
NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 35.

FEBRUARY 1999.

323 Philp Ave.,
Frenchville.
Qld. 4701.
27/2/99.

Dear Members,

Outside it's muggy and overcast and trying very hard to rain again. We've had a few odd falls - enough to green up the grass and set the weeds growing - but so far the heavy rain to the north, south and west has stayed away from us. It's nice to have the country green again, but the creeks haven't run and the dams aren't full, so we need plenty more. Maybe our water-logged friends down south can send a bit of their excess our way?

A reminder that the biennial ASGAP conference and seminar is being held in Brisbane from July 10 to 16 this year, and the study groups have been asked to mount displays. Unfortunately, as it has not been scheduled in the school holidays, I will be unable to participate as I would like, so will have to rely very heavily on others, especially those in the Brisbane area. Any specimen material, and/or contributions of foodstuffs eg jam for tasting at Monday's afternoon tea will be gratefully received. I plan to fly down from Rocky on the Saturday for the study group leaders' meeting, stay over till I've given my presentation on Monday, and then fly home.

Jan Sked tells us she is busy revising "Go Native - Wild Food Cookbook" so that the new edition will be ready for sale at the Conference. I hear the Sked family have been eating some pretty interesting meals lately!

Does anyone know Jack Newman? He joined the study group last year, and I sent out the "introductory" package to the address on the envelope all right, but newsletter 34, sent to the same address, was returned to sender. The only address I have is Citibank Ltd in Brisbane. I assumed he worked there, but maybe it was a recycled envelope, so can anyone help locate this rather elusive member?

The last two issues sent to Joseph Kraatz of California USA have also been returned to sender without explanation, so at this point he too is off the subscriber list.

We have been notified that there will be a formation meeting for a national bush foods body held in Brisbane on 20 March. As well, a bush food workshop will be held either the last week of March or the

first week of April (Saturday or Sunday) in Brisbane. It will be hosted by Australian Bushfoods Magazine and will have a range of guest speakers including the Cribbs, John Wrench, and Rob Fletcher. For further information, contact Sammy Ringer at 38 Mountain View Rd, Maleny. 4552.

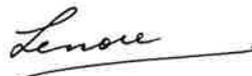
You will notice further on in this issue a small advertisement from Australian Bushfoods Magazine. The editor, Sammy Ringer, enquired whether we accepted paid advertising. We have had no policy one way or the other, and we have quite happily published what I suppose you could call advertorial material because of its information value (there is some further on), but this is something new. How do you feel about it? There's no denying it helps financially, but if members think it's inappropriate, we'll be guided by your views.

My eldest son and daughter-in-law brought me a present from a friend's place in SE Qld at Christmas - a complete Bunya cone, something we haven't had for years.

While trailing along Norman Road in North Rockhampton helping to "Clean Up Australia", we saw a small tree covered with magnificent white blossom on the fence line. Closer investigation identified it as *Capparis canescens*, so I'm keeping a bit of an eye on the developing fruit. It's quite a common plant around, growing in the buffer zone between the lanes of the divided road down to Yeppoon for example. There is some speculation that it might be the elusive "Warraburra" of the Aboriginal tribe from round Gracemere, which has not been conclusively identified, as it is very widespread in the area, and it's certainly one of the better edible fruits.

I had a query some time ago about *Lomandra longifolia* seeds being edible, which I had not heard of. However, since then, I've found two references which suggest they are. One was in the Rainforest Study Group's newsletter of July 1994. This recounted an interview with a Koori woman who said they knew the seeds as "bush rice", but the ripe seeds need to be soaked in water for some time to soften before cooking. The other was in Jennifer Isaacs' book *Bush Food*, where the seeds are listed as edible but with no further explanation.

Regards,



Lenore Lindsay and Rockhampton SGAP.

E-mail: lenorelindsay@hotmail.com

BE CAREFUL WITH WINE MADE FROM RAINFOREST FRUITS - a warning!

Don Yates notes that many study group members are putting various native fruits to good use by turning them into wine. His previous experience with this practice is that it invariably turns out "tainted" - "taint enough!". It also seems too slow to mature; he once matured a batch in bottles for as long as 3 days and it *still* wasn't ready!

From the Rainforest Study Group Newsletter 44.

EDIBLE SPECIMENS TABLED AT MEETINGS:

27/11/98: Speaker's topic - Winemaking with Australian fruits: *Backhousia citriodora* (leaves), *Euroschinus falcata* (fruit), *Syzygium australe* (fruit), *Geijera salicifolia* (medicinal), *Orthosiphon aristartus* (medicinal).

29/1/99: *Dioscorea bulbifera* (tuber), *Orthosiphon aristartus* (medicinal).

