn mowers.

There are no venomous lizards in Australia. The most common lizard seen in urban environments is the Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard, which is easily recognised by its deep royal blue tongue. These lizards are completely harmless and although they may hiss as a protective measure, they very rarely bite. In fact they are an asset to any garden because they eat slugs, snails, spiders, insects and plant material. We need to be aware of the chemicals we use in our gardens – especially snail bait and pesticides– if lizards ingest snails and insects that have eaten or been affected by these chemicals they will die.

Blue tongue lizards are highly territorial and their territory can cover over 1 hectare. This means that you may not see them every day in your garden as they are somewhere else in their territory. Most blue tongue lizards that come into care are the result of dog and cat attacks. If you do find an injured blue tongue lizard the best way to pick it up is to use a small towel that is large enough to cover the whole animal. Place the towel over the animal, gently wrap the animal in the towel and then lift it under the tummy between the front and back legs and place it in a box/container. You can take the lizard to your vet (you won't be charged for the visit and ask them to call your local wildlife rescue service to arrange for the animal to be collected. Remember, all reptiles are protected by law, so they cannot be cared for by any unlicensed person.



Eastern blue-tongue lizard