
NEWSLETTER

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323 Philp Ave.,
Frenchville.
Qld. 4701.
26/1/2005.

Dear Members and subscribers,

Happy New Year to you all, and best wishes for the coming year. I had hoped to be writing this a month or two earlier, but it didn't work out that way.

However, I have some excellent news to report: the State Member for Rockhampton, Hon Robert Schwarten MP, has made the copying facilities in his office available to photocopy our newsletter, so that particular problem has now been solved, for which I am very thankful.

Personally, I have had an eventful and extremely busy last six months. Mid-year I was fortunate enough to spend a month visiting family in Yokohama, and had a lovely time doing ordinary grandmother stuff with my two grand-daughters (and their parents). As it was summer and we spent a lot of time walking through the neighbourhood to kindy, playgrounds, shops, beach, etc, I had ample opportunity to closely observe the pocket handkerchief gardens, and the local garden shops. It was quite exciting to see the lovely effects achieved using plants from all over the world, including many Australian natives, in confined spaces and containers, and among the cut flowers and "potted colour" in the florists'. Unfortunately, there was little evidence of edible Aussie plants around.

Then I was out of action for the best part of a couple of months with a ragged wound in my lower right leg, sustained when ambushed by a dead tree while out walking "for my health" would you believe? Some very fancy medical needlework did the trick, and all that remains is a rather spectacular scar. It did cramp my style for a while though.

We managed a few days camping up at Cape Palmerston National Park south of Sarina at the end of September. The fish were scarce, and the bush was so dry and stressed there was little of particular interest to see among the plants, though I recognised a number of potential food sources, as well as the mangroves and saltpan succulents.

Our other two grand-daughters (and their parents) visited later in the year, followed by our daughter and her partner from Adelaide. In between all this daily life went on.

Finally, we are just back from a month in Tasmania, where we spent time with old friends, both at their home in Burnie, and touring round in our camper-trailer. We had a great time, and while food figured largely, there weren't a lot of native ingredients involved apart from *Tasmania*. That, of course, featured prominently. We tried Native Pepper flavoured cheeses, gin and vodka, chutneys and sauces, sausage, stuffing mix and shortbread (surprisingly good!), as well as dishes using either ground leaf or berries as one of the condiments. The next most common native ingredients we came across in food were Lemon Myrtle and kelp. We also bought dried berries and a variety of mixes to bring home and try using.

As tourism expands in the Island State, there would seem to be plenty of opportunity for value-adding using native Australian food plants.

So now we're home catching up and sorting out, hence this edition of the newsletter.

Regards,

Lenore Lindsay and Rockhampton SGAP.

E-mail: lenorelindsay@hotmail.com

EDIBLE SPECIMENS TABLED AT MEETINGS:

25/6/04: *Acacia holosericea* (seeds), *Brachychiton bidwillii* (seeds, root), edible ripe fruit of *Elaeocarpus grandis*, plant of a *Marsilea* sp. with edible sporocarps, *Sterculia quadrifida* (seed kernels), red form of *Melaleuca viridiflora*, *M.fluviatilis* (nectar).

23/7/04: *Acacia holosericea* (seeds), *A.podalyriifolia* (flowers), *Brachychiton bidwillii* (seeds), *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (nectar, medicinal leaves, bark to wrap food), *Myoporum acuminatum*, *M.montanum* (fruit), *Sterculia quadrifida* (seed kernels), and a number of nectar-filled *Grevillea* hybrids.

27/8/04: *Acacia decora* (edible gum), *A.macradenia* (seed), *Bombax ceiba* (flowers), *A.podalyriifolia* (flowers), *Brachychiton australe* (seeds, root, jelly from wood pulp), *Dendrothoe glabrescens*, *Eleagnus triflora*, *Myoporum acuminatum*, *Viscum articulatum* (fruit), *Sterculia quadrifida* (seed kernels), *Grevillea banksii*, *G.longistyla*, *G.obtusifolia*, a number of *Grevillea* hybrids (nectar), *Melaleuca leucadendra* (nectar, medicinal leaves, bark to wrap food), *Viola betonicifolia* (flowers), *Orthosiphon aristartus* (medicinal).

27/9/05: *Brachychiton bidwillii* (seeds), *Myoporum acuminatum*, *Dianella* sp. (fruit), *Sterculia quadrifida* (seed kernels), *Acacia salicina* (seeds), *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, *M.fluviatilis* (nectar, medicinal leaves, bark to wrap food), *Callistemon salignus*, *Grevillea banksii*, and a number of *Grevillea* hybrids (nectar).