26/2/99: *Acacia aulacocarpa* (root), *A.salicina* (seed), *Geodorum neocaledonica* (tuber), *Syzygium paniculatum* (fruit), *Orthosiphon aristartus* (medicinal).

EXCURSIONS:

1/11/98: McGinty's property at Struckoill (near MtMorgan): A number of rare and endangered species were seen in the microphyll vine forest, though not many edible ones. *Austromyrtus bidwillii* (fruit), *Canthium odoratum* (fruit), *Cupaniopsis anacardiodes* (fruit), *Diospyros geminata* (fruit), *Ficus opposita*, *F.virens* (fruit, shoots), *Geitonoplesium cymosum* (shoot), *Hibiscus heterophyllus* (shoots, buds, flowers), *Planchonella pohlmaniana* (fruit), *Pleiogynum timorense* (fruit), *Capparis ornans*, *C.arborea* (fruit), *Cissus oblonga* (fruit), *Malaisia scandens* (seed aril), *Smilax australis* (fruit), *Tetrastigma nitens* (fruit).

6/12/99: Christmas barbecue at Hill's, North Rockhampton: *Backhousia citriodora* (leaves), *Eustrephus latifolius* (roots; fruit arils), *Geodorum neocaledonica* (tuber), *Grevillea spp.* (nectar), *Melaleuca tamarascina*, *M.thymifolia*, (nectar; useful bark; medicinal leaves), *Viola hederacea* (flower), *Orthosiphon aristartus* (purple and white forms), medicinal.

7/2/99: "Wahroonga" at Marmor: *Brachychiton australe*, *B.rupestre* (seeds, shoots, young roots, young wood, exudate), *Eremocitrus glauca* (fruit), *Alectryon diversifolius*, (fruit), *Pleiogynum timorense* (fruit), *Cucumis anguria** (fruit).

11/2/99: Combined working bee with Livingstone Remnant Vegetation Study Group, TAFE Bush Regeneration class, and Yeppoon State School P&C to salvage about 50 *Macrozamia miquellii*, *Xanthorrhoea sp.* and an assortment of other plants and relocate them at the Junior Landcare Environmental Trail at Yeppoon School, Lammermoor Native Gardens and the Bushland Centre.

ACRONYCHIA OBLONGIFOLIA: WHITE ASPEN. There is a report in "Australian Horticulture" Sept 1998 which describes White Aspen as important in horticulture and sustainable land management and an attractive species in landscaping. Many of you will know this small tree as it has a wide distribution from Victoria into Queensland. The fruit is claimed to have a unique sharp citrus flavour with the versatility of a lemon. Whole fruits, pulp or juice has been used for flavourings, in jams and as an infusion for a pleasant drink. Quantity of fruit per tree varies widely, as does propagation rate. Southern plants are said to germinate faster than northern forms.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

11 Lancaster Street
EAST BENTLEIGH
Victoria 3163
Telephone: 03 9578 1679
Email: rennick@iaccess.com.au
28 January 1999



Caladenia valida
courtesy
Geoff Carr and
VIRIDANS

Dear Lenore

I look forward to your informative Newsletter and to hear from other Australians who value our Australian Plants and are protecting them in their natural habitat and researching their past Aboriginal and future food and medicinal use.

As a member of South East Melbourne Region (Australian Plants Society), I have been concentrating on coordinating the rescue and study of threatened remnant local native plants in our area. This has resulted in the Local Primary School children rescuing these plants or/and propagating material for classroom propagation and planting in their school and the local Park where they will be cared for and studied by a special Friends Group and the City of Glen Eiras Parks and Gardens Staff. The Australian Plant Society (Victoria) has provided funding for the development of vandal proof, aesthetically unobtrusive and informative signage .

So far two of the many interesting plants now growing happily in the school and the park seem particularly interesting for further study.

One is the local Native Flax (linen and linseed) *Linum marginale* , the seed of which was eaten by the Aboriginal people and the fibre used for strong fishing lines and nets. The history of the use of flax as a fibre for weaving material, world wide, goes back to the Stone Age. Recent research has found that the essential dietary ingredient omega 3 oil is an important part of the Flax seed

The second plant is the Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*) growing in a number of forms from a rounded very spiny shrub to a beautiful, vertical almost spineless medium tree. The honey /perfume of the massed white flowers in Summer attract butterflies and small honey eating birds and other fauna. The leaves contain a UV light filtering chemical, utilised by the Aboriginal people and during World War 2 was developed as a sun block cream for airmen . The children would appreciate any further historical, food , medicinal or habitat, growing or landscaping information. We hope to produce an informative book on our remnant local native flora.

Yours sincerely

Stefanie Rennick

STEFANIE RENNICK

Watchorn's Hill.
Neika. Tas. 7054.
3/2/99.

