

**Australian Food Plants Study Group**  
**ANPSA - Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)**  
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**Native Elderberry *Sambucus australasica* has yellow berries**

The native elderberry is an attractive graceful understory shrub seldom seen as a 10m tree. The small yellow fruits are edible with soft, juicy, sweet flesh although they are a little bland in flavour. It requires moist soil and some protection, in its natural habitat it is found along watercourses in warm temperate, subtropical and dry rainforest. Ref: daleysfruit.com.au John Wrench says that fruits don't ripen simultaneously. Shake the branch so the fruit drops off in your hand. If eaten before maturity, taste will be very variable!



**White Elderberry**    *Sambucas gaudichaudiana*    **has white berries**

In compost-rich, slightly acidic soil, and planted in a sheltered position with morning sunshine, these shrubs need regular watering during dry weather to fruit well. Old wood on all species of elderberry tends to be susceptible to borer attack, which kills individual stems. Pruning off affected stems to the ground stimulates replacement by suckers. Elderberries succeed best in coastal gardens in warm temperate or subtropical regions.

**Podcasts**

<https://www.talkinglifestyle.com.au/podcast/aussie-bush-tucker/>

<https://www.talkinglifestyle.com.au/podcast/unusual-aussie-vegetables/>

<https://www.noongarculture.org.au/martha-boronelli-talks-about-eating-bush-food-as-a-child/>

**Websites**

Check out Sammy Ringer's updated website.  
Sammy is a Life Member of the Qld Bushfood Association.  
<http://www.ausbushfoods.com/>



There I was camped by a billabong (Chapple Creek) in the remote southwest corner of the Otways in Victoria reading the latest edition of Costerman's "Trees and Shrubs of Southeastern Australia" when I happened upon page 254. My eyes lit up when I discovered the rare Elderberry Panax (*Polyscias sambucifolia*) does grow in this part of the Otways. In fact the Otway plants make up the western most population in Australia with the nearest population in the Dandenongs.

I had been tramping over this neck of the woods for a few days looking for seed, taking snaps of plants and basically just relaxing so I was rarin' to go for a good plant investigation. The Elderberry panax belongs to the Araliaceae family of which the most well known genus is *Hedera* (ivy). Araliaceae is closely related to the Apiaceae family. They both have their flowers in an umbel (resembles an umbrella). However the Araliaceae form succulent fleshy seeds (fruit) and Apiaceae form dry seeds. Plants in the Apiaceae family include dill, parsley and our own basalt plains favourite, the blue devil.



The Elderberry Panax is not related to the Northern Hemisphere plant, elderberry, however, early Europeans saw a resemblance in the flowers and in some bushes the production of white-mauve berries. I haven't been able to find any references to indigenous Australian names for the plant and only anecdotal references to Aboriginal uses of the plant. Most books state the berries are edible (in fact succulent, tasty, etc) but I have drawn a blank as to recipes and bush tucker uses. One local bush food expert reckons they taste more like blueberries than elderberries. I can't wait to try 'em !

There are actually two plants in the Otways that go by the elderberry name. The above elderberry panax and one of the worst named plants ever to be given a botanical name: *Sambucus gaudichaudiana* (or white elderberry). I'll give you a second or three while you try to pronounce it... Now, as I was saying, both plants have edible berries. The white elderberry is a small shrub to waist high with delicately branched white flowers in early summer. It belongs to the *Caprifoliaceae* family (Lonicera or honeysuckle as well). It is almost exclusively a northern hemisphere family with *Sambucus* its only antipodean member. I have eaten the berries of the white elderberry. They are a translucent white colour about the size of a currant. The juicy fruit is somewhat astringent (like a currant) but sweetens as it ripens. The plant bears large amounts of fruit which, when ripe, fall to the ground very quickly where birds and mammals eat them with gusto. They grow in shady, moist forests usually near streams. These plants readily germinate from seed. Collect the fresh seed and squeeze the juice out into a glass. (chill and drink later, yum). The seeds left over can then be rubbed through a sieve to remove skins and extra pulp. Sow the seeds in seed raising mix- not too deep or too thick.

They usually germinate in about a month. The seed can be dried and stored as well (in a cool dark place) and sown at a later stage. The elderberry panax (that's the plant I'm actually supposed to be writing about) has a novel pinnate leaf form which isn't well represented in the Otways. There are actually three leaf shapes within the species across Australia thus the plant found in the Otways has a narrow serrated pinnate leaf (see photo) while in other regions the leaf can be quite a broad pinnate leaf or even bipinnate leaf (like a black wattle). The elderberry panax suckers and root cuttings are an easy way of propagating the plant. The shrub grows to about 4 m tall and tends to grow into a dense screen with a somewhat weeping habit. In the Otways it grows in about 600-800mm rainfall on moist soils. It grows in association with brown stringybark, messmate, silver banksias, balm mint bush, hop goodenia, tree everlasting, sallow wattle, and prickly tea tree.

Well, now back to the camping trip. I decided to look for the plant in bush areas adjacent to the Gellibrand River where the map in Costerman's book hinted at being where the species might be found. I drove up hill to Lavers Hill, over to Moonlight Head and Lower Gellibrand, and up to Carlisle River. Saw some magnificent country. Obviously took in the rainforest at Lavers, and coastal forest near Lower Gelli, but the starkness and botanical variety on the Grasstree Plain near Chapple Vale was most interesting. Treeferned gullies dissected banksias, hakeas, grass trees, purple flag irises, egg and bacons, and prickly geebung with the odd twisted brown stringybark. One track led to another and I eventually found myself in the Devondale area with rich river flats on one side and prickly tea tree on the other. A great spot. Even found a nice patch of Mountain Pepper. (Maybe the next article?!)