22/10/04: *Citrus glauca*, *Psychotria daphnoides*, *Cordyline stricta*, *Dianella* sp., *Mallotus discolor*, *Syzygium* sp. (fruits), *Erythrina vespertilio* (root).

26/11/04: *Amyema mackayense* (fruit), *Grevillea banksii*, *G. longistyla*, *G. striata*, a number of *Grevillea* hybrids (nectar), *Syzygium luehmannii*, *Terminalia porphyrocarpa* (fruits).

28/1/05: Red form of *Melaleuca viridiflora* (nectar), *Orthosiphon aristartus* (medicinal), *Syzygium luehmannii* (fruit).

EXCURSIONS:

4/7/04: Capricorn International Resort area, off the Kelly's Landing Road: *Acacia disparrima* (root), *Ficus obliqua*, *F. virens* (fruit, shoots, medicinal sap), *Euroschinus falcata* (fruit), *Pipturis argenteus* (fruit), *Leptospermum polygalifolia* (leaves for tea; flowers the source of medicinal jellybush honey), *Banksia integrifolia* (nectar), *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (nectar, medicinal leaves), *Melastoma affine* (fruit), *Blechnum cartilagineum* (rhizomes), *Lygodium microphyllum* (rhizomes), *Pteridium esculentum* (rhizomes, fiddleheads).

31/7-1/8/04: Blackdown Tableland weekend campout: Mimosa Creek was dry, and the only water was a small trickle over Rainbow Falls. On top of this there had been serious bushfires. Among the regrowth were: *Dianella caerulea* (fruit), *Hardenbergia violacea* (leaves as a tonic tea), *Melastoma affine* (fruit), *Banksia oblongifolia*, *B. spinulosa* (nectar), *Clematis glycinoides* (leaves crushed and sniffed for headaches), *Macrozamia platyrhachis* (seeds after extensive treatment).

5/9/04: Waterpark Creek, Byfield: *Acacia disparrima* (root), *Banksia integrifolia* (nectar), *Dodonaea triquetra* (dried capsules as a hop substitute for brewing), *Ficus congesta* var *congesta* (fruit, medicinal sap), *Corymbia intermedia*, *Grevillea banksii*, *Eucalyptus crebra* (nectar), *Hibiscus heterophyllus* (buds, flowers, shoots, roots), *Lantana camara** (fruit), *Melodinus australis*, *Freycinetia scandens*, *Cissus hypoglauca*, *Smilax australis* (fruit), *S. glycyphylla* (fruit, leaves), *Dianella caerulea*, *Diospyros fasciculosa*, *D. pentamera* (fruit), *Cassytha filiformis* (fruit), *Dioscorea transversa* (roots), *Eustrephus latifolius* (roots, aril), *Flagellaria indica* (fruit, young leafy shoots), *Lygodium reticulatum* (rhizomes), *Melastoma affine* (fruit), *Persoonia virgata*, *Planchonia careya*, *Terminalia porphyrocarpa* (fruit), *Piper novae-hollandiae* (fruit, ground dry seeds), *Pogonolobus reticulatus* (seeds), *Xanthorrhoea latifolia* (growing tip, leaf bases), *Gahnia aspera* (seeds), *Rubus moluccanus*, *R. parviflora* (fruit), *Macrozamia miquellii* (treated seeds), *Blechnum orientale* (rhizomes), *Pteridium esculentum* (rhizomes, fiddleheads), *Bowenia serrulata* (treated seeds and tuber), *Livistona decipiens* (palm "cabbage"), *Cordyline murchisoniae* (underground stem).

3/10/04: Alligator Creek: *Acacia disparrima* (root), *Corymbia tessellaris*, *Eucalyptus tereticornus* (nectar), *E. coolabah* (emergency water source), *Diospyros geminata*, *Drypetes australasica*, *Rapanea variabilis* (fruit), *Melaleuca bracteata*, *M. fluviatilis*,

M. quinquenervia, *M. trichostachya* (nectar, medicinal leaves), *Myoporum acuminatum* (fruit), *Nauclea orientalis* (fruit), *Dodonaea viscosa*, *D. triquetra* (seed capsules used as a hop substitute), *Pogonolobus reticulatus* (seeds).