Dear Lenore,

....I have been doing Bush Foods workshops for the Hobart Council on the Mt Wellington reserve. We collect berries and have bush barbecues. Every workshop has been booked out and they are proving to be very popular. Today I am taking children with disabilities on a special workshop and we will have an Aussie plant feast.

Enclosed are some notes I have put together for our Bushfood Cafe at the SGAP Flower Show.

Look forward to seeing you again in July.

Regards,

Kris Schaffer.

As we don't receive a great deal of information about southern food plants, these notes are reprinted in this issue. Thanks Kris. (Ed).

Picton
NSW 2571

8th February, 1999

Dear Lenore,

Many thanks for the latest issue (no. 34) of the Food Plants Study group newsletter. As usual, it contains plenty of interesting reading!

Some notes on propagation of *Pandanus spiralis*:

In July last year I visited some friends who live in Darwin and who also own a large bush property near the Adelaide river. Amongst the many interesting plants on their property are numerous mature *Pandanus spiralis* plants. This *Pandanus* species has edible fruit pulp and kernels, and the leaves can be used to make string, rope, dilly bags etc.

The fruit is an aggregate structure comprised of numerous wedge shaped fruitlets. The mature structure resembles a large, red pineapple when ripe. The ripe fruits are eagerly sought after by flying foxes, and feral pigs scavenge fallen fruitlets, helping disperse them widely.

When I visited the property I collected a couple of fruitlets of this interesting tropical plant. In early November, about three months after my return to NSW, I planted each fruitlet into a 140 mm pot containing a standard seed raising mix, then placed them on a bench in the fibreglass propagation house at the nursery where I work.

At that time of year temperatures in the propagation house are usually around 30 to 35 °C during the day, and around 20 to 25 °C at night. The pots were kept moist by hand watering as necessary.

Within five weeks both fruitlets had sprouted, each throwing up several lush shoots. Three months after planting, the young plants are now growing rapidly and are ready for potting on into 200 mm pots.

I thought this might be worth reporting, as my friends in Darwin had told me that they thought *Pandanus* were hard to grow from seed. Has anyone else in the group had any experiences with propagating and/or growing *Pandanus* species?

Also, I'm quite keen to try seeds of *Pandanus basedowii*. This beautiful plant is shrubby rather than tall and tree-like. It is endemic to the stone country of Kakadu and looks like it would make a very ornamental plant.

Unlike *P. spiralis*, the fruit pulp of *P. basedowii* is apparently not juicy and is not considered edible. However the seed kernels are used by local aboriginal people as a food.

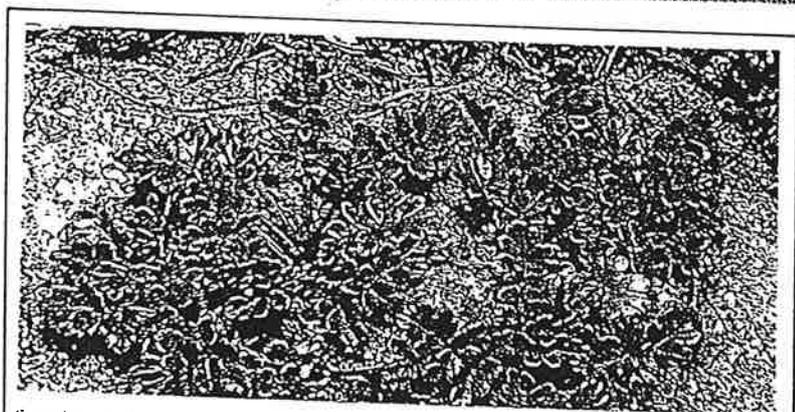
Has anyone in the group grown this species? Does anyone know of a source for seeds?!

Finally, if anyone is interested in obtaining young plants of *Dioscorea hastifolia*, the Western Australian native yam, these are currently available from Hamilton's World of Cacti, Fourth Avenue, Llandilo, NSW, 2147.

All the best,



Brian Faulkner



Sea celery (*Apium prostratum*) is a common herb of southern Australian beaches.

Uses: Sea celery was a significant vegetable of Australia's first explorers and colonists. It was first eaten by Captain Cook at Botany Bay, and later by Labillardiere in Tasmania in 1792. The journals of no fewer than four First Fleet Officers refer to its use as a vegetable (calling it "parsley" or

"celery") during Sydney's initial starving years. In Tasmania in the 1830s botanist Daniel Bunce said it "forms an excellent ingredient in soup, and otherwise may be used as a pot herb". Around Albany in Western Australia it was even cultivated by colonists as a vegetable.!

6.

Issue 10 out now!