As the day wore on and the sun began to fade, my campfire next to the billabong (sounds romantic anyway) was beckoning so off I drove and ... wait a minute, what was that on the side of the road. A bush with pinnate leaves and lots of suckers all around growing right on the edge of the road (I'd driven twice before down this track without spotting them) tucked in front of a pine plantation. Yep it was the elderberry panax. I was expecting it to be growing in a protected gully hidden behind a hill miles from anywhere. I was very excited. (Just tremble the paper a little while you read this to help add to the moment!). I took about two thousand photos and my excitement must have been catching because a carload of Japanese tourists stopped to see what I was taking photos of (koalas, frill neck lizards?) Anyway, I had fun, I had a rest and I found a rare Otway plant that helps make our neck of the woods such an interesting and great place to live in and visit. Feel free to contact me for more information about this plant and others.

**Bush tucker**, also called **bushfood**, is any food native to Australia and used as sustenance by the original inhabitants, the [Aboriginal Australians](#), but it can also describe any native fauna or flora used for culinary and/or medicinal purposes, regardless of the continent or culture. Examples of Australian native animal foods (meats) include [kangaroo](#), [emu](#) and [crocodile](#). In particular, kangaroo is quite common and can be found in Australian supermarkets, often cheaper than beef. Other animals, for example [goanna](#) and [witchetty grubs](#), were eaten by [Aboriginal](#) Australians. Fish and [shellfish](#) are culinary features of the Australian coastal communities. Examples of Australian native plant foods include the fruits [Quandong](#), [kutjera](#), [muntries](#), [riberry](#), [Davidson's plum](#), and [finger lime](#). Native spices include [lemon myrtle](#), [mountain pepper](#), and [aniseed myrtle](#). A popular leafy vegetable is [warrigal greens](#). Nuts include [bunya nut](#), and the most identifiable bush tucker plant harvested and sold in large-scale commercial quantities is the [macadamia](#) nut. Knowledge of Aboriginal uses of fungi is meagre but [beefsteak fungus](#) and [native "bread"](#) (a fungus also), were certainly eaten.  
Ref: Wiki

Albany Creek	Albany Creek Road – available for sale on roadside
Auchenflower	Wesley Hospital
Auchenflower	Howard St
Brisbane	QUT Botanic Gardens many trees
Brookfield	Ground Rd and Wybelenna St
Chelmer	Plum Ridge St (Graceville Memorial Park)
Chelmer	Richmond St
Chelmer	cnr Roseberry and Wharf St.
Cooroy	Cooroy Railway Station
Dayboro	several behind the Art Gallery near the bridge
Doonan	Cooroy-Noosa Rd
Eagle Heights	Central Avenue - Running Creek
Eumundi	Bruce Hwy Fullager Dr
Eumundi	Bruce Hwy Wilsons Ln
Eumundi	Bruce Hwy Sheahans Rd
Graceville	Simpson's playground near Pamphlet Bridge
Gympie	Pacific Hwy
Hamilton	Annie St
Hendra	Hedley Ave
Herston	Gilchrist Ave also more opposite Royal Brisbane Hospital
Indooroopilly	Meiers Rd & Cadiz St 1 tree 1 more on left (over creek) & Sir John Chandler Pk
Indooroopilly	Thomas Park Bougainvillea Gardens, Harts Rd
Indooroopilly	Harts Rd
Indooroopilly	Hunter St
Nanango north	Burnett Hwy
Nanango south	D'Aguilar Hwy
North Arm	North Arm Road
Paddington	Carolyn St
Salisbury	cnr Riawena and Orange Grove Road
Salisbury	Tucket Road
Sherwood	Egmont St Cemetery
Sherwood	cnr Oxley Creek and Sherwood Rd
Toowong	Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha Rd
Toowong	Herbert St
Toowong	Sir Fred Schonell Drive and Glenolive Lane
Toowong	Cemetery, 304 Birdwood Terrace
West End	Hove St
West End	Ferry St
West End	Musgrave Park
Yandina	Sheahans Road
Yarraman	D'Aguilar Hwy near the Bunya Mountains
Yeerongpilly	Stamford St
Yeronga	William Pde
Yugar	Eatons Crossing Rd
	Sunshine Coast Pacific Hwy

It would appear that this is going to be a light crop this season. If you know of any cones that are available, please email me. We had a storm a couple of weeks ago and the trees dropped their cones. John Wrench tells me that when they are green, they are soft and sweet.

Jan Sked of the Australian Native Plant Society says raw nuts in their shells that have been stored in the bottom of the refrigerator in a sealed container for several months have a much sweeter taste, and are as fresh as the day they fell from the tree, even though the shells may look a bit mouldy. "I have found many uses for the fruit of the bunya pine, both cooked and raw and in savoury and sweet dishes. It is one of the most versatile and useful of all our native foods. My family and friends have been mostly willing, but sometimes unwitting guinea pigs, as I researched various recipes for the Go Native - Wild Food Cookbook. I have used the nuts in soups, casseroles, quiches, pies, pastas, vegetables, desserts, cakes, biscuits, bread, damper, scones, pikelets, pastry, lollies and porridge. The simplest way to prepare bunya nuts for eating is to put them in a saucepan of water and boil for about half an hour. Remove from the water and split open while still hot. Remove from the shell and serve with butter (pepper and salt if required). They may be eaten cold, but are better hot."

<https://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/theyre-a-humble-bush-tucker-now-being-favoured-by-/2192203/>

## **Bush Tucker Muffins**

by Angela Tranter

Sift 2½ cups self-raising flour into a large bowl and rub in 90g butter  
Stir in 1 cup castor sugar, 1¼ cups milk and 1 whole egg being careful not to over mix.  
Add 1½ cups dried bush tomatoes, ½ cup roasted ground wattle seed and 1 tablespoon ground lemon myrtle leaving a little of each to sprinkle on top.  
Spoon mixture into muffin trays lined with muffin patty pans.  
Place two or three bush tomatoes on top of each muffin and dust with wattle seed and lemon myrtle. Bake in moderate oven (180) for 20 minutes. Nosh Up!

