

Don't be A Lounge Lizard - find a Lizard Lounge!

Have you heard? One in four of Australia's 850 reptile species are now in serious strife. This is a big deal because of the 850 species of reptile found in Australia, 90% of these are found nowhere else in the world, meaning we really have to do something about this rapid decline, and fast.

There are five distinct families of lizards in Australia; geckos, dragons, skinks, legless lizards and goannas, many of which may be hanging out in your schoolyard.



Think Skink

There are quite a few skinks that you can find all over Australia. For example, *Tiliqua rugosa* (shingleback) can be found in WA, SA, Vic, NSW and Qld. *Tiliqua scincoides* (Common blue tongued skink) can be found in WA, NT, Qld, NSW, Vic and SA. The next one doesn't have such a wide distribution, but can be found in Tasmania – the *Tiliqua nigrolutea* (Blotched blue-tongued skink).

Looking for Lizards!

Go out into your school yard and see if you can find any signs of skinks or lizards living in the wilder parts and, if you don't see any, determine if there are any inviting "lizard lounges" for them.

Looking for Lizard Lounges -

In staking out your school yard, look for the following:

- Tussock grasses, groundcovers and hiding spots in rocks and logs.
- Protected sunny spots on rocks, logs or brick paths
- Natural leaf litter which support insects and larvae
- Logs, fallen branches, natural cracks in soil and ground-cover plants
- And, as you might expect, places where garden chemicals are used won't be part of a Lizard Lounge – eliminating insects removes their food source, and snail and slug pellets can kill them!

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Some native plants that lizards love include:

- Dwarf Baeckia (*Baeckia* sp.),
- Dianella sp.,
- Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*),
- Mat Rush (*Lomandra longifolia*),
- Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*),
- Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*),
- Weeping Grass (*Microleana stipoides*),
- Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia* spp.)
- and assorted Grevilleas and Bottlebrush (*Callistemon* sp.) to attract insects.



Lizards Rock

Lizards, unlike us, are cold-blooded and rely on the sun to raise their body temperature and keep them happy and warm. Lizards love nothing more than lounging the day away on rocks, logs or brick paths, along with sunning areas which are protected from predators, offering lizard shelter nearby, just in case they are startled out of their sunning slumber. Rocks that are elevated slightly or are piles so the lizard can slip under it if threatened are awesome. If a few plants nearby, you've got yourself a Lovely Lizard lounge!

Flat Out Like a Lizard Drinking

Lizards get the bulk of their moisture from the food they consume, and are incredibly efficient when it comes to moisture retention, however they will happily have a drink if water is provided, especially in really hot weather. If there's a shallow bowl in a protected spot and your lizards will lap it up!

If you build it, they will come:

If you plan to modify a place in your schoolyard into a Lizard Lounge, there is no need to head down to the local park and collect lizards. In most places, this is illegal and can draw a hefty fine, so please don't do it! Lizards will seek out a well-designed and lizard-friendly garden, and, although it won't happen overnight, it will happen!

Reference: <http://www.sgaonline.org.au/lizards/>