AUSTRALIAN



Bushfoods
magazine

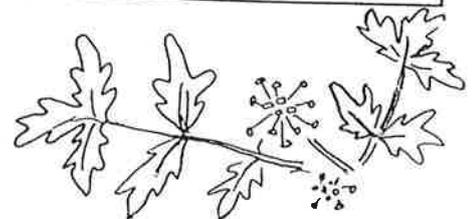
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PLANTS OF TASMANIA
NURSERY AND GARDENS
65 HALL ST RIDGEWAY TAS 7054

PH 03 6239 1583
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TASMANIAN BUSH TUCKER

As many of you are aware there are some native plants in Tasmania which have edible portions. Fruits, shoots, berries, leaves, seeds, sap, flowers, pollen or tubers can be edible in some species - even palatable.

Unfortunately our European colonising predecessors, by wiping out most of the original inhabitants, so destroyed most of the wealth of knowledge, gained over many thousands of years.

Some small portions of information were recorded by early white botanists in Tasmania, and some from archaeological remains, but most of the knowledge we can access, originates from Aboriginal people on the mainland. (Relevant for the Tasmanian species that also occur interstate.)

Kris Schaffer has a keen interest in the edible nature of our indigenous flora, and has prepared the following notes from her research. She is a member of the Australian Food Plant Study Group set up by The Society For Growing Australian Plants.

WARNING Please note that this information has been obtained from a number of references, and we pass it on in good faith, however we advise extreme caution. As well as many plants being edible, **some are poisonous**. (On some plants one can find both edible and poisonous bits.) At all times be cautious. It could be very unpleasant (or worse) if one started to experiment. Be extra cautious with children. Three points should be stressed.

- 1. Plant Identification** Don't guess. If you're not positive on the identification of your plant, or which bits are the edible bits, either find out from someone who knows, or forget it.
- 2. Conservation** Please observe State and Federal regulations designed for the protection of our native flora. (Especially if you're into wood chipping.) Remember also that for our native birds and animals, these edible bits (especially fruits and berries) may be part of their existence - so harvest lightly, or grow your own.
- 3. Partake Sparingly** Some foods have substances that may be harmful in excess. Plants in the wild can be very variable, so start with small amounts. (For example: Many people have heard of early Europeans using Sassafras to make a tea or tonic. However Sassafras contains safrole, a possible cancer causing agent, so its use now is not recommended.

specialist growers of the Tasmanian flora

EDIBLE BERRIES AND FRUIT

Many berries and fruit we may not find very palatable, depending on individual taste buds and being accustomed to a western diet. Making a small jar of jam, sauce or chutney can be an option.

Most of the berries and fruit ripen in late summer and autumn and can be available into winter. If you'd like to indulge with more than just a nibble we suggest you grow your own plants in the garden. Many of these plants are quite hardy but some need that extra special spot.

Aristotelia peduncularis **Heart Berry** Fat, fairly hollow berries, often heart shaped, and occurring in moist shady forests in summer / autumn. Berries can come in various colours - white, pink, red or purple-black. Can be bitter in taste. (We have these in stock - they like a cool, moist shady situation.)

Billardiera longiflora **Climbing Blue Berry** A vigorous vine with cream tubular flowers in spring (which help feed honey-eaters) followed in summer and autumn by shiny purple-blue capsicum shaped berries. Rarely also in white, and on the coast the scrambling vines commonly have dusky red berries. Like the heart berry - a largely hollow receptacle. These berries are ideal for jam or chutney. Fresh fruits have a floury texture. Save some of the seeds and return to your garden or bush. Jelly is also yummy.

The climbing blue berry is quite easy to grow, producing berries after a few years.

Billardiera scandens **Apple Berry** A vine from northern Tasmania with a fleshy fruity berry which is still a pale green colour when ripe. It is recommended you spit out the seeds and rough skin. The flesh is quite sweet with a flavour described as being similar to stewed apples. The fruit ripens in autumn.

We have just germinated this plant so hope to have plants ready by late spring or summer.

Carpobrotus rossii **Pigface** This prostrate coastal succulent plant has purple flowers and edible reddish fruits in summer. This is a great fruit, a bit like a salty fig. (On the wild west coast of Tasmania when you are searching for a way out, it's a good excuse to stop and "pig" out.) Suck out the tiny seed and sweet pulp from the base of the flowering stem. The green leaves can also be eaten in a salad or cooked.

Coprosma hirtella **Coffee Berry** A bush to 1.5m with pale green rounded leaves. The reddish berries on female plants are edible when almost red-black. (A bush in my garden was almost demolished as our dog discovered the berries).