<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/recipes/bush-tucker-muffins/8938560>

## **ANPSA 2018 Conference - Hobart**

The Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc. (ANPSA) presents a national conference every two years, in conjunction with the ANPSA Biennial General Meeting. These rotate through the 6 states & the ACT. Tasmania is to be the host in January 2018 which enables access to flowering alpine flora.

### **Conference Theme**

Grass Roots to Mountain Tops depicted in our logo with Themeda, the grass roots, and the recognisable mountain tops shaping the map of Tasmania.

**Dates: 15-19 January 2018**

**Venue: Hobart – Wrest Point**

### **Pre-post conference Tours**

Post Conference tours to King and Bruny Island and a special forest tour are available.

The Program is now complete: [\*\*Download the Program PDF version\*\*](#)

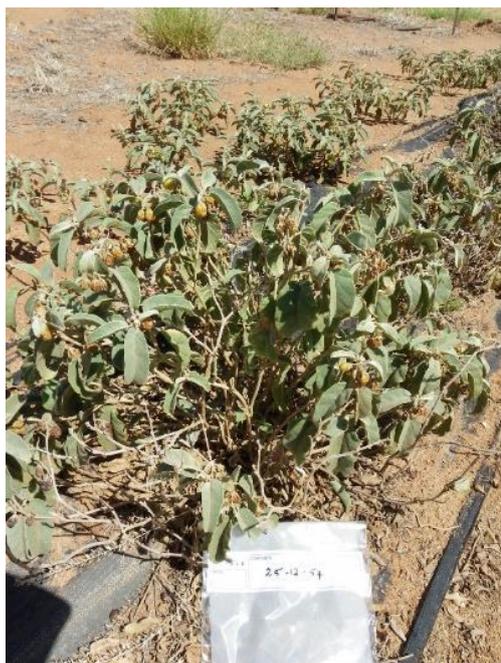
<http://apstas.org.au/conference.html>

## Bush Tomato varieties

Bear in mind that a typical cereal breeding project (for example) takes more than ten years to produce a variety, beginning with formidable resources of genetic knowledge, parental breeding lines developed over many decades, and large teams of plant breeders and technicians usually working on improvement of a small number of target traits. Breeding cycles for perennial crops (and bush tomato is one such) generally take much longer. It is therefore very pleasing to report that in little more than four years, Plant Business has produced five bush tomato varieties that we feel are superior in many respects – two derive from western Arrernte Aboriginal provenance, both originating from the Wallace Rockhole area, and three from Crown Land. All exhibit large fruit and high yield in the AZRI field trial, and each differs in other attributes such as sweetness, plant form, etc., but all are superior overall.

These plants are being vegetatively propagated (to ensure their characteristics are faithfully retained) and will then be sent to CleanGROW for tissue culture propagation to produce large numbers of identical clonal plants to be ready when required by bush tomato growers.

In addition another nine accessions have been identified as having particular features of interest, and these will be maintained by vegetative propagation for prospective future development or for use as potential breeding parents after further assessment.



Lots of genetic variation observed in the field trial plot.

One of the Arrernte provenance varieties (25-12-54)

### **Bush Tomato plantings**

To stimulate interest in bush tomato growing, Plant Business has initiated several plantings of bush tomatoes in central Australia, with a number of different objectives. One accession of Aboriginal provenance is being progressively planted out in a horticultural garden plot at Ntaria (Hermannsburg) in partnership with the Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre Aboriginal Corporation. This work, begun in late 2015, aims to provide an opportunity for local women to develop a bush food micro-enterprise, and the work, in association with CSIRO, includes training in food handling, processing and marketing.

In addition, ‘enrichment plantings’ of bush tomato are planned for Ntaria. These involve establishment of plants in a low-intensity-management fashion in a largely undisturbed

location that replicates a wild bush-scape situation. There is evidence that this approach provides a valuable way for Aboriginal people to engage in cultural activities and transfer of traditional knowledge and at the same time conveniently and more efficiently gather fruit as if wild harvesting, to supplement supplies for the bush food enterprise being developed at Ntaria.

Two other accessions (of Crown Land provenance) have been planted at DGP (Desert Garden Produce Aboriginal Corporation, Max and Ruth Emery's farm near Rainbow Valley). The objective of this is to get some Plant Business accessions into production in a farm plot setting to assess performance in a real situation.

Furthermore, clonal plants (a tissue cultured line) are to be planted in autumn 2016 at DGP and at an intensive farm plot at Ilparpa Road, Alice Springs. The objective of this activity is to compare identical plants growing in quite different environments – this will shed light on plant responses that will provide useful information about optimal crop management strategies for particular situations. Plants for the Ilparpa plot are in the nursery at Alice Springs awaiting cooler weather for planting out, and the DGP-bound plants are approaching maturity in the tissue culture nursery in Melbourne, almost ready for despatch to central Australia.

Dr Lingard succeeds. The Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) Plant Business Project student, Kylie Lingard's PhD project, Legal and Institutional Strategies to Support the Interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Bush Food Commercialisation, was not initially envisaged in the Plant Business research proposal. As Slade Lee developed the project plan, it was clear to him that the gaping void in the nascent project was an activity to seek fairness for the hereditary custodians of bush food knowledge when commercialisation happens.

It is therefore extremely gratifying that Kylie Lingard's PhD project has become a key defining feature of Plant Business. It is very pleasing to know that not only did Kylie Lingard conduct an outstanding body of research with dedication and enthusiasm, but that her thesis was returned by its international examiners without a single correction or suggestion for amendments (a rare occurrence indeed), but they were unanimously complimentary and praised her work. Further, her effort has earned Kylie the UNE Chancellor's Doctoral Research Medal, which she'll receive at her formal graduation on 23rd April.

A huge amount of information has been documented in Kylie's thesis, which is also now appearing in a series of scholarly journal papers. Copies of these can be provided on request, but their essence is captured in a four Ninti One Policy Briefings that can be downloaded at the following links:

Lingard K. 2015. An inclusive governance framework for bush food commercialisation. Ninti One Ltd. Alice Springs.