7//11/04: Frenchville State School at the request of the Administration, to identify and label the trees in the school grounds. This is a massive task; a mixture of natives and exotics with many unknowns that were probably originally nursery purchases of unknown provenance, for which no records exist. We managed about a quarter of the school grounds in the course of the afternoon. Native species included: *Acacia disparrima* (root), *Acacia macradenia*, *A. salicina* (seed), *Brachychiton rupestris* (seeds, root, jelly from wood pulp), *Castanospermum australe* (seeds edible after prolonged treatment, very dangerous without, medicinal research subject), *Corymbia citriodora* (nectar, lemon flavoured leaves added to tea and used medicinally), *Cupaniopsis anacardioides* (fruit), *Ficus opposita* (fruit, shoots, medicinal sap), *Leptospermum petersonii* (lemon flavoured leaves for tea), *Pleiogynum timorense* (fruit), *Pogonolobus reticulatus* (seeds), *Syzygium australe* (fruit), and a large number of *Grevilleas*, *Eucalypts*, *Melaleucas* and *Callistemons* (nectar).

5/12/04: Christmas lunch on Mt Archer: *Acacia disparrima* (root), *Diospyros geminata*, *Drypetes australasica*, (fruit), *Eucalyptus media* (nectar), *Euroschinus falcata*, *Exocarpus latifolius*, (fruit), *Ficus opposita*, *F. platypoda* (fruit, shoots, medicinal sap), *Lantana camara** (fruit), *Planchonia careya*, *Syzygium australe* (fruit), *M. viminalis* (nectar), *Corymbia citriodora* (nectar, leaf), *Cissus oblonga* (fruit, root), *Eustrephus latifolius* (roots), *Geitonoplesium cymosum* (shoot), *Passiflora foetida**, *P. suberosa** (fruit), *Grewia latifolia* (fruit), *Cycas media*, *Macrozamia miquellii* (treated seed), *Pteridium esculentum* (rhizomes, fiddleheads), *Rubus moluccanus*, *R. parviflora*, *R. probus* (fruit), *Xanthorrhoea latifolia* (growing tip, leaf bases).

World Wide Wattle Website:

This website (worldwidewattle.com) is a collaborative project involving the Shire of Dalwallinu, the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Canberra based Australian Tree Seed Centre (part of CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products).

Information focuses on the scientific, social and cultural importance of Wattles. It includes descriptions and photographs of the species, information about where they grow and how many species occur in different parts of the world, information on the cultivation, utilisation and taxonomy of Wattles.

Some of the many areas where Acacias have actual and potential application are in the production of wood products (sawn timber, furniture, pulp, reconstituted wood products, fuelwoods, craftwoods and musical instruments), secondary plant products (tannin, adhesives, gums, essential oils), environmental utilisation (reclamation of degraded and often salinised land which is often caused by over-clearing), seeds as food for human consumption, as a source of fodder, in horticulture/floriculture and as a host plant for the valuable Sandalwood (and Quandong) tree.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brisbane. Qld.
1.7.04

Dear Lenore,

This message came to me by a very roundabout path, as Technical Officer of SGAP Qld Inc., but you might like to know about it and perhaps pass it on to your members. But please make sure at the same time that they already know about (or will check up) and will adhere to any relevant Government/AQIS regulations about import/export of seeds, especially of rare species.

(Dr) Elwyn Hegarty.

I am Creator and Director of the Tropical Adventure Botanical Garden and President of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council International, Inc.

We would like to obtain seeds of Australian native fruiting plants for our Botanical Garden Australia subdivision. The seeds are for research, breeding, education and conservation of the species.

We will pay for the seeds and mailing costs or we can trade seeds from our Botanical Gardens.

If you can help with seeds, please let us know, and if not, a name and address of someone who may be able to help would be appreciated.

Best Regards,
Charles Novak.

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Brisbane Valley, Qld.
29.8.04

Dear Lenore,

....We only moved here in 2000 and don't have the range of our previous garden (we grew over 130 species there). As this is a smaller area, we have only planted our favourites that we ourselves eat or drink regularly.

The plants that we mainly use are identified at:
<http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/APOL30/jun03-3.html>

Regards,
Colleen Keena.