Coprosma quadrifida and *Coprosma nitida* **Currant Bushes** Prickly bushes up to 1.5m or more. The female plants can be laden with shiny orange berries in autumn. The silver eye finches will tell you when they are ripe. Nice in pies, cakes and tarts.

***Coprosma moorei* Blue-Berried Coprosma** Ground hugging alpine plant with tiny succulent edible blue berries.

***Coprosma pumila* Creeping Coprosma** An alpine plant from the central plateau. Female plants have tiny edible orange-red berries.

Cyathodes sp. These bushes can produce wonderful displays of berries which are edible but not very palatable. Garden grown bushes may produce berries of greater succulence.

***Dianella tasmanica* Tasman Flax Lily** The blue berries from this hardy strap-leaved plant can be made into jam.

***Exocarpus cupressiformis* Native Cherry** These handsome pine-like plants produce sweet, tiny red edible berries in summer, attached to the end of their green seeds. (This plant has not been the easiest to propagate, and we seldom have many in stock, however we hope to have a decent batch coming on in a couple of years.)

***Gaultheria hispida* Snow Berry** This bush for shady moist sites, comes alive in summer to autumn with the whitest of white berry-like fruits. They're edible but not particularly palatable.

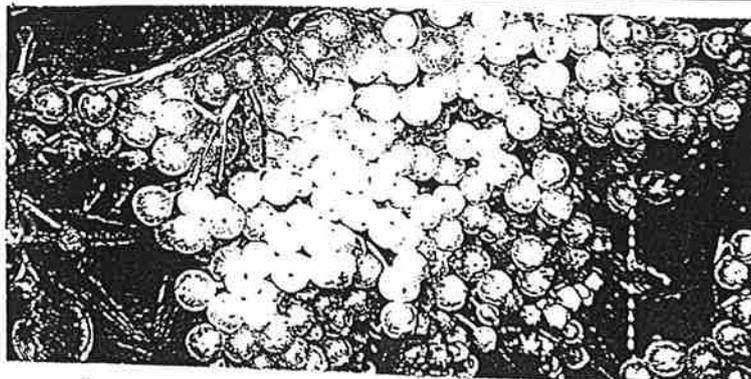
***Microcachrys tetragona* Creeping Strawberry Pine** Female plants of this prostrate alpine conifer bear tiny raspberry-like fruit in late summer and autumn. (My favourite of all the berries. Great with marinated quail - Tasmanian of course.) We have this conifer in stock, but don't plan the dinner party yet - they're not fast!

***Podocarpus lawrencei* Mountain Plum Pine** Another conifer, with small red berries on female plants, similar in appearance to *Exocarpus*.

***Rubus gunnianus* Alpine Raspberry** A prostrate suckering plant, which can be invasive in a moist spot, displays tiny red fruits in the summer, on female plants.

***Rubus parvifolius* Native Raspberry** A scrambling prickly plant (Like a benign blackberry) with small pinkish flowers followed by small pink to red fruits. High vitamin C content.

***Sambucus gaudichaudiana* White Elderberry** Small cream juicy edible berries. Unfortunately we're out of stock of this interesting plant.



S. gaudichaudiana

Yellow elderberry (*S. australasica*) has yellow fruits and grows on rainforest edges north from Gippsland. White elderberry (*S. gaudichaudiana*) has larger clusters of white fruit and prefers cooler forests and seashore scrubs between Gympie and Beachport, South Australia.

Uses: Joseph Maiden wrote in 1889: "The fruit of these two native elders is fleshy and sweetish, and is used by the Aborigines for food."

***Solanum laciniatum* Kangaroo Apple** Our Tasmanian representative of this widespread Australian genus which contains many poisonous and many edible species. (Exotic relatives include the potato, tomato and deadly nightshade - a fascinating tribe!) The fruit of the kangaroo apple is **poisonous** when green, but edible when ripening to a yellow or orange colour; so treat with caution. And there's more - for many years this Australian species has been cultivated in Russia to extract substances for steroid and oral contraceptive use. The ripe fruits are high in vitamin C, and make a great chutney. The Tasmanian Aboriginals placed partially ripe fruits in sand heaps to ripen away from birds.

***Tasmannia lanceolata* Native Pepper** Tasmania's shrub of the decade. Many restaurants round the state now include meals flavoured with the dried berries or leaves. The Pepperberry Restaurant in Launceston has been running for many years now. (One of our customers will now settle for nothing less on his food than our local pepper-berry.) And as a bonus, it's such a handsome plant in the garden. Female plants have the berries, males have the more showy flowers. The berries can be dried, (eg. fan forced oven) pickled, or frozen to keep. Many new products are springing up - pepper-berry liqueur, wine, damper and icecream!

