

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS.

AUSTRALIAN FOOD PLANTS STUDY GROUP.

ISSN 0811 5362.

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 26.

FEBRUARY 1996.

323 Philp Ave.,
Frenchville.
Qld. 4701.
28/2/96.

Dear Members,

As usual, rain (or the lack thereof) is uppermost in our minds here in C.Q. Some good falls over a week or so in January have been followed by ...nothing, and the grass that germinated then is already dry fuel ready for a bad fire season. The initial relief felt by the State Conference planners has evaporated with the moisture, and we're beginning to discover some Hanrahan-like traits surfacing when we're feeling a bit down. Still, the cyclone season isn't over yet, so we might be lucky!

I've been making wine ready for tasting at our planned bush food evening at the Conference in September. So far there is Burdekin Plum #1, *Syzygium luehmannii* and *Syzygium fibrosum* and orange (yes, there's a story to that one!) in bottles, and Burdekin Plum #2 still in the fermenter. There's still bags of raspberries in the freezer, but they're destined for jam. Anne and Ted McHugh have also been experimenting, and I've sampled Desert Lime cordial syrup and marmalade, and am interestedly awaiting the opening of the jar of limes in brandy. Ted's pickled lillipillies were pretty yummy too!

There's been little in the way of a wild harvest of any thing this year; apart from little Burdekin Plums the pickings have been small, so we've been relying on our limited cultivated sources.

Dawn Pound has brought some of her beautiful paper made using native grasses along to S.G.A.P. meetings, and at our November gathering Eric Anderson gave a very pertinent talk, illustrated with slides and specimens, on declared and potential environmental weeds, and again warned us of the threat posed by Bellyache Bush (*Jatropha gossipifolia*).

We have again received enquiries from various S.G.A.P. groups about possible guest speakers for their meetings, the most recent from Victoria. If any of you would be

willing to talk to a group near you about any aspect of your interest in Australian food plants, we would love to hear from you, or even if you are able to travel a bit further afield if your travel expenses were re-imbursed and/or overnight accommodation provided. After the Queensland Conference we should have an audio-visual presentation available for loan, but the personal touch is nicer.

As yet there's been no response to my request in the last newsletter for an illustration of the Wongai Plum (*Manilkara kauki*). This is an obvious gap in our reference material that I would like to see filled, so please keep your eyes peeled!

This year is shaping up to be an extremely busy one for me personally, as apart from the Conference and all the usual things, I've a wedding to arrange in Rocky in June, and both my eldest son and his fiancée currently live in Japan. Perhaps it's just as well the weather hasn't been conducive to gardening, and it might be wise to apologise in advance for the arrears in correspondence and paperwork that are sure to occur!

Regards,



Lenore Lindsay and Rockhampton S.G.A.P.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members:

Stan KAILIS: 29 Milson St., South Perth. W.A. 6151.

Sandra KANE: 2/6 Garden Crt., Elwood. VIC. 3184.

Ray TAUSS: C.A.S. Curtin Uni. Box U1987, G.P.O. Perth. 6001.

EDIBLE SPECIMENS TABLED AT MEETINGS:

24/11/95: *Acronychia laevis*, *Backhousia citriodora*, *Coelospermum reticulatum*, *Elaeocarpus grandis*, *Eugenia reinwardtiana*, *Ficus virens*, *Leptospermum petersonii*, *Rhagodia nutans*, *Sterculia quadrifida*, *Syzygium luehmannii*, *S. paniculatum*, *Terminalia melanocarpa*, *T. porphyrocarpa*, and *Ajuga australis* and *Orthosiphon aristartus* (medicinal).

2/2/96: A.G.M. of Rockhampton S.G.A.P. Guest speaker Dr. N Ashwath of C.Q.U. who spoke on his work in rehabilitating areas released from the Ranger uranium mine after 5-6 years of operation. The aim was to revegetate the disturbed sites with native species, similar in density and abundance to the original savannah woodland

with *Acacia* understory, to form a viable, long term, self sustaining ecosystem, which naturally includes many food plants. This was a very interesting talk.

23/2/96: *Billardiera scandens* fruit, *Eupomatia laurina*, *Geitonoplesium cymosum*, *Leichardtia australis* green seed pod, *Syzygium australe*, *Tetrastigma nitens*.

EXCURSIONS:

5/11/95: Struck Oil: very dry conditions in this normally dry forest area, with few flowers or fruit, and none of those observed edible.

3/12/95: Garden visits:

1. "Jawolira", Lorraine and Wayne Logue's one acre block at Glenlee which won first prize in the Native Garden section of "The Morning Bulletin" 1995 Garden Competition.

