

Go native and save the river

Fiona Brady

ATTENTION keen gardeners. Want to learn some new skills and help protect the biodiversity of native plants and animals?

Then sign up for one of the TAFE-accredited Growers for Greenspace courses being offered by a group of Sydney councils.

The free courses teach participants how to propagate and grow native plants in their backyards or balconies for replanting in the Parramatta River catchment.

Ashfield firefighter Bill McCarthy recently completed one of the courses and is now nurturing seedlings for replanting at vegetation sites in Riverglade Reserve, Hunters Hill.

"It's a very worthwhile thing to do that's also beneficial to the individual," he said.

"Once you start getting into it, you can develop a passion for it."

As well as learning about native plant growing, Mr McCarthy said participants learned "little bits of botany".

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

■ Bookings are now being taken for the Growers for Greenspace courses.

■ The 15-hour course is run over three separate days.

■ Dates are: Strathfield and Ashfield - Saturdays, February 5, February 19 and April 2. Ryde - Tuesdays, March 8, 29 and May 3.

■ For more information, phone Strathfield Council on 9748 9999.

"It's very enjoyable and fun," he said. Each participant receives a grower's kit that includes seeds, equipment and technical advice.

The participating councils include Strathfield, Ashfield, Bankstown, Canada Bay and Hunters Hill.



Bill McCarthy is growing seedlings for replanting on the banks of Parramatta River.

Picture: PHIL BLATCH

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