Happy New Year and Thanks:

I'd like to thank you for your support and interest over the last 12 months. I also hope we get the chance to take it to the next level, whatever that may be, but plans to reach goals are ideally made at the start of a New Year, looking back. I have found that my blog has helped me enormously with this and recommend writing one for yourself. It really focuses you on your professional highlights in life, if not the personal ones.

For me, Australian native foods have taken a huge leap forward. Dining Downunder Promotions, which I run with Benjamin Christie, continue to inspire chefs in Europe, USA and Asia. I am excited about 2005 plans and how Australian cuisine promotions can build markets for our partner companies as we showcase Aussie products around the world. I welcome your approach should you see this of benefit to your brands. Our new cookbook is getting good reviews and great feedback on the recipes and information it contains. I hope it will be seen as a landmark reference in Australian cuisine development. This year will also see the filming of the second series of Dining Downunder.

The foods themselves are developing too. There are better blends, more technically sophisticated ingredients and more research on their uses. This is good news for the chefs and manufacturers we are proud to supply. Proud also that after 20 years, my company still leads the industry with the best quality ingredients, the highest ideals for growth, with strong indigenous links, environmentally and ecologically sustainable productions and in international marketing. I have also proven to myself, that a virtual store is a good avenue for those who appreciate the ease and security of on-line shopping. The store is about to be renovated so please visit soon to see the result.

A major goal for me in 2005 is to entrench native ingredients into an authentic Australian cuisine and explore the global possibilities for this unique Australian food style. I hope that you will join me in this endeavour.

All the best for the New Year

from Vic Cherikoff.

Fernleigh NSW 2479
16.9.04

Dear Lenore,

Thanks for a very informative newsletter. I haven't done much in the way of bushfoods lately but have found the last batch of Davidson's Plum wine very "spritzy" - never really sure how each batch will turn out!

I would like reader feedback on Rose Myrtle (*Archirhodomyrtus beckleri*, unless it's changed) as a jam and any other uses.

Regards,
Rosie Tongmar

SNIPPETS:

An inquiry from the Sub-Tropical Fruit Club of South-East Queensland about obtaining seed of *Athertonia diversifolia* resulted in some positive leads from North Queensland, and an interesting comment from Kris Kupsch, Leader of the Rainforest Study Group, that "they taste like c**p if eaten raw but when roasted and lightly salted they are delicious". Is anyone in the group growing this plant or have any experiences with it to share?

While the original request may have been made a while ago now, anything you can add to the pool of general knowledge about the following plants will still be gratefully received:

Guettarda speciosa: This is a large spreading shrub to small tree. It grows on the tropical beach strand and has large, stiff, almost round, opposite leaves. The sweetly perfumed, white tubular flowers are borne in tight clusters at the end of long stems. The 'woody' fruits are depressed-globular and about 2-3 cm in diameter.

According to Cribb & Cribb (1985) *Plant Life of the Great Barrier Reef and Adjacent Shores* perfume is obtained from the flowers in India and the durable timber is used for house stumps in Fiji.

Aboriginal uses cited by Brock (1993) *Native Plants of Northern Australia* include leaves for cooking food, warmed leaves used to relieve headache, and wood used for firesticks.

Specifically, does anyone have a common name for this plant, or any cultivation information?

Gahnia aspera: Saw-Sedge is a tall, dark green, grass-like perennial plant with a woody rhizome. As the common name suggests, the margins of the leaves have fine saw-like teeth that make them very sharp. The extremely hard, reddish-brown nuts, 5-6 mm long, have a distinct sharp point at the apex and are borne in clusters.

Has anyone succeeded in germinating these seeds, and if so, how?

According to Cribb & Cribb (1974) *Wild Food in Australia*, Aborigines pounded the nuts into flour.

Ochrosia elliptica: Blood Horn or Wedge Apple is another small tree that is usually found close to the sea. It belongs to the same family as Frangipani and exudes copious milky sap from damaged leaves, stems or bark. The glossy green leaves are borne in whorls of four. Perfumed, cream, tubular flowers occur in axillary clusters and are followed by showy, glossy red, paired, wedge-shaped fruits. These are poisonous and the sap should be avoided.

According to Cribb & Cribb, the bark has been used to treat malaria.

Does anyone know anything about growing this one?

If you can help with any information at all, please contact Cas Liber of APS NSW at PO Box 83, St Pauls NSW 2031, phone 02 9559 2656 or e-mail casliber@ozemail.com.au

BOAB (*Adansonia gregorii*).