Edible plantings included many different *Banksias*, *Baeckias*, *Callistemons*, *Casuarinas*, *Cycas*, *Eucalypts*, *Grevilleas*, *Leptospermums*, *Lomandras*, *Melaleucas*, *Xanthorrhoeas*, palms, tree ferns and ferns. Also noted were *Alpinia caerulea*, *Brachychiton populneus*, *Eucalyptus gunnii*, *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*, *Lysiphyllum carronii*, *Geitonoplesium cymosum*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Viola hederacea*, *Nymphaea violacea*, *Cymbidium canaliculatum*, *Dendrobium speciosum*, *Syzygium australe* in flower and fruit, *S.aff. erythrocalyx*, pots of standard *Ficus* and pyramid shaped *Syzygium australe* "Bush Christmas", and an eves-high hedge of *Syzygium oleosum* along the western side of the house.

2. Trish and Richard Ferguson's garden in Old Glenmore estate, where they have specialised in local indigenous plants, adding to their remnant bushland. Besides many of the more usual Myrtaceous and Proteaceous trees and shrubs, and a good representation of *Acacias*, we also observed the following edible and medicinal plants. *Ajuga australis*, *Alphitonia excelsa*, *Brachychiton acerifolium*, *Capparis* sp., *Coelospermum reticulatum*, *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*, *Dianella* sp., *Elaeocarpus angustifolia*, *Eugenia reinwardtiana*, *Eustrephus latifolius*, *Grewia latifolius*, *Hibiscus heterophyllus*, *Leptospermum petersonii*, *Macadamia* sp., *Myoporum debile*, *Orthosiphon aristartus*, *Plectranthus* sp., *Pleiogynum timorense*, *Rubus fraxinifolius*, *Scaevola calendulaceae*, *Sterculia quadrifida*, *Syzygium australe*, *Viola betonicifolia*, *V. hederacea*, *Wahlenbergia* sp.

4/2/96: Mt.Archer summit: *Acacia aulacocarpa*, *Acronychia laevis*, *Alphitonia excelsa*, *Alpinia caerulea*, *Ajuga austalis*, *Cayratia acris*, *Coelospermum reticulatum*, *Dianella* sp., *Elaeocarpus obovatus*, *Emilia sonchifolia*, *Eucalyptus intermedia*, *Euroschinus falcata*, *Grewia latifolius*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Livistona decipiens*, *Macrozamia miquellii*, *Murdannia graminea*, **Passiflora subpeltata*, **P.foetida*, **P.suberosa*, *Physalis minima*, *Pipturis argenteus*,

Plectranthus sp., *Pleiogynum timorense*, *Rubus fraxinifolius*, *R. molluccanus*,
R. parvifolius, *Solanum nigrum*, *Themeda triandra*, *Wahlenbergia sp.*

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, ETC.

The First Australian New Crops Conference: 8-11 July 1996 at the University of Queensland Gatton College.

Contact: Sally Brown, New Crops Conference Secretariat, Continuing Professional Education, The University of Queensland, Q.4072. Ph: (07) 3365 6360. Fax: (07) 3365 7099.

Third Horticultural Industry Technical Conference in conjunction with First Australian Macadamia Research Conference: 17-22 August 1996.

Contact: AuSHS/AMS Conference Secretariat, Story Horticultural Services Pty Ltd, 202 Stenner St., Toowoomba, Q. 4350. Fax: (076) 359 422.

Fifth International Herb Conference: 8,9,10 November 1996 at the Victoria and Albert Hotel, Mt. Victoria (Blue Mountains).

Contact: Sue Perkins, Quincey Cottage, 56 Railway Parade, Medlow Bath, N.S.W. 2780. Ph: (047) 88 1097.

SNIPPETS.

* David Noel, President of the West Australian Nut and Tree Crop Association (with whom we swap newsletters), has been awarded a medal by the Vavilov Institute of St. Petersburg, Russia. The annual award commemorates the founding in 1894 of the N.I. Vavilov Institute for Plant Resources, named for Russia's most famous plant breeder and researcher.

* Australian macadamia production is beginning to grow sharply due to maturing trees. The 1994 crop yielded 10.6 million kernel pounds, up from about 8 million kernel pounds in 1993. The estimated 1995 crop is 11 million pounds. The Australian industry should continue to experience growth to the end of the decade. Australian processors are stretched to meet the demands of new markets in Asia, Europe and Australia. (*The Cracker*. Jan. 1996).

* John's interesting letter on the next page sent me scurrying off to the dictionaries and reference books! As far as I can ascertain, unlike many place names and words such as "kangaroo" in common usage, both "bush" and "tucker" are English in origin, and were first used in Australia by Europeans. Perhaps there is more information out there!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

183 15th St.,
Renmark. S.A. 5341.

Dear Lenore,

Thanks so very much for all your hard work over the last year. There is only one problem with the newsletters; we'd love more, though I fully appreciate that this requires a great deal of work to produce, and we are more than happy with what we have.

Interest is growing rapidly here in South Australia and our nursery seems to be always running out of stock! As interest snowballs the public's demand for information seems to be insatiable. Hopefully we can nurture their interest and manage the development of the burgeoning industry to ensure it is sustainable, long term and appreciative of those who have passed on enthusiastically a great deal of the base-line information - the indigenous peoples.