EDIBLE LEAVES AND TEAS

***Acaena novae-zealandiae* Buzzy** Leaves can be infused for tea. (And seeds can be infused into your socks!) A plant I really quite like in the garden with its glossy leaves, but it can need a regular trim.

***Acacia mearnsii* Black Wattle** A bark tea can be used for indigestion. Caution - contains tannin.

***Atherosperma moschatum* Sassafras** Caution - see item 3, above. Leaves can be infused for tea - use only a small amount. Early settlers drank this tea. Has also been used to make wine.

***Baekea gunniana* Alpine Baeckea** Leaves in cooking (eg. scones or roast meat) or as a refreshing tea. Lemon tasting and aromatic. Leaves can be used fresh or dried. (We have prostrate and upright forms for sale - nice beside pathways to brush past!)

***Carpobrotus rossii* Pigface** The succulent green leaves of this coastal ground-cover can be eaten in a salad or cooked.

***Correa alba* White Correa** The leaves of this coastal shrub can be infused for tea.

Kennedia prostrata **Running Postman** Another mainly coastal plant. The leaves can be infused for tea, the stems can be used for twine and the nectar from the flower, for a drink. What a plant!

Kunzea ambigua **Sweet Scented Kunzea** Can be infused as a tea and included as a flavouring in cooking. (There is a hand cream available now, with a Tasmanian, Kunzea based perfume. Very nice too.)

Leptospermum rupestre **Mountain Tea Tree** Makes a very nice tea. *Leptospermum riparium* and *L. lanigerum* can also be used for tea and as herbs for cooking.

Mentha australis **Native Mint** Caution: Use sparingly. Too much can muck around with oestrogen balances. Tea for coughs and colds and also for food flavouring.

Phebalium montanum **Alpine Phebalium** Leaves can be used in a salad. eg potato salad. (It's flowering now in the nursery, and scores 10 out of 10 in that department. A beautiful groundcover.)

Tetragonia sp **New Zealand Spinach or Warrigal Greens** Salads, raw, steamed or as substitute spinach pie. Tetragonia was taken to France as early as 1820 and has been used as a steamed or stirfry vegetable in many households. (Editors note: I heard a French chef interviwed recently. He grew up with Tetragonia growing in the family vegetable garden, and was surprised when he visited Australia to find it growing wild around the coast, and not even recognised as a food plant!)

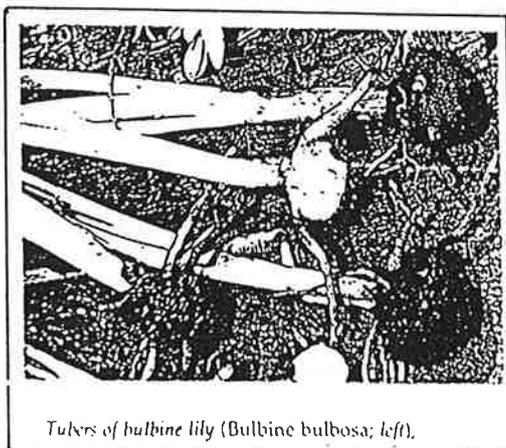
SEEDS

Acacia (Wattle) seeds are used in biscuits, icecream and chocolate. They have a high protein content. The dried seeds are commonly roasted and ground. Green pods can also be cooked on a cool fire and the green seeds eaten - they taste like peas. (For further information on wattle seeds, refer to Bushfoods Magazine No. 4).

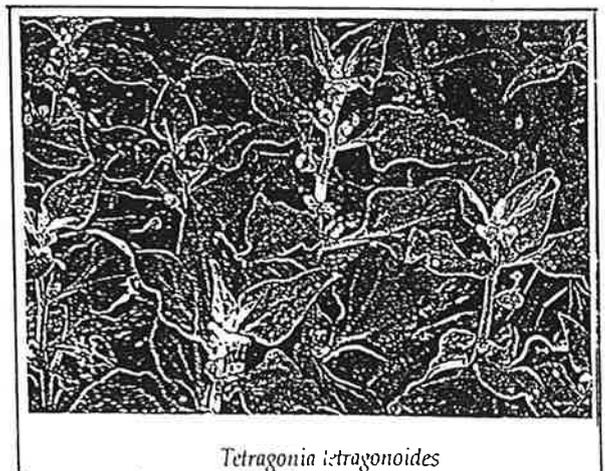
Tasmanian wattle seeds which can be used are:

Acacia mucronata **Narrow Leaf Wattle**, *Acacia verniciflua* **Varnish Wattle**, *Acacia verticillata* **Prickly Moses**, *Acacia melanoxylon* **Blackwood**, *Acacia dealbata* **Silver Wattle** and *Acacia sophorae* **Coast Wattle**.

