



Description: a small, active bird which has a distinctive reddish brown rump and continuously fanned tail. The crown, face, neck and shoulders are grey-brown, shading to reddish brown on the lower back, rump and upper tail. The eyebrow is reddish-brown, the chin and throat are white, grading into a dappled black and white breast, and the rest of the underparts are white tinged red-brown. The wings are grey-brown and the tail feathers have red-brown bases, but are otherwise dark grey, tipped white. Young birds are similar, but duller, with less distinct markings on the breast.

Where seen in the gardens: The Rufous Fantail is found in rainforest, dense wet forests, swamp woodlands and mangroves, preferring deep shade, and is often seen close to the ground. In the gardens, best seen from the Creek Walk, Lagoon Walk and in the Ephemeral Wetlands.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The dainty Rufous Fantail is usually seen singly or occasionally in twos, flitting about below the canopy of moist eucalypt forests and rainforests, where they usually inhabit the dense, shady undergrowth of gullies. Foraging mostly in the air, Rufous Fantails often perch restlessly on the branches, with their wings continually fidgeted and the tail almost always fanned, regularly making short, jerky flights out from the perch, flitting and fluttering, diving, twisting and looping near the foliage and branches to dislodge, flush or catch insect prey.

Nesting: The Rufous Fantail builds a small compact cup nest, of fine grasses bound with spider webs, that is suspended from a tree fork about 5 m from the ground. The bottom of the nest is drawn out into a long stem. Both sexes share nest-building, incubation and feeding of the young. One or two broods may be raised in a season.

Similar Species in the gardens: The Rufous Fantail is similar in shape and behaviour to the Grey Fantail, *R. fuliginosa*, but can be distinguished by its bright red eyebrow and rump. It also tends to inhabit denser, wetter habitats. Visitors may know another similar fantail, the Willie Wagtail, a black and white visitor to many urban backyards and gardens.