The Boab is an iconic tree in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Related species are also found in Madagascar, Africa and India where the tree has been used for centuries as a food source by the local people.

The Boab tree flowers in the wet season. The flowers only open at night and look like a large tulip. Common names include Baobab, Bottle Tree, Monkey Fruit Tree, Cream of Tartar Tree, Sour Gourd Tree and Upside-down Tree.

For thousands of years the Aborigines used every part of this tree - the bark for twine, the porous trunk for moisture and the fruit for food and medicine. The hard fruit pods are also useful as bowls and utensils. The thick, furry pod contains segments of fruit, a little like dried apple in texture. The fruit is very high in Vitamin C (many more times that of oranges) and has an almost citrusy flavour. It is also very rich in minerals.

Boab Fruit Nutritional Analysis:

Ascorbic Acid per 100g 4.5
Sodium per 100g 10
Riboflavin per 100g 0.07
Potassium per 100g 2673
Thiamin per 100g 0.01
Magnesium per 100g 209
Calcium per 100g 250
Iron per 100g 6
Protein 9.17
Fat 4.96%
Moisture 11.38%

The earliest recorded consumption of the fruit dates back to the ancient Egyptians. Although the tree is not native to Egypt, the fruit has been reported to have been found in Egyptian tombs.

Aboriginal usage included grinding the fruit to make a flour for cooking, and using the fruit to treat stomach pain.

The seeds are said to make a coffee-like brew when boiled, and the fruit has been turned into an interesting array of culinary delights such as boab chocolate, boab bread, boab muffins and cakes and even dry-roasted chunks sprinkled on a salad.

Now some enterprising locals in the Kimberley town of Kununurra are developing boab products as a mainstream food.

Melissa Boot uses the food in chocolate which she markets commercially.

The Western Australian Agriculture Department, in conjunction with local growers, has been trialling young boab plants as a new vegetable. The Department's researchers believe the boab root is very easy to grow and has great potential to be accepted as a conventional vegetable rather than be branded an exotic "bush food". So far they are selling about 30 bunches a week through local fruit shops and off

the farm. The crisp juicy roots reportedly taste a little like a radish or water chestnut, while the tender leaves have a pleasant peppery flavour. Both may be eaten raw or cooked.

The growing of a seedling boab as a vegetable was taken from a Madagascan source, trialled in the Kimberleys by locals, and now on a larger scale by growers Denise Hales and Peter Fox. The trial has taken place with the assistance of funding by RIRDC and the W.A. Department of Agriculture.

The crop is grown from seed and, depending on the time of year, takes 6 to 10 weeks to be ready for consumption.

Kununurra chef, Richard Horan, has been experimenting with the young boab plants - boiling, pureeing and roasting them. He says that when roasted the root has a sweet parsnip-like flavour. He also uses sliced boab root in a paperbark parcel to top steamed fresh barramundi, and fresh boab diced with mango and doused with Bacardi for an accompanying salsa.

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Chef: Richard Horan
The Mercure Inn
Cnr Messmate and Duncan Highways
Kununurra WA 6743

Australian Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*).

A native of eastern Australia and the Western Pacific Islands, this low-growing, creeping plant thrives in moist, shaded parts of the garden in temperate areas. It sometimes invades areas where it is not wanted, but it's easy to control if necessary. This is a classic groundcover or hanging pot subject. The Native Violet has kidney-shaped leaves and produces nodding, lilac and white flowers which are edible for most of the year. They can be added to salads and fruit drinks, frozen in ice-cubes, or used fresh or candied as garnishes.

Davidson's Plum. (Ann McHugh).

Ooray

Davidsonia pruriens

Named for J.E.Davidson, a pioneer sugar-grower of Rockingham Bay, where the first specimen was collected. *Pruriens* from the Latin *prurire* to itch, referring to the minute soft hairs on the leaves and branchlets, which were thought to cause irritation.

The Davidson's Plum is a rainforest tree of North Queensland and northern New South Wales. It grows to a height of about 15m, usually in lighter sunny areas. The pinnate leaves are very large, to about 70cm, and each shiny dark green leaflet grows to about 25cm.

The tree would make an attractive garden specimen, growing straight with one single stem and few branches. The trees bear flowers and fruit from a very young age. The main attraction, however, is the beautiful large plum-like fruit.

The fruit is round to about 6cm in diameter, very dark reddish black, with a bloom like a fresh grape. They are very sour but with a rich plum flavour. They were much prized by the Aborigines as the trees often have very large crops.