[http://www.nintione.com.au/resource/PB008\\_PolicyBriefing\\_InclusiveGovernanceFrameworkBushfoodCommercialisation.pdf](http://www.nintione.com.au/resource/PB008_PolicyBriefing_InclusiveGovernanceFrameworkBushfoodCommercialisation.pdf)

Lingard K. 2015. The potential of law to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in bush food commercialisation. Ninti One Ltd. Alice Springs.

Lingard K. 2015. Strategies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in gourmet bush food product development. Ninti One Ltd. Alice Springs.

Lingard K. 2015. Strategies to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests in the development of new native plant varieties. Ninti One Ltd. Alice Springs.

Kylie's work has attracted great interest from IP Australia, the Commonwealth Government's Intellectual Property agency. Even better, Kylie has been appointed as a research fellow at UNE and we expect to continue to benefit from her expertise. CRC-REP is proud to be part of Kylie's commendable achievement and we wish her the best for what we know will be a stellar career.

We invite you to pass this update onto colleagues and friends who might also be interested in this research. We always value feedback – contact details are below, so please stay in touch or contact us for further information.

Slade Lee, Principal Research Leader, Plant Business  
Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation  
Email: [slade.lee@nintione.com.au](mailto:slade.lee@nintione.com.au) Mobile: 0419 474 251

<p><b>Beautiful' Bush Tomato plant discovered in northern Australia</b> <b>Named in top 10 new species by Carl Curtain ref: ABC Rural</b></p>
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**The bush tomato plant produces blood-red fruit which is too hard for eating once mature.**

A recently discovered bush tomato plant in northern Australia has been named in the 2017 top 10 new species list by the International Institute for Species Exploration. While specimens of the plant have been collected for many years in the Northern Territory and Kimberley, it has only just been formally identified by a visiting United States scientist.

Dr Chris Martine speaks about discovering a bush tomato plant. ( ABC News )  
With the help of budding young science enthusiasts at the Eichhorn Middle School in Pennsylvania, the species was named *Solanum ossicruentum*, after its blood-red and bone-hard fruit. Bucknell University biology professor Chris Martine compiled his research in a paper last year, leading to the plant being recognised in the top 10 new species, on a list that [aims to increase biodiversity awareness](#).



Dr Martine said the plant, which was quite common in the western Top End, had a very attractive appearance. "They're really beautiful plants, anywhere from two to two and a half metres tall, really prickly and silvery blue with these large beautiful purple flowers," he said.

[The tomato plant is hard to miss in northern Australia with its large purple flowers.](#)

"When the fruit is developed, they're covered in these dense prickles, really spiny prickles, so there are some things that are almost ghastly about the plant when you first encounter it."  
Dr Martine and his research partners took seeds back to the university laboratory to grow the plant in controlled conditions.

"To watch this one grow and watch it develop over months of time, hand-pollinate the flowers and then see those fruits develop under cultivation, was pretty exciting for myself and for the undergraduate students who were closely involved in the project," he said.

"It was a nice complement to what we had also seen in the field, which were these same sets of really cool and interesting characteristics that this particular species has."

The bush tomato plant is common to bushland in the Northern Territory and Kimberley.

As for whether the tomato was edible, Dr Martine said the plant's fruit left a lot to be desired.

"The odd part about it, that makes it different from a lot of other bush tomatoes, is when the fruit is fully ripened and the seeds are mature and can germinate, the fruit are hard as a bone," he said.

"So at maturity the fruits are certainly not edible, and when they're immature they're about as bitter as any wild bush tomato that I've had a taste of. "My guess is they're not edible, and the small taste I took leads me to believe one would be pretty sick if they tried to eat a whole fruit."



<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-05-30/top-end-bush-tomato-plant-species-named-top-10/8568246>

<b>Karl's Bush Tomato Relish</b> by Sara Morley
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Dice 1 brown onion, 1kg tomatoes, 100g dried Bush Tomatoes

Crush 4 cloves garlic, drizzle oil into a saucepan, add the garlic, onion and saute without colour until the onion is transparent, add the tomatoes, bush tomatoes and 300g brown sugar, and 300g white sugar and stir until the sugar starts to melt and boil.

Turn the heat down and simmer until liquid becomes thick and syrupy.

Add 150ml red wine or sherry vinegar and stir through allowing to simmer a little more

.Allow mix to cool a little and place into a blender and pulse until you get a chunky jam like consistency.

This is a recipe that incorporates a bush tucker staple into a good accompaniment for almost any meat. This recipe makes a bright red chutney, if you need a different colour use capsicums or just onions to make other flavoured chutneys.

<http://www.abc.net.au/radio/recipes/karls-bush-tomato-relish/8898722>

<p><b>There is an 82 page Bush Tomato Handbook by Ange Vincent which is downloadable from the net:</b></p>
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<p><a href="http://www.nintione.com.au/resource/NintiOneLimited_BushTomatoHandbook.pdf">http://www.nintione.com.au/resource/NintiOneLimited_BushTomatoHandbook.pdf</a></p>
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**The Chefs Line on SBS**  
**Mark Olive on the Chef's Line and taking bush food to the world**



**Mark Olive talks about SBS's ground-breaking cooking show, The Chef's Line, and taking bush foods to the screen and kitchens not only in Australia but around the world as well** by Bertrand Tungaandame Presented by Kirstyn Lindsay  
<https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/aboriginal/en/article/2017/05/04/mark-olive-chefs-line-and-taking-bush-food-world>

What makes the [Chef's Line](#) different from any other cooking show according to Mark Olive is that “it is a show without all the drama, without all of the bitchiness, without all of that sort of drama that goes on with a lot of the reality shows these days. Something viewers can look at and just really enjoy the food the people, the characters, and not only that, we get to learn about the restaurant as well. The program is a series where viewers get a chance to learn more about the specific culinary and cultural background of the restaurant that featured in the show all week. The way restaurants and chefs are portrayed in the Chef's Line is totally different from the way viewers are used to seeing them on their screens.