I thought perhaps you might like to raise this important issue with our members. At a recent conference I spoke at in Atherton, Aboriginal people expressed to us their concern about the use, for commercial purposes, of the terms "Bushfood" and "Bush Tucker" (terms which I have not used for quite some time). They felt that to use these terms was an infringement of intellectual property rights, particularly if you are considering commercial production of Australian food plants. It must be made clear though, that most did not object, and realised the need to cultivate Australian plants for commercial food production. Members may have opinions, or ideas for alternative titles etc. they'd like to express. It should also be noted that this is one area of people only who have objected to this term so far, though I have talked to other groups who disapproved of the term "bush". Others quite clearly favour the word, but for this region another term may show respect and consideration for their beliefs.

I am presently endeavouring to contact those South Australian queries from the recent newsletter.

Once again I really appreciate your excellent work. Bye for now. Regards,

John McCarthy.

FOR SALE: Northern Rivers Bush Tucker Foods. Business & Goodwill, House, Land, Plantation, Irrigation System & Tanks, Shedding & Shadehouse, Equipment, Power and Fencing. \$255,000. Enquiries: Larry and Barbara Geno. PO Box 149, Lismore, NSW, 2480. Ph/Fax: 066-886274.

Australian Tropical Native Food Industries.

P.O.Box 648,

Gordonvale. Q. 4865.

Dear Lenore,

My company and nursery are trialling, in small plantations, quite a few native food plants from the wet and dry tropics which have commercial promise. We are selecting and propagating superior genotypes and establishing some commercial plantations. We are also trialling value-added products from these species.

Species we are trialling include: *Pleiogynum timorense*, *Eugenia reinwardtiana*, *Diploglottis sp.*, *Acronychia sp.*, *Terminalia catappa*, *T.ferdinandii*, *Stylobasium spathulatum*, *Davidsonia pruriens*, *Manilkara kauki*, *Solanum centrale*, *Buchanania arborescens*, *Semecarpus australiensis*, assorted *Syzygiums* and many others.

We would like to hear from any members who can supply us with a quantity of fruit/seed of *Davidsonia pruriens*, *Acronychia acidula*, *Eugenia reinwardtiana* or *Stylobasium spathulatum* which we would like to purchase.

I am keen to be an active member of the group.

Looking forward to hearing from you. Regards,

Steve Prowse.

P.O.Box S124,
Homebush South. N.S.W. 2140.
18/9/95.

Dear Lenore,

Thanks for the most recent newsletter. I've moved since I last renewed. I now live inland again - frosts and no cooling sea breeze! The soil is different too - much more fertile.

I'm still studying - should be finished the degree this year. I've been working as a horticulturist for local government (Strathfield) since last January. It's great to be working outdoors again but life gets a little too busy at times! A large greenhouse has been built for propagating indigenous plants - maybe even some edible ones. The macadamias seem to do really well round here, as well as other rainforest species.

All the best,
Alex Mackenzie.

37 bushland Drive
Taree 2430
19 th. October 95

Dear Lenore,

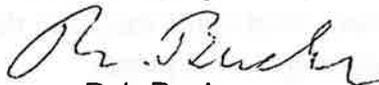
I would like to renew my subscription to Australian food plants study group. Enclosed is a money order for \$5.00.

I don't have as many Bush Food plants in my garden as I would like to have in it. I have a Midgen Berry, but you need to have a lot to get a snack. I also have two Brown Plums, one about 4m high (6yrs old) and the other 2 m high (3yr old) and I don't know when I'll get any Brown Plums. I don't know if it is possible to tell the sexes at this stage. The new growth on the larger plant is a bright green, But on the smaller tree it is a beautiful reddish - orange. Perhaps you might know where i can get some information on the subject. I've also watched the Noisy Miners eating the Scale insects surrounded by Sooty Mould and feel hesitant about dunking my Grevilleas in water for a drink of honey. I can't detect much, if any ginger taste in my *Alpinia caerulea* seed as yet . I wonder if it might improve with age.

I've been tasting my *Bulbine bulbosa*, but I have not found any with enlarged bulbs so far. I think I'll wait a while longer before I try again, or maybe I might try separating the clumps and growing them separately, as I do with my Onions. Meanwhile I am waiting for my Finger Lime to grow a bit more before I plant it in the garden. I'll also have to plant my Blue Lilly Pilly soon. That will be worth a wait My *Dianella* fruit are a bit small and not too tasty. My *Lomandras*, *longifolia* and *hystix*, definately need some improving. Maybe I should try growing them from seed and pick them young and on a continuous basis.

I am currently listing all the local species for the area for the Lower North Coast of NSW between Coffs Harbour and Newcastle. I hope at least 50% of my plantings in future will be local species, and I am looking for local sources for good provenance.