Bulbine glauca **Rock Lily** The seeds can be eaten like peas. The roots can also be eaten.



Tubers of bulbine lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*; left).



Tetragonia tetragonoides

EDIBLE FLOWERS, NECTAR AND POLLEN

Acacia dealbata Silver Wattle The pollen and/or flower can be used in pancakes. (Perhaps not for people with allergy to wattle pollen).

Banksia marginata Silver Banksia and *Banksia serrata* Saw Leaf Banksia Pour a cup of warm water over the flower spike to get the nectar. (NB Leave the flowers on the bushes for the honey-eaters and pigmy possums and also so the plants can set seed.)

Callistemon sp Bottle Brushes As for banksias.

Grevillea australis and *Hakea sp* Nectar can be sucked from the flowers or eaten as a garnish on salads.

Kennedia prostrata Running Postman Nectar from flowers. Grow your own as a garnish for salads.

Melaleuca sp Paperbarks Pollen from flowers can be eaten.

Richea scoparia and *Telopea truncata* Waratah Nectar can be eaten.

Viola hederaceae Native Violet and *Wahlenbergia stricta* Bluebell Flowers can be used in a salad or as a garnish. How's this for a recipe - coat flowers with beaten egg whites and dust with icing sugar. Great for cakes or for children with icecream or deserts.

Xanthorrhoea sp Grasstree Pour water over cones for nectar, or pick a few flowers and infuse.

These references have been used in the collation of this information as well as personal experience.

Australian Bushfoods Magazine
(we stock this publication - \$4.95)

Wild Food in Australia - AB & JW Cribb

Bush Tucker - Tim Low

The Bushfood Handbook - Vic Cherikoff & Jennifer Isaacs

Bush Foods - Jennifer Isaacs

(*Australian Plants* / 1998 Sep)

The tree with the stone on the outside

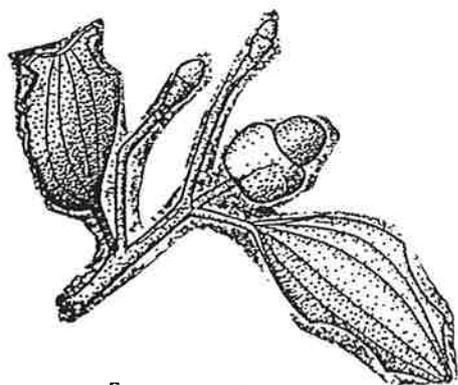
The Tasmanian tree known locally as the Native Cherry looks nothing like a cherry tree; it has more the appearance of a Cypress or Casuarina but it is not related to these trees either. It is also a partial parasite on other plants but it is not a mistletoe, although it is a distant relative.

Exocarpos cupressiformis is a member of the Santalaceae family, along with Sandalwoods and the Quandong, a tree of arid Australia with edible fruits of some commercial potential. The family is widespread in temperate and tropical regions throughout the world.

There are 10 *Exocarpos* species in Australia and all but one is endemic. Tasmania has 5 species but *E. cupressiformis* is the most widespread and obvious species. It is an understorey tree of open Eucalypt forest and woodland in the eastern two-thirds of the state, often in the drier and better drained situations. If you are fortunate enough to live in a wooded area with existing *Exocarpos* trees, protect and keep them, and value them as they are quite beautiful and ornamental trees. You will be unlikely to reestablish them once they are gone.

In appearance it is very cypress-like, hence the specific name 'cupressiformis'. It has many upright branches but the outer branchlets become pendulous in mature trees giving a soft graceful appearance. The branchlets are usually a yellowish-green often with bronze toning but the actual leaves are reduced to small scales. The cream flowers are minute, in short spikes.

An unusual characteristic is that although the fruit is a globular nut about 0.5 cm in diameter, the stalk of the fruit swells, becomes succulent and turns bright red and this has led to the common name of Native Cherry. It is



Exocarpos latifolius



said to be a tasty little morsel which was much sought after by the local aboriginal tribes and the early settlers and is still eaten by a number of native animals and birds. The generic name *Exocarpos* means—'exo' outside, and 'carpos' fruit, referring to the nut or stone being outside the fleshy part of the fruit.