**Basically can passion beat profession?**

Mark Olive says that the SBS new cooking show presents chefs who, in his words, “are generous with their knowledge, helping some really passionate home cooks.” He says “it is about celebrating the food, the cuisine and the culture. We've got restaurateurs that are part of this show that are so passionate about the chosen cuisine of the week and they are not necessarily from that country. That is a really exciting element to this show. You see people who have fallen in love with different cultures and really embrace that cuisine and the history of that cuisine as well”.



He adds “We have some home cooks that are just so on the ball; that are just so passionate about their food and they are holding recipes that are decades old and have been in the family for a long time”.

Mark Olive is generally credited with bringing bush foods to the dinner plates across Australia and around the world.

**“It is okay to eat this stuff. I call it our national cuisine.”**

He says, “My journey is a journey thirty years in the making. I started out in the late seventies, early eighties. During that whole time bush food wasn’t even heard about. I was very pleased being introduced to it by my Aunties. The wattle seed and the lemon myrtle from the Bundjalung region... I am originally from that area. I was introduced to it at a young age. When I started my apprenticeship and finished it I continued using a lot of those elements of bush foods as well as looking into other bush foods as well. It has been a real learning curve for me and I think I have been so fortunate I have been able to be at the forefront of the bush tucker movement. He is known for telling his audience: “It is okay to eat this stuff. I call it our national cuisine.”

Thanks to Mark Olive’s contribution, renowned chefs from all over the world like René Redzepi from Denmark, Heston Blumenthal and other leading European chefs are utilizing Australian bush food. These chefs are appreciative of its native tucker's very interesting flavour profile. They also use it in quite unique ways. Though bush food is still a niche product Mark believes that it will only grow in popularity. He says: “It is in its infancy. It has only been around for some thirty odd years and it is only in the last five-eight years that it has really taken off. We’ve got Indigenous people all around the country growing bush food but also we’ve got some farms all around the country that are producing things like the lemon myrtle en masse. You’ve got a lot of Quandong farms. You’ve got people that are growing finger limes, that lovely zesty finger lime, and you’ll see that feature throughout the show as well.” Mark Olive is also keen to pay tribute to the many Indigenous growers and professionals who are now involved in the bush tucker movement. “We’ve got a lot of bush foods that are now being produced and over the years I’ve been working with Outback Pride; Mike and Gayle from down in South Australia. They really brought it to the commercial front”

### **Protocols around bush food and what to know before growing it in your backyard**

Considering the growing popularity of bush produce, the next logical step is about growing it in people's backyards in the suburbs and use it in the kitchen right across the country. For this, Mark Olive told Living Black Radio that there are strict but simple rules and protocols to follow. He cites his own discovery journey of more than thirty years working and experimenting with native produce in his cuisine and businesses. "We've got a lot of nurseries now that have these plants and fruits out there. Basically it is just looking at it like we look at every other cuisine from around the world. And embracing it."

**Do a bit of research into it and then you start doing it. Everybody has got a curry in their cupboard. Everybody has got their Chinese five spices. Why not some lemon myrtle? Why not some wattle seeds or river-mint? I think it is just about educating the people to really start looking at it and embracing it and growing it in their back yard. Do your homework and see what grows under your particular climate.**

### **Protocols that everyone has to follow including the famous and powerful.**

"When I did my TV show, The Outback Café; I just couldn't go out there. I would never do that. I always got an invite from the elders especially when I went to their country to feature the bush food that was growing there; things like the desert raisin. When I did the show it was so unique. It gave a showcase, a window into all of these communities that a lot of non-Australians didn't even know about. Outback Cafe brought that to the living rooms around Australia. Mark Olive's show also gave an insight into Indigenous tourism at the time. "When I think about bush food I think about the region that it comes from. What country it is grown on."

### **Key protocols regarding bush food**

Who says country says culture and protocols. "When we did that show we showed the protocols. We had actual invites into these communities and it was another eye-opener for other Indigenous Australians and also non-indigenous Australians to just peek into that window and see what indigenous life is right around the country. It was an amazing time. And I think it is only getting better. The protocols are in place to go into these communities. Protocols apply to everyone including megastars from all over the world. Mark Olive recalls how René Redzepi whose restaurant, Noma, was voted number one restaurant in the world several times, also went through the protocols relating to native indigenous foods before prior to him embracing these foods and incorporating them in his own cuisine very successfully.

"Rene had to go out there and get those invites from the community. Which was okay, which was great. All other chefs from around the world that have come here; it is either through an Indigenous person that they get an invite in, or they approach them themselves. Those protocols are very, very strict. And they are necessary." Last year the famous Danish chef opened a temporary restaurant in Sydney whose cuisine incorporated bush foods. This restaurant was sold out every day throughout its six months operation. "Basically it sold out and gave people the opportunity to experience this type of cuisine with Australian bush foods. It is getting exciting that we've got top chefs from around the world that are looking at our cuisine and think wow!"

**Past episodes of the Chef's Line can be viewed on [SBS On Demand](#).**

Black, green, white, even pink; we are used to a range of peppers. Now an increasingly organised and scientific approach is likely to mean more Tasmanian pepperberry will appear on spice shelves.

Chris Chapman has a PhD in microbiology but was overtaken by a passion for pepperberry after spending time in the remote bushland in Tasmania's Tarkine, far north west and east coast regions, harvesting pepperberries. 'Quite different' heat from pepperberry. Pepperberry is not a true pepper, but a native Tasmanian tree that thrives in cooler climate, high rainfall areas. The leaf and berry are dried to produce a warm, peppery sensation on the tongue.



Chris Chapman hard at work planting a pepperberry.

"The pepperberry pepper, in terms of the heat, is quite different," Mr Chapman said.