I always appreciate your newsletter and the diversity of approaches to growing Bush Food. Yours faithfully



Bob Buck

P.S. I like the ease with which I can modify, erase, correct and forget about my errors on a computer.

* Rob Conley is currently growing many species of edible rainforest plants in South Australia, as well as some local edible fruiting plants.

* Judith Brass writes that it is very dry at Karalee in S.E.Qld., with many trees failing to flower or set fruit. She has left what little fruit there has been for the birds, bats and possums. She has not acquired any new plants, but has dug up and mulched another area of lawn which she plans to plant with natives if it ever rains.

* Wayne Gliddon of Lot 215, Old Toodyay Rd., Gidgegannup. W.A. 6038, wishes to obtain *Crinum* seeds, and has enquired whether any of our readers can help.

Chris Pidd from Roleystone in W.A. writes:

* I was fortunate enough to attend the ASGAP biennial seminar at Ballarat (where I met you). It was interesting to note how many of the food plants featured were also rainforest plants, so both study groups will have a lot of plants on their lists in common.

Later, my wife Veronica and I went on a tour of the Barossa Valley in South Australia. While at Angaston, I purchased a small jar of Quandong jam, and at Chateau Dorreen Wines at Tanunda, they had Quandong Mead Liqueur for sale.

At a third winery we visited, whose name escapes me, there were recipes using Australian plants displayed, which they kindly allowed me to copy, and I have enclosed a copy for you in case you do not have them.

Thanks Chris! The recipes appear to be sourced largely from "The Bush Food Handbook" by Vic Cherikoff and Jennifer Isaacs - an excellent reference work, published by Ti-Tree Press. (Ed.)

Fred Bell sent me the handout given to participants in a "bush tour" which he led last June in the Wondabyne area, 60km north of Sydney, with a covering note.

He was asked to do this by the Total Environment Centre (TEC), whose tours are intended to feature items of conservation/heritage/cultural interest, and attract members of the various environmental and conservation groups around Sydney.

This particular tour included the International Sculpture Symposium 1, Railway History, Wetland Conservation and Bush Tucker. Fred made the point that any sampling was very limited, so as to avoid any damage to the plants.

The notes relating to the edible plants are reprinted further on.

TASTE TEST: *Billardiera scandens*. Apple Berry.

A slender twiner of moist eucalypt forests.

The greenish-yellow cylindrical berries, 2-3cm long, were covered in soft downy hairs. There were numerous small, rounded, flattish seeds embedded in soft pulp. This pulp was sweet with a hint of acid, and a flavour reminiscent of muscatels or raisins, with overtones of apple and kiwi fruit. The seeds and tough skins were discarded.

WONDABYNE TEC TOUR

4 JUNE 1995

BUSH TUCKER IN THE WONDABYNE AREA

Unfortunately, June is not a good month for observing bush tucker at Wondabyne. The food plants used by Aboriginals in the area would have included various species of native figs, grapes, plums, cherries, raspberries and currants, and also species of lillypillies, milkmaids, ground orchids and geebung. None of these plants are in fruit or flower in June and without such distinguishing features they have less interest and are more difficult to find. However, we should be able to examine most of the following:

Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*)

EDIBLE PARTS: yellow and red fruit (raw), usually February-April, August-October
tender green shoots (steamed or boiled), any season.

Five-leaf Water Vine (Native Grape) (*Cissus hypoglauca*)

EDIBLE PART: black berries (raw), usually January-March

Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*)

EDIBLE PARTS: tubers on roots (raw or steamed), any season
orange fruit (raw), usually November-February

Scrambling Lilly (*Geitonoplesium cymosum*)

EDIBLE PART: young tender shoots (steamed or boiled), any season

Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)

EDIBLE PARTS: light brown to light purple flowers (raw), usually January-April
soft base of leaves (raw), any season

Sydney Golden Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*)

EDIBLE PARTS: green seeds (roasted), usually November-March

Red Coral Pea (*Kennedia rubicunda*)

EDIBLE PART: fresh young leaves used to make tea

New Zealand Spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*)

EDIBLE PART: young leaves (steamed or boiled), any season

Grey Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*)

EDIBLE PART: fruit (roasted or boiled after soaking to remove bitterness), early summer

Gristle Fern (*Blechnum cartilagineum*)

EDIBLE PART: starchy roots (after drying and roasting), any season

Native Pencil Yam (*Dioscorea transversa*)

EDIBLE PART: carrot-like tuber (raw, steamed, boiled or roasted), any season

Blackberry Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*)

EDIBLE PARTS: ripe black fruit, raw, any season except July-August
fresh young leaves (steamed or boiled), any season

Flax lilly or Blueberry Lilly (*Dianella caerulea*)

EDIBLE PART: blue fruit when soft and ripe (raw), usually January-March

Native Parsnip (*Trachymene incisa*)

EDIBLE PART: carrot-like tuber (raw, steamed, boiled or roasted), any season

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

EDIBLE PARTS: underground rhizomes (boiled or roasted), any season
soft white shoots (steamed or boiled), any season

Bull-rush or Cumbungi (*Typha orientalis*)

EDIBLE PARTS: Pollen and flowers (made into cakes and baked), September-March
soft white shoots (steamed or boiled), any season
underground rhizomes (boiled or roasted), any season
soft white bases of leaves (raw).