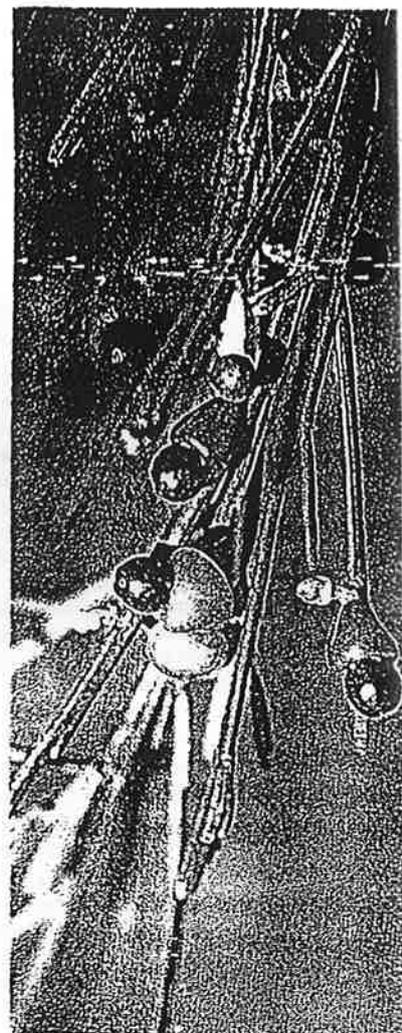
Exocarpos is a root parasite, as are many members of the Santalaceae family. The roots develop a specialized organ called a haustorium which grows out from the root and attaches by means of suckers to the roots of nearby host plants. It penetrates the roots of the host without causing damage or injury and obtains nutrients direct from the host. It uses other woody plants as hosts and not non-woody plants such as grasses or lilies.

Exocarpos is not an obvious parasite and does not usually adversely affect the surrounding vegetation that it is using as hosts. This is no doubt due to its wide host range; its roots appear to attach to many trees and shrubs including Eucalypts. If *Exocarpos* was transplanted along with an accompanying host plant it usually survived, but those transplanted without a conjoined host plant usually died within a few months.

They have great potential as ornamental plants but problems of propagation have to be overcome. Sowing fresh seed must be done with a suitable host plant. There has been limited success with stem and root cuttings. This is an ideal project for plant propagators. Native Cherry can then be grown as a specimen tree or a multi-trunked copse encouraged by a little root pruning.

— Philip Milner

Australian Plants: <A1059>



Exocarpos cupressiformis



[Subtropical Farm Forestry Newsletter / 1998 Oct]

BLUE QUANDONG

Elaeocarpus grandis



OTHER NAMES: Silver quandong, brush quandong, blue fig, coolan

FIELD NOTES: Quandong is a tall majestic rainforest tree with open, almost horizontal branches that carry slender leaves with finely serrated edges. The blue fruits, about 2-3 cm in diameter, consist of a thin layer of sour green flesh surrounding a large, spherical, very nobbly stone. They ripen from May to January.

Blue quandong grows mainly beside streams in dense coastal and mountain rainforests. It is unrelated to desert quandong.

USES: Quandong fruits in season are favourite fare of fruit pigeons, especially wompoos, top-knots and purple-crowned pigeons. Laden trees can be located by the beat of flapping wings. Aborigines once gathered the fallen fruits, sometimes kneading them with water into an edible paste. They are sour, insipid, and not very nutritious. They contain no thiamine and only traces of vitamin C.



Blue Quandong available as tissue cultures

For the last four years scientists at Vitroplant of Mudgeeraba on the Gold Coast have been undertaking an extensive program of research and development into the selection, tissue culture clonal propagation and use of Blue Quandong (*Elaeocarpus grandis*) for Farm Forestry.

Blue Quandong is known to be one of Australia's fastest growing rainforest timbers.

The tree matures in 16-18 years and provides a comparable yield to hoop pine in half of that tree's growing cycle. Blue Quandong timber is recognized as one of the famous range of banding timbers and is priced similarly to clear grain hoop and radiata pine.

Accordingly, it is a most desirable tree for use in timber plantations. It not only gives a quick return, it also modifies the environment within the plot and enhances the conditions for other slower growing species.

The tree produces an excellent timber. It is used in a wide range of applications including structural and furniture products and is a much sought after timber that has been largely cut out of natural stands.

For some time now, the growth pattern of Blue quandong has attracted the attention of many tree growers and governmental institutions. Trial plantings have been conducted in a number of locations. All have proven its growth characteristics and provided valuable information about its management requirements. Typically, trees in trial plantings in Queensland have reached 8.0 m in two years.

Vitroplant clonally propagated plants provide healthy elite

stock that eliminates plantation diversity. A Blue Quandong 10 acre demonstration plantation has been established in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales.

Trial plantings to confirm Quandong suitability for forestry in tropical regions have also been established in both the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Results to date are positive.

— Marek Lubomski, Vitroplant. Phone 07-5525 3023.

[Q Ed: Blue Quandong is not related to West Australian Quandong, *Santalum acuminatum*, although the pitted seeds are quite similar in appearance].

Subtropical Farm Forestry: <A1920>



18 year old Blue Quandong in Brisbane



Tissue cultured Blue Quandong ready for planting