"The pepper heat is quite unique in that it builds and builds over time".

Wild Taz products is a venture established by Mr Chapman and his partner Corinne Ooms.

Their pepperberry jellies, sauces, teas, and fruit pastes recently took out a swag of medals, including the Primary Industry Minister's Encouragement Award at the latest RAS Tasmanian Fine Food Awards. "We've been using frozen berries and extraction methodologies that enable us to concentrate more on not just the heat of the pepper, but also the 'fruity' qualities of the pepper", Mr Chapman said.

[It is the female native Mountain pepper trees that produce the berries which are ground up into the pepper spice.](#)

He is now establishing a grove of selected pepperberry plants on a property at Montrose in Hobart. It is a property rich in history, having been the original farm owned by Tasmanian bushranger Martin Cash. "I've been involved in the pepperberry harvest for the last three years and I've found some great places for pepper," Mr Chapman said. "I've come across enormous variability amongst individual plants. "It's quite striking sometimes. You will happen upon some



plant which will make you drop your basket [because] it is so thick with berries you can't see the leaves, just about! "So, I've been taking cuttings from those plants, and have got a good, small collection." The collection of high value genetics is being planted near the homestead, built in the 1860s. "Yeah, Martin Cash used to live here when he was 'retired' from bushranging," Mr Chapman said. "He came and settled here for some years, perhaps the last 15 or 20 years of his life, and he ran a farm from here. "This was the centre of a farm at some point that stretched down into Glenorchy. "I'm currently reading his biography."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2017-09-15/pepperberries-growing-on-former-bushrangers-farm/8863980>

This article describes simple, quick and efficient methods that I often use to grow my Quandong. They can be applied by most home gardeners.

### **Growing from Seed**

Use only clean, fresh seed collected from a situation where cross-pollination is likely to have occurred. Seed of unknown age may not be viable and seed collected off the ground is usually badly contaminated with fungal spores. Seed derived from self-pollination (ie isolated trees) usually produces plants of inferior quality.

### **Preparation of germination medium**

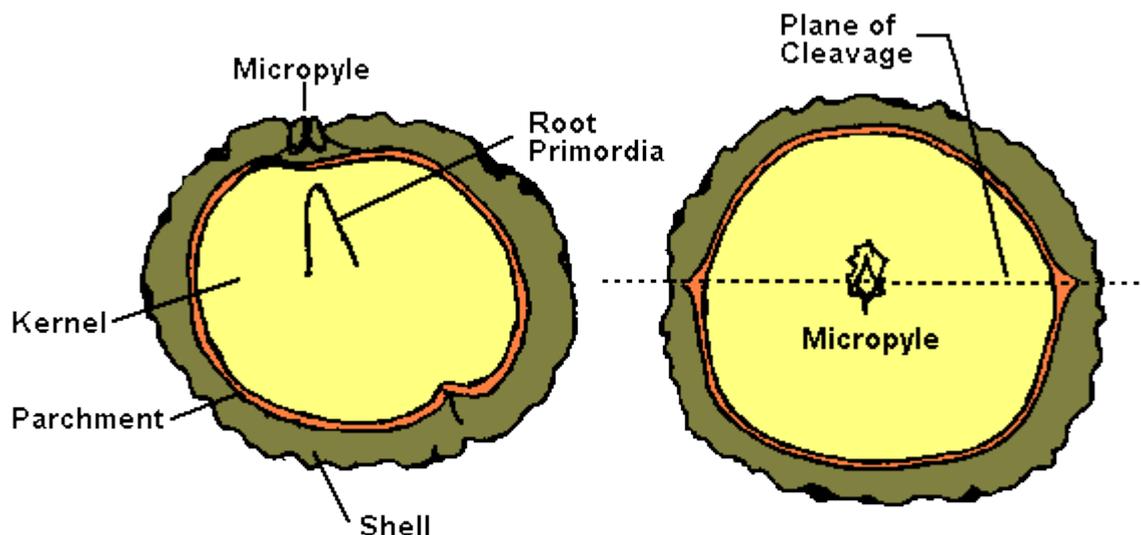
I often had problems obtaining vermiculite of the right consistency to promote Quandong germination. Either it was too wet or too dry or was contaminated with fungal spores, which was often associated with dry sterilization of the vermiculite. Wet sterilization and hot handling of the vermiculite alleviates these problems. Soak the vermiculite in rain water then drain it on a sieve until there is no free-draining liquid. Then place it on an oven tray, cover with aluminium foil and cook at 150 degrees C for 1 hour. While still hot (caution, steam!) transfer it to Zip-lock sandwich bags, seal and allow to cool overnight. The bags may be stored until required.

### **Seed Preparation**

Either whole seed or kernels may be used. Germination of kernels is usually complete after two months but that of whole seed may take a year or more.

### **Kernel extraction**

Some knowledge of the anatomy of the Quandong seed (diagram) is needed for successful extraction of the kernel. Most of the diagram is self-evident, but one important feature does require some explanation. The micropyle is a very fine tube connecting the inside of the shell to the outside. It is the usual means by which the seed absorbs moisture.



## **ANATOMY OF A QUANDONG SEED**

The micropyle is usually evident on the outside of the seed by a flat area with or without a symmetrical bump. It is obvious on examining a cross section of the remnant shell after whole seed germination. The micropyle is the weakest point of the shell and is the first point of the

shell to break during germination. The micropyle also intersects a depression in the shell which bisects the entire seed. This natural weak point in the shell, which usually breaks during the germination process, can be utilised to efficiently extract whole kernels from whole seeds. Once you have identified the micropyle, place the seed in a vice with the micropyle directly against the vice jaws and very carefully place pressure on the seed. The seed should, more often than not, crack cleanly and the kernel can be removed. It is usually covered with a parchment layer that can be picked off with a thumb nail.