Edible weeds

Young leaves and shoots of the following weeds at Wondabyne may be eaten if steamed or boiled:

Rambling Dock or Turkey Vine (*Rumex sagittatus*)

Inkweed or Pokeweed (*Phytolacca octandra*)

Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*)(roots and flowers are also edible)

Cats Ears (*Hypochoeris radiata*)(roots are also edible)

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)(roots and flowers are also edible)

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)(seeds are also edible if boiled or roasted)

Fat Hen (*Chenopodium alba*)(seeds are also edible if boiled or roasted)

Green Amaranth (*Amaranthus viridis*)(seeds are also edible if boiled or roasted)

Milk Thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*)

Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)(flowers are also edible raw or steamed)

Other weeds at Wondabyne with edible parts:

Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) - fruit when black

Lantana (*Lantana camara*) - fruit when black and soft

Wild Rose or Sweet Briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*) - fruit when orange-red (flowers also edible).

Further Information

'Wild Food in Australia' by A. & J. Cribb (Collins, 1987)

'Wild Food Plants of Australia' by T. Low (Angus & Robertson, 1988)

'Wild Herbs of Australia and New Zealand' by T. Low (Angus & Robertson, 1985)

'Australian Weeds' by G. Stern (Harper & Row, 1986)

'Predilection and Prediction: a Study of Aboriginal Sites in the Gosford-Wyong District' by

P. Vinnicombe (unpublished report to NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, 1980)

'Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney' by L. Robinson (1994).

Fi Bell, z

GROWING WILD FOODS, FIBRES & MEDICINES

On Sunday 28th May, 69 people from throughout Victoria gathered at Melbourne's Living Museum of the West to discuss the potential of indigenous plants to supply food, fibre and medicine. GAV is gearing up to distribute the proceedings of this session. While these ideas are being discussed and debated, GAV has also made an undertaking to have a regular column through which information on growing Victorian bush foods and other bush products can be distributed.

For our inaugural column, we have decided to focus on a Kangaroo Apple, Native Spinach and Sneezeweed, as they were identified at the workshop as plants with significant potential.

Bush foods and medicines are now becoming more and more popular, with items such as Wattle Seed and Bush Tomatoes being found on the tables of more and more food establishments. Also the use of oils such as tea tree and eucalypt oils have become an almost standard remedy for the common cold in most Australian households. At present the supply of bush foods seems to be largely to the gourmet food market.

Some of the more common foods and medicines can be found almost as close as your own backyard. The Large Kangaroo Apple (*Solanum laciniatum*) for example, is an attractive shrub with dense foliage and large, glossy dark green, lobed leaves, often tinged with purple (MCMC, 1994). The plant has attractive purple, star-shaped flowers that form yellow fruit which ripen to a dull orange. This species sometimes appears in gardens, as the seeds are readily spread by birds. Koorie tribes would eat the fruit when soft-ripe, as they are poisonous when green (Gott & Conran, 1991). The fruit is slightly bitter and can be eaten raw or roasted. If using Kangaroo Apple in your own cooking try making chutneys and jams, straining out the small hard stones and seeds.

Another such bush food is Warrigal Greens or New Zealand Spinach (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*) which was cooked and eaten by the *Endeavour* crew to prevent scurvy. In the 1880's it was also promoted in European and American seed catalogues as a hardy, summer-growing spinach substitute (Low, 1991). The plant requires moist, well-drained soils and in Melbourne, naturally occurs in the dune scrubs from Brighton to Mordiallac. It is a succulent herb spreading up to 2m, with yellow-green flowers and hard fruits. To bring out the natural flavours of Warrigal Greens steam the leaves and use in salads, quiches and pastries.