The fruit can be cooked with plenty of sugar and eaten with ice-cream, or made into jams or jellies. Each fruit has two attractive feathery seed capsules, which, when dried, make excellent additions to potpourri.

Davidson's Plum Jam:

2 kg fresh Davidson's Plums
750 ml water
2 kg sugar

The easiest way to handle the fruit is to cut it in half around the seed, which can then be removed. Be careful with the juices, as the stain is very difficult to remove. Chop the fruit roughly into a stainless steel pan and add water. Bring to the boil and simmer steadily for about 30 to 40 minutes, or until the fruit is tender, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

Add the sugar, which has been heated in the oven. The amount of sugar will vary with your own taste, but it will be at least cup for cup. Stir till all the sugar has been dissolved and quickly bring back to the boil. Boil for 20 to 40 minutes, or until a small quantity of the jam jells on a cold plate.

Bottle while hot in sterilised jars and cover with a clean cloth till cool. To keep for a long period, cover the top of the jam with paraffin wax or greaseproof paper dipped in vinegar. Tightly capped, it should store well.

Jelly:

To make a jelly, chop the fruit roughly and boil for about 45 minutes with rather more water than is needed for jam. Allow to drain overnight in a jelly bag, or a large strainer lined with fine muslin or old stocking. Bring the liquid back to the boil and add the heated sugar as before. It is sometimes necessary to add some pectin to the jelly to make it set. Bottle as before.

Seeds:

To use the seed capsules, wash them well in several lots of water and allow to dry thoroughly. They may then be used for craft projects and pot pourri.

Lillypilly Jelly. (Burke's Backyard).

Ingredients:

Lillypilly fruit
Water
Sugar
Lemon juice

Method:

1. Put fruit into a preserving pan or heavy saucepan with enough water to just come to the top of the fruit but not cover it. Boil rapidly till the fruit is soft.
 2. Strain through a clean cloth and allow all the liquid to run through. Do not press the fruit as this may make the jelly cloudy.
 3. Measure the liquid and allow a cup of sugar for each cup of liquid. Put the strained liquid, sugar and juice of a lemon into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Boil until it jells when tested on a cold plate.
 4. Bottle in sterilised jars. (Hint: Add extra lemon juice or use a jam setting product containing pectin, like Jamsetta, if the jelly is slow to jell.)
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Bush Tucker Tours - Kershaw Gardens, 2004.

In conjunction with the Friends of the Gardens, we once again hosted a number of coach group tours and morning or afternoon teas at the Kershaw Australian Flora Gardens in North Rockhampton, which received very favourable feedback.

Ann and I usually guide while the others set out the food in and round the veranda of the slab hut. Besides tea, lemon tea and coffee, and cordial and lemon myrtle water if it is hot, we offer wattle seed damper, scones and rice crackers with a large selection of native fruit jams, and a few dips so that special dietary needs are catered for. (Ed.)

ASGAP Conference Perth 2005.

I am sure that you are aware that the Wildflower Society of Western Australia is hosting the 23rd biennial ASGAP Conference in Perth throughout the week October 1st to 7th. This will be at Hale School, Wembley Downs.

The Conference Committee is planning to hold a Study Group and Craft display/information and sale evening on Tuesday, October 4th. This will be held at Hale School along with the lecture programme and a number of other functions.

Our Study Group has been offered the opportunity to have a display/information/sales booth on this evening. (This is separate from the poster display and presentations being held in conjunction with the main lecture programme).

I will not be at the Conference, so if we are to have a display of any sort we will have to call on volunteers from those who are planning to attend. So, are there any members out there willing to put their hands up? There will apparently be plenty of space available, and a trestle, chairs and table will be supplied if requested. It does not have to be elaborate, but some sort of presence would be nice.

Western Australia does have very strict quarantine import regulations regarding plant material, including seeds. Any seed must be declared at border checkpoints/airports, and on the spot assessment will be made of small quantities.

Enquiries about the display area should be directed to Janet Atkins at 08 9295 2954 or e-mail at atkinsrj@iinet.net.au

Please contact me as soon as possible if you are able to help put together a Study Group display at the Conference, or if you have any ideas or material to contribute.

Lenore.

