

Common Name/Scientific name: Brown Honeyeater/ *Lichmera indistincta*

With its drab, dun-coloured plumage, the Brown Honeyeater is virtually devoid of distinguishing markings. It is widespread in northern Australia as well as parts of the eastern and western regions, where it inhabits a range of wooded habitats. Although usually near wetlands, Brown Honeyeaters may occur far from the nearest water. It gives a loud, melodious song, rendered as sweet-sweet-quarty-quarty.



Description: The Brown Honeyeater is a medium-small pale grey-brown honeyeater with a distinctive yellow tuft behind its eye. It also has yellow to olive wing patches and tail panels. It is pale grey below, darker olive brown above and has a long curved black bill. Young birds are paler with more yellow colouring and a yellow gape (open bill). It has a fast, undulating flight and is seen either singly, in pairs or small flocks in flowering trees and shrubs.

Where seen in the gardens: The Brown Honeyeater is found in a wide range of wooded habitats, usually near water. It is often found in mangroves and woodlands or dense forests along waterways. It is common in parks, gardens and street trees in urban areas as well as on farms and in remnant vegetation along roadsides. So you could expect to see it in most areas of the gardens.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Brown Honeyeater feeds on nectar and insects, foraging at all heights in trees and shrubs. It may be seen in mixed flocks with other honeyeaters.

Nesting: During the breeding season, male Brown Honeyeaters defend a nesting territory by singing from tall trees and they stand guard while the female builds the nest and lays the eggs. The small neat cup-nest is made from fine bark, grasses and plant down, bound with spiders web, and is slung by the rim in a shrub, fern or tree at up to 5 m from the ground and is usually very well-hidden by thick foliage. Only the female incubates, but both sexes feed the young. Nest predators include Pied Currawongs, snakes and cats.

Similar Species: It could be confused with females or young birds of the Scarlet Honeyeater, *M. sanguinolenta* (see details on very often seen birds webpage). Also most of the other honeyeaters in the gardens are not so drab. A striking feature of the Brown Honeyeater is the long, curved, black bill.