### **Seed sterilization, germination and growth**

Place the seeds or kernels in a pot with holes in the bottom for drainage). Fill a larger container with 10 percent bleach (1 part household bleach : 9 parts water). Place the pot in it and agitate until the contents are completely wet. Soak for 30 to 45 minutes. Remove the pot and rinse the seeds or kernels thoroughly with cool, boiled rainwater. Place the seed directly in the vermiculite (about 10 per Zip-lock bag) and incubate in the dark at 15 to 23 degrees C (18 to 20 degrees is optimal). A dark cupboard indoors is suitable. Addition of some fungicide to the whole seed preparation is suggested. Examine the bags after one week and remove any contaminated seed. Continue to examine twice weekly and remove germinated seed when the root radical is one cm long (approx 3 weeks for kernels, 2 months for seed). Either plant the germinated seed directly into the ground or pot on into as a large a pot as practicable. Pot depth and size are important as the tap root of the Quandong is very vigorous. In unrestricted growth situations over winter the shoot may only be a few centimetres long but the tap root can exceed 30 cm long. It is important to try to maintain the root system as close to natural as is possible. The smaller the pot, the more care and attention will be required to prevent loss of the plant while trying to establish it in the field.

### **Potting mix**

Choose any low-phosphate free-draining potting mix. A potting mix made of peat moss and alkaline sand (1:4) supplemented with a low-phosphate slow-release fertilizer is suitable.

### **Host plants**

Quandongs are semi-parasitic plants. This means that a host plant will be beneficial, but not essential. Any plant, even an already established one, will do. It is best to choose a plant that is not too vigorous as competition for water and/or nutrients can be a problem. It is important to get a good balance. I suggest a native perennial grass, legume, herb, shrub or prostrate species as suitable. It is perhaps advantageous to add the host to the pot before planting out as this may not only improve the parasitism but may also hold the root mass intact so that the Quandong can be transplanted without root disturbance.

### **Establishment**

People often describe Quandongs as being adapted to growth and survival in arid to semi-arid conditions. Direct-seeded Quandongs may not require any special treatment. However, Quandongs are not adapted to pot culture. When they are grown in pots, their root structure is drastically modified. These plants must be carefully nurtured after transplanting if they are to survive and thrive. The young Quandong is quite succulent and preventing desiccation is important. Partial shade, supplementary watering, mulching and protection from strong hot and cold winds should be maintained until the plant has developed an adequate root system. It is suggested that Quandongs be planted as early as possible into their permanent site. The best period is April to September (mid autumn to early spring). The soil should be well drained. Its pH is of lesser importance. I have found mulching and tree guards prepared from shade cloth to be beneficial to the establishment of pot-grown Quandongs.

## Why graft?

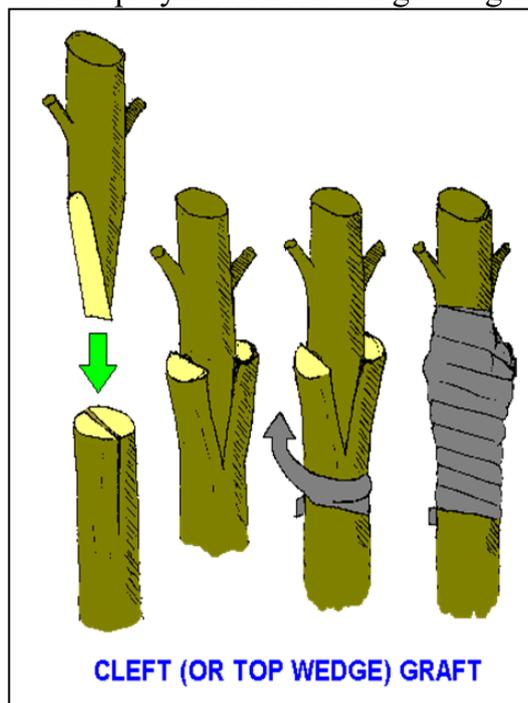
Grafting is a means of clonally propagating the above ground parts of dicotyledonous plants when the species does not breed true from seed, or cutting material doesn't easily produce roots. Grafting may be used to grow scion (above the graft union) onto a stock (below the graft) of a closely - related species which is more suited to the prevailing soil and climate.

## Grafting and secondary growth

The growth of plants can be classified into two forms: Primary and Secondary. Primary growth is the growth that determines the height or length a plant attains. This growth is due to cell division of a small zone of the shoot. This zone is known as the apical meristem. Secondary growth is that growth which determines the girth or diameter of the plant stem. The lateral meristem or vascular cambium which is responsible for this growth occurs as a narrow band which runs along the length of the mature stem between (and giving rise to) the phloem and xylem elements. This narrow band, which is found between the bark and wood, is the "plumbing" of the plant. The activity of the cambium from past growing-seasons gives the characteristic heartwood growth rings which are used in dendrochronology. Plants that are produced by grafting (and cuttings for that matter) rely on active secondary growth; this is likely to be found in mature non-resilient (i.e. snappy not bendy) wood that is most often found in the previous season's growth. The purpose of grafting is to join the cambial zone of the scion to that of the stock. When the cambial zones are brought into close contact, the resulting callus tissue that forms from metabolically active cambium will differentiate into connecting phloem and xylem tissue, thus re-establishing the severed "plumbing" and resulting in continued growth of the scion.

## Grafting Quandongs

Quandong cuttings callus readily but they do not produce roots. Quandong seedlings are quite heterogeneous (variable), so you can't be sure of getting a good plant from seed. However, I have successfully grafted suitable scion material onto seedling root stocks. There are many different types of grafting techniques (see Elliot and Jones). The cleft graft is one of the most commonly-used and simplest types of grafts to perform. It is employed here for the grafting of Quandongs. Match the scion and stock diameters precisely; this maximises the chance of matching the cambiums. The defoliated scion from a healthy plant should contain at least one completely dormant node on second-year wood which has had all soft, active growth removed. (Active soft growth will abscise, taking with it nutrients whose loss can be detrimental to the healing process and the success of the graft.) The stock should be an actively-growing seedling (do the grafting during the warmer months) which is a few months old. Cut the scion and fashion its base into a thin, narrow wedge. A large contact surface area will increase the rate of healing. Cut the stock at right angles to the stem in mature wood or hypocotyl, preferably close to a node. Make a single vertical cut down the middle of the stem. The cut should be the same length as the wedge of the scion. Make sure that all cuts are straight and precise; use a very sharp knife or scalpel. Do not touch the cut surfaces, or allow them to dry out. Force the wedge into the slit which was made in the stock; no gaps should be apparent.



