

Creating suitable habitats for northern New Zealand geckos and skinks

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My favourite gecko-friendly native plants for the Auckland Region include:

- *Coprosma areolata*
- *Coprosma rhamnoides*
- *Coprosma spathulata*
- Flax (most types are ok, *Phormium cookianum* P. *tenex*)
- Hebe (most types are ok)
- Kahikatea and puriri are good for geckos but may grow too large for gardens...
- Kanuka *Kunzea ericoides* - many wild native geckos are found in this but it can grow to over 20 meters tall
- *Lophomyrtus bullata*
- Manuka *Leptospermum*
- Mingimingi *Leucopogon fasciculatus*
- *Myrsine australis*
- *Myrsine divaricata*
- Putawetaweta *Carpodetus serratus*
- Rata vines (e.g., *Metrosideros perforata* or *fulgens*)

For native skinks, it is best to provide a mix of logs and rocks, shrubs (especially flax), ground cover plants, and open areas. Variety is important. In the wild, native skinks will often live along a habitat edge. For example, they might live under a log or in the base of a flax bush but also forage and bask in adjoining open areas.

My list for skink-friendly gardens in the Auckland Region would include:

- *Carex* (e.g., *Carex secta* - but many varieties are suitable)
- *Dianella nigra* (a small flax-like plant with blue berries)
- Flax (*Phormium cookianum* is a suitable small-medium variety)
- *Meublenbeckia complexa* (a dense vine - also grows as groundcover)
- Native rice grasses (*Microlaena stipoides* and *avenacea*)
- Renga lily (*Arthropodium cirratum* - best in dense plantings)
- Toetoe (e.g., *Cortaderia fulvida* - a small-medium variety)

- Did I mention logs and rocks???

See the NZ Native Plant Network for more details <http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/>