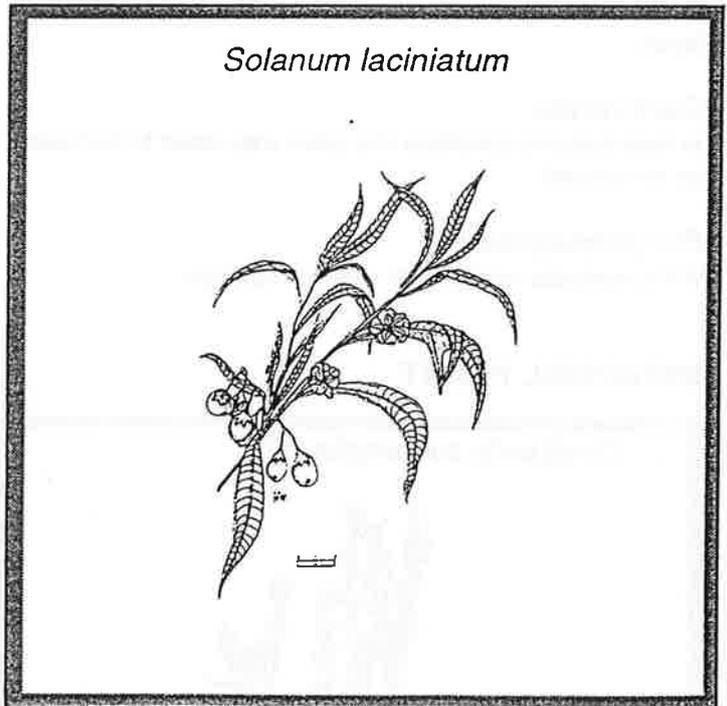
Some of our local native plants also have medicinal properties. Common Sneezeweed or Old Man Weed (*Centipeda cunninghamii*) is an important traditional medicine. A decoction can be used as a tonic for chest complaints, and as a lotion for the skin (Gott & Conran, 1991). It is a perennial herb with light green, toothed, aromatic leaves on ascending stems. The flowers are green-yellow buttons and the plant grows mostly during the warmer months. Its original habitat included grassy wetland, grassy open forest and riparian scrub.

REFERENCES

- Gott, B. and Conran, J. (1991). *Victorian Koori Plants*. Yangennnock Women's Group. Program Print.
- Low, T. (1991). *Wild Food Plants of Australia*. Angus & Robertson. Melbourne.
- Merri Creek Management Committee. (1994). *Plants of The Merri Merri*. MCMC. Brunswick.

SO YOU WANT TO GROW....

FOOD PLANT



Situation

Prefers sheltered position in moist, well drained soil; semi-shade. Although it can be very hardy and drought tolerant.

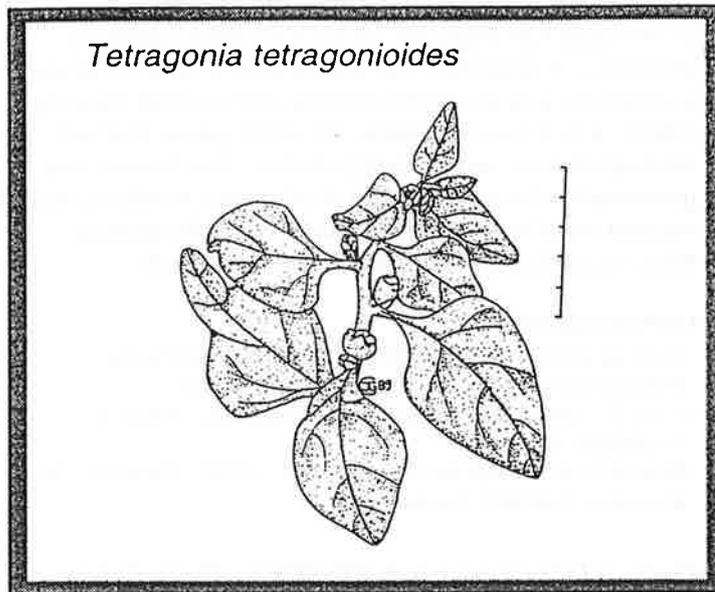
Care notes

Prune severely in late winter to encourage dense growth.

For propagators

Seed should be removed from the flesh before germination. An average of 16 days to germinate (in optimum conditions) and 80% average seed viability (Langkamp, 1987).

FOOD PLANT



Situation

Prefers well drained soils, in a sunny to hot position but needs adequate moisture. It will act as a perennial and layer.

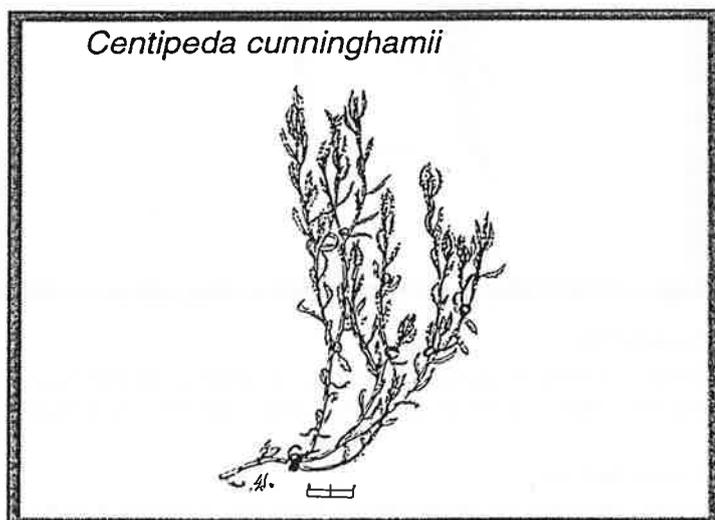
Care notes

In less suitable condition this plant may need to be treated as an annual.

