

Common Name/*Scientific name* **Australian Magpie/ *Gymnorhina tibicen***



Description: The Australian Magpie is black and white, but the plumage pattern varies across its range. Its nape, upper tail and shoulder are white in males, with some grey on the shoulders in females. Across most of Australia, the remainder of the body is black. At the gardens (as in Qld and most of NSW) we have the 'black backed' subspecies. The eye of adult birds is chestnut brown.

Behaviour in the gardens: Although the Australian Magpie is generally quite tame, during the breeding season (July - September) **some** males become aggressive towards any intruders, including humans, that venture too close to their nest sites, the 'swooping magpie' behaviour. Some magpies also see humans in the gardens as a food supplier, and will brazenly attempt to steal your picnic lunch.

Where seen in the gardens: Australian Magpies are found wherever there is a combination of trees and adjacent open areas so in the gardens they are often seen flying through timbered areas and across the lawns areas.

Feeding and Nesting: The Australian Magpie walks along the ground searching for insects and their larvae. The nest is a platform of sticks and twigs (occasionally wire), with a small interior bowl lined with grass and hair. The nest is constructed in the outer branches of a tree, up to 15 m above the ground.

Similar Species in the gardens: The Pied Butcherbird, *Cracticus nigrogularis*, has a black head and bib separated from the black back by a complete white collar, and white underparts. It is a smaller species. The Magpie-lark, *Grallina cyanoleuca* is coloured similarly, but also is smaller in the body and has a lighter bill than a magpie.