

What do Koalas need?

Year 1 - 2 Science



Food

Koalas eat **gum leaves!**

There are around 800 different types of gum leaves, but koalas can only eat about 50 of those.

Each koala will have one or two types of gum leaves that they like the best.



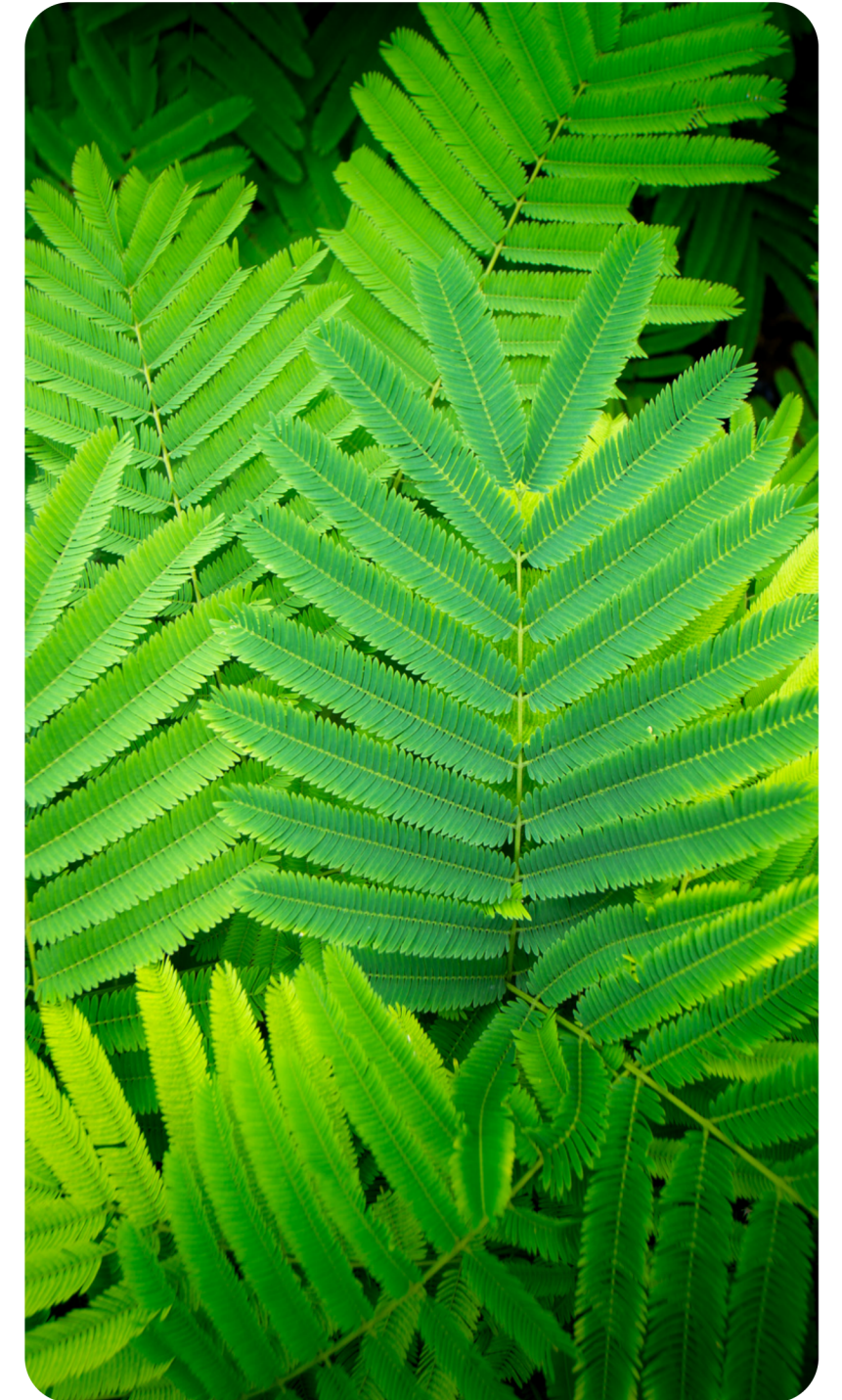
Food

They will eat about a kilogram of gum leaves every day.

Sometimes they will eat a little bit of other leaves, like wattle, but only a tiny bit and not very often.



Gum leaves



Wattle leaves

Shelter

Gum trees provide koalas with the best protection. Koalas can climb high in the tree away from anyone who might want to eat them.

Koalas have powerful arms and shoulders to help them climb.

They have a pad of **cartilage** in their bum like a special built-in cushion that lets them sit comfortably in the trees.



Shelter

Gum trees help koalas keep cool when it is hot. They press their tummy up against the nice cool trunk to help them cool down, and they hide in the shade of the leaves.

When it is cold, koalas tuck into a ball, and hide under the leaves like a blanket.



Water

Koalas don't usually drink water. They get all the water they need from gum leaves.

If they need more water they might eat a small amount of other leaves.

If it is VERY hot, if there are no good leaves, or if there has been a fire koalas will sometimes drink water. This means they must leave their safe tree and come down to the ground.



Companionship

Koalas need other koalas nearby, but they don't like to live too close to other koalas.

Male koalas have deep, growling voices that they use to talk to each other from far away.

Female koalas have high-pitched squawking voices they use to talk to their **joey** (baby) or warn away other animals.

A joey will stay with mum for around one year before it moves away and finds its own place to live.