For propagators

Will propagate easily from seed or cuttings.

MEDICINAL PLANT



Situation

Needs moist soils, can tolerate inundation. Does best in a sunny position. Can be used as ground-cover for bog gardens & pond edges.

Care notes

Prune to encourage dense growth.

For propagators

Can be propagated from seed or cuttings.

YUM - Wattleseed Cake!

Although indigenous to scrub and woodland vegetation communities on the coastline of Port Phillip Bay, *Acacia sophorae* (commonly known as Coastal Wattle) can spread beyond its range and invade other areas of remnant bushland. For those of you tackling this environmental weed, you might want to collect some of the ripe seed next time you're removing *A. sophorae* and use it in the following recipe.

How to prepare wattle seed for cooking.

Beth Gott kindly provided GAV with the following description:

Check to see the seed still has its elaisome, a structure on the outside of seeds thought to attract insects such as ants. For Coast Wattle it will be a brown attachment sitting on the outside of the seed. This is important as it contains oils important for cooking.

Take heavy-based frying pan and heat the seed over a hot gas burner. You don't need to add any cooking oil!

The seeds are ready when they give off a nutty smell and the seed coats of a few start to crack. It is similar to the way you would roast coffee beans.

MARIA'S WATTLE SEED CAKE**Cake:**

185g butter or margarine
1 cup castor sugar
3 eggs
1 tbs vanilla essence
Grated rind of 1 orange
1 cup of plain flour
3/4 cup of SR flour
1/4 cup of milk
1/4 cup of orange juice
1/4 cup of dry roasted wattle seed
1 bakers or ring tin

Instructions:

- cream butter & sugar until light
- beat in eggs
- add vanilla & orange rind
- add flour
- mix
- add milk, orange juice & wattle seed
- bake 180°C for approx. 50-60 minutes in greased tin

Orange Syrup:

- simmer 1/2 cup of water with rind of one orange for 5 minutes
- add - 1/3 - 1/2 cup of castor sugar
- Juice of 1/4 of an orange & 1-2 tbs lemon juice
- and simmer a little longer
- pour sieved syrup on warm cake from oven (remove tin first!)

Foraging in the 'burbs

By Project Officer Dave Francis

There are a number of native plants commonly used in suburban landscapes that represent a feast to those in the know. For those that aren't "in the know" the following paragraphs will give you a few pointers as to what to look for, how to prepare it and where you may find some of these delectable treats.

The flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*)

Very popular as street trees, flame trees can be found all throughout suburbia. The bright red flowers of these trees during the summer months makes them readily identifiable. When not in flower they are still easy to identify with their large lobed leaves and their peculiar dark brown fruits.

The pod-like fruits are approximately 10-18cm in length and hang in clusters from the tree. Inside you will find numerous yellow powdery seeds that are surrounded by a thin hairy husk. These hairs, to the unwary, are quite irritating to the skin and very nasty if inhaled or rubbed into the eyes. You can remove the hairs in a number of ways - one way is to rub them

off with gloves in a bucket of water. Another method is to burn them off over a fire whilst staying upwind from the smoke - be careful not to burn your seeds as the husk is quite flammable.

When the hairs are removed the cleaned seed can be roasted in a moderate oven. After roasting the seed coat is removed and the kernel eaten. The flavour is very pleasant and taste somewhat like a mixture of coffee and peanuts.

Midyim (*Austromyrtus dulcis*)

Midyim is a small attractive shrub with dagger-shaped leaves borne oppositely on the stem. This shrub is often used as an attractive edging to landscaped gardens. The small (5-10mm), white and freckled fruit is probably the most distinctive feature of midyim. The fruit ripens during summer to autumn.

Midyim fruit can often be collected in large quantities and consumed with absolute relish - without any preparation. The leaves are quite aromatic and if a few are added to a pot of tea a delightful brew results.

Small leaved lillipilli (*Syzygium luehmanii*)

The small leaved lillipilli or Riberry is another popular street tree in suburbia. It

has dense foliage and displays pink tips when putting on new growth. The leaves are small (2-5cm) and taper to a distinctive point, making the leaves tear-shaped in appearance. The small (8-13mm long) red fruit appears in great quantities during the summer months.

Although pleasant enough when eaten unprepared, the fruit's true worth shines through when made into a jam. The pulp is stewed up in a small quantity of water for some time. When stewed enough, a quantity of sugar equal to the weight of the original fruit is added and dissolved. Unlike a lot of jams Riberry jam does not require the addition of lemon juice. Allow this to boil for approximately 30-45 minutes. When ready pour the hot mixture into sterilised jars and cap.

After cooling the jam has a very pleasant spicy flavour.

Bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*)

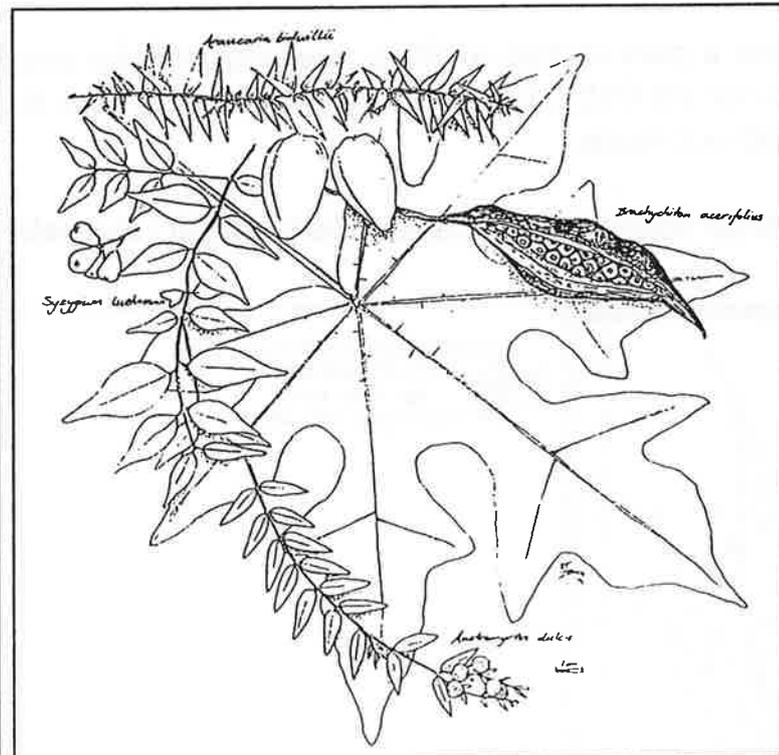
These very large trees can often be found gracing spacious parks and cemeteries. The bark is dark and rough, its leaves are lance-like in shape and come to a very sharp point. These trees produce very large cones (around 30cm diameter) around Autumn time, putting on a bumper crop about every third year. These 10kg cones can give you quite a headache after falling out of a 40m tall tree if you're in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is therefore very important to be wary of this

potentially fatal hazard.

There are many different ways of preparing bunya nuts. Firstly, they can be eaten raw - tasting fairly bland. They can be boiled in salty water - giving the nut a rubbery texture. I find bunya nuts the tastiest when roasted and sprinkled with a little salt. Roasting is done at a low temperature to reduce the risk of exploding nuts.

REFERENCE:

The proceedings of Greening Australia Victoria's 1995 seminar on "Growing Wild Foods, Fibres & Medicines" has been received, and the slim volume contains much of interest, including a report on the progress of the Southern Bush Food Industry Network by Gil Freeman of Tarnuk Bush Foods and Flowers (one of our members), papers from Dr. Beth Gott on "Indigenous plants of Victoria which may be grown commercially", and Greg Bain on "Ecological considerations for gathering and growing bush products", notes from regional workshops and an open forum on "Identifying the relevant issues", and a useful list of resources.



" CULTURE of the LAND; CUISINE of the PEOPLE"

This catchcry aptly describes an industry which could well be Australia's next "quiet achiever" over the next three years - our own native bushfood industry.

Recognising the potential of the industry and this produce the Federal agency of Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has established ANBIC (Australian Native Bushfood Industry Committee).

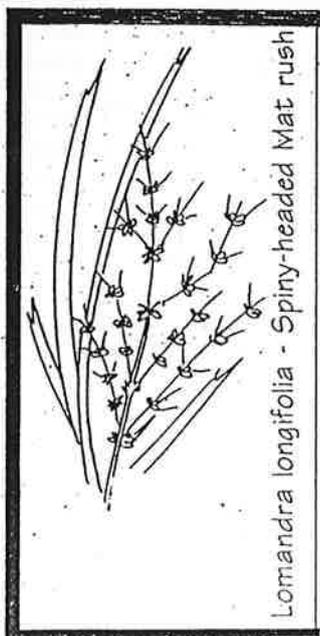
ANBIC has been charged with the responsibility of assessing the current status of the bushfood industry, its size and its scope as well as identifying and charting its future as a financially viable, sustainable Australian industry. This process includes the developing of a strategic management framework to facilitate the industry's national growth including an industry business and marketing plan.

A major outcome of ANBIC's work is the staging of an inter/national Conference titled "Culture of the Land; Cuisine of the People" to be held on May 3, 4, 5, 1996 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This conference will address the wide ranging factors affecting the current industry which include standards for growing and processing, research and development, value added food/ingredients and its applications, funding, employment and marketing and promotion.

Become a part of this exciting new industry by contacting the Conference Convenor on 015.519456 (phone/fax) to be sent the registration brochure and find out more.

For further information: Denise Hart ANBIC Secretary - 0411.852.644



AUSTRALIAN FOOD PLANTS
STUDY GROUP
323 Philp Ave.,
Frenchville, Qld. 4701