Prepare a 0.5 cm-width piece of Parafilm or use shredded grafting tape. Wrap the graft firmly with Parafilm, tying from just below the graft and working up. Care should be taken not to force the scion from the stock when traversing the join. Ensure that all points are covered with film. Air and water must be excluded from the graft-point if a successful union is to occur. Cover the scion and graft with a small plastic bag (of the self-sealing variety) to minimize desiccation of the scion. Place the plant in a stress-free environment such as a shaded (50-90%) hot house with temperatures that are suitable for vigorous growth of the Quandong. Examine regularly. The dormant nodes should burst in about 3 to 4 weeks. Residual petioles on the scion will abscise. Remove any buds that develop below the graft point. Harden off the plant by gradually removing the plastic bag for increasing lengths of time or by cutting small holes in the plastic. Remove the grafting tape at a later date.

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Anyone interested in knowing more about Quandongs should consider joining the Australian Quandong Industry Association by contacting the Secretary, AQIA, PO Box 236, Upper Sturt, South Australia 5156.

Ben Lethbridge has a PhD in plant sciences. He has a strong interest in the growing of Quandongs and the species of the Adelaide area. This article is a composite of two articles which were published in the August 1995 and February 1996 issues of the *Journal of the South Australian Region of SGAP*. <http://anpsa.org.au/APOL7/sep97-2.html>

**Editor: We have trial plots of Quandong growing in the Lockyer Valley in SE Qld.**

**Below is a list of books, booklets, pamphlets, proceedings and papers on Bushfood. May these 163 items pique your interest in further study of this wonderful culture. This list compiled by Sheryl Backhouse – please add to it!**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Year</b>
60 Wattles of Chinchilla and Murilla Shires	Grace Lithgow	Grace Lithgow	1997
A Companion Guide to Bush Food	Jennifer Isaacs	Lansdowne	1996
A Guide to Australian Native Essential Oils	Greg Trevena	Essentially Australia	2013
A guide to some common and unusual fruits found in rainforests	Harden & Williams	Uni of Armidale	
A Guide to the common trees and shrubs found in rainforests in Dorrig National Park	Harden & Williams	Uni of Armidale	1979
A guide to traditional Aboriginal rainforest plant use by the Kuku Yalanji of the Mossman Gorge	John Roberts, Colin Fisher & Roy Gibson	Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku, Mossman,	1995
A study of the Bushfoods Industry of the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland Areas	Karen Douglas and David Swete Kelly	DPI	1997
A transient soil seed bank for the Yam-daisy <i>Microseris scapigera</i>	Ian Lunt		
Aboriginal Pathways in SE QLD & the Richmond River	JG Steele		
Aboriginal people and their plants	Philip Clarke	Rosenberg, Dural, NSW	2007
Acacias of Australia Vol 1	Marion Simmons	Nelson	1987
Adnyamathanha and Beyond - Useful plants of an ancient land	Neville Bonney	Aust Plants Society, SA Region, Unley, SA	2006
Alawa Ethnobotany Aboriginal Plant Use from Minyerri NT. NT Botanical Bulletin No 11	Glenn Wightman, Donna Jackson & Lorraine Williams	Government Printer NT	
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An annotated bibliography of Native Australian Bush Foods	Christine Jones	Christine Jones	1996
An introduction to the Bush Foods Industry of the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland Areas	Karen Douglas and David Swete Kelly	DPI	1998
Anmatyerr ayey arnang-akert: Anmatyerr plant stories by the women from Laramba (Napperby) community	Jenny Green	IAD Press, Alice Springs, N.T.	2003
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Australian Climbers and Ground Covers	Denise Greig	Mt Annan Botanic Gardens	1994
Australian Dry Zone Acacias for Human Food	APN House & CE Harwood	CSIRO	1991
Australian Eucalypts	Mervyn Millett	Perwinkle	1969
Australian Medicinal Plants	Lassack & McCarthy	Reed	1997
Australian Native Plants	Wrigley and Fagg	Collins	1979

Australian Native Shrubs	Ivan Holliday and Geoffrey Watton	Rigby	1978
Australian plants as Aboriginal Tools	Philip Clarke		
Australian Rainforest Plants I - IV	Nan & Hugh Nicholson	Terania Rainforest Publishing	1994
Australia's Bushfoods our natural and cultural heritage	Ron Mitchell	Ron Mitchell	2000
Between Wodjil and Tor	Barbara York Main	Jacaranda Press	1967
Bilinarra, Gurindji and Malngin plants and animals	Bilinarra, Gurindji and Malngin elders	Department of Land Resource Management?	
Boonyja Bardag Gorna: all trees are good for something	Esther & Sandy Peddy & Moya Smith	WA Museum	1993
Broome and beyond: plants and people of the Dampier Peninsula, Kimberley, Western Australia	Kevin F Kenneally, Daphne Choules Edinger, & Tim Willing	Dept of Conservation and Land Management, Como, WA.	1996
Bush Food: Aboriginal Food and Herbal Medicine	Jennifer Isaacs	Lansdowne	1997
Bush Foods of NSW	Kathy Stewart and Bob Percival	Royal Botanic Gardens	1997
Bush Heritage	Pat & Sim Symons	Australian Geographic	1994
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**Welcome to all new members.**

**Do send in photos, articles etc. of your bushfood experiences.**

**Cheers  
Sheryl**