[Helpful hint from Kris Kupsch of the Rainforest Study Group.](#)

In gardens a wide genetic resource of wild populations is preferable to single seed sources, as genetic variation is an important conservation tool. Ask your nursery person if all the stock is from one tree! If so, seek plants from different nurseries in your area.

To guarantee fruit on a Plum Pine (*Podocarpus elatus*):

Because *Podocarpus* is dioecious, that is, it has separate sex plants, growing new trees from seed can be a chancy business, as they take some years to bear. You could plant 3 or 4 trees and they could all end up males! To grow from seed you'd probably need between 5 and 10 plants to be sure of ending up with a fruit bearing female. You could then graft branches from a male tree onto a female to ensure pollination, and the excess trees can be cut for cabinet timber. Plant seed fresh - it's the hard bit at the bottom of the "fruit".

However, using cuttings from trees of known sex will allow a set ratio of males to females to be planted (1 to 10 is said to be about right). Take cuttings when the new growth has hardened off. You can use a mini greenhouse made from a plastic drink bottle with the bottom cut off stuck over the cuttings in a pot filled with potting mix.

Alternatively, you could try grafting from known sex trees onto existing stock. Doubtless a lot depends on how much space you've got available. In the street next to us is an Illawarra Plum that is kept trimmed as a high hedge, and bears heavily most years, whereas in the Botanic Gardens they are tall straight trees in an avenue planting alongside a road.

Some interesting books:

Dennis Archer of Toona Essential Oils has just published a book on Lemon Myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*). Its hundred pages covers

- history - from discovery to the present day
- biology
- silvicultural practices - plantation and home growers
- uses - essential oil, leaf, seeds, wood and the tree
- research - culinary, therapeutic and silviculture
- production and handling of essential oils
- over 45 colour illustrations
- extensive bibliography

The book costs \$37.35 posted within Australia. For more details see <http://www.toona.com.au>

Mackay Branch of SGAP has recently purchased a copy of "Australian Medicinal Plants" by E.V.Lassak and T.McCarthy, published by New Holland Press.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part is organised according to various ailments and/or uses, eg antiseptics, and within these chapters, the plants are listed alphabetically by botanical name. Also included is the traditional preparation for medicinal use. The second part of the book contains a table of plants with their uses listed.

While not directly concerned with food, there are overlaps, and of course anything taken by mouth is probably of interest to our members. There is also the related "food as medicine" idea to consider.

Now for something a bit different....

Have you ever heard of Kerguelen Cabbage (*Pringlea antiscorbutica*)? It's from Heard Island, so technically Australian, and is being investigated as a food plant. Trials are being carried out at the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra.

It is described as having a light peppery taste, a bit like water cress. The name certainly suggests its past usage as a fresh green by seafarers, particularly sealers and whalers, to prevent scurvy.

I had only seen illustrations, and know of no source of plants or propagation material at present, but I did see what I think were some real plants (if they weren't they were certainly a related species) in the special Antarctic display at Hobart Botanic Gardens while I was there. The micro-climate that had been created within the building was exceedingly harsh, and this little hothouse plant from the deep north had to pile on the clothing layers and shiver to get a good look, but it was amazing. A constant cold, wet gale blew, and the low clumps of vegetation were an incredible green against the coarse black waterlogged soil. I imagine that all those islands in the path of the great southern wind circulation would have similarly harsh conditions.

From "Capricorn Local News" 30.6.04:

TUCKER DRAWCARD

Bush tucker grown near Emu Park was a big feature of the Yeppoon and District Show Society's Golden Show at Stevenson Park, Yeppoon this month.

Tungamull property owner Bill Stacey has been trialling a range of bush tucker species on a small acreage and has used some of the produce to make fruit wine. He displayed a bottle of his special bin at Yeppoon's 50th show.

Capricorn Edible Plants spokesman Tony Welch said Mr Stacey's bush tucker wine was made from the fruits of a native mangosteen, *Garcinia warrenii*, which grows naturally in north-east Queensland and New Guinea.

"The fleshy red fruit is very sour, its juice will permanently stain cloth and the yellow sap is a kind of natural super glue," Mr Welch said, "but it makes a good fruity red wine with a 15% alcohol content."

Mr Welch said many native fruits were boiled up with water in the winemaking process. "Growers are also blending bush tucker fruit juices to make wine, and we're hoping this category will become more popular at next year's Yeppoon Show."

Right: Tony Welch shows a handful of the *Garcinia warrenii* fruit used to make this bottle of rich red bush tucker wine.