

Intensive Care for self-esteem

by Darmin Cameron
Men and Family Centre, Lismore

In his book the Six Pillars of Self-esteem, Nathaniel Brandon calls self-esteem the "Immune system of Consciousness". A powerful statement, we all know what happens when our physiological immune system is weak or compromised: we can't fight off colds or flu's, every little bug can lead to a health crisis. Sometimes a person's immune system is so weak, that they have to be kept in an isolation ward in an Intensive Care ward.

So what can happen to a person with compromised self-esteem? Are they vulnerable to attacks from 'psychological bugs' from the outside? Probably, but destructive self-talk, beliefs and attitudes that have been internalised from a lifetime of put-downs, coupled with abuse and disappointments can have a powerful negative effect. That inner voice that says 'I am an idiot'. "I am so stupid, I am a failure."

"I am hopeless, I am worthless" are not great thoughts to have bouncing around inside your head.

Research has stated that one of the best ways to raise self-esteem is to get a job. Great if you can get one, but what if your self esteem is so low you don't have the drive or belief in your self to get one? Catch 22. This situation can cascade and create problems in other areas of a person's life, relationships, physical health and wellbeing.

Nathaniel Brandon says, 'I cannot think of a single psychological problem - from anxiety and depression, to under-achievement at school or work, to fear of intimacy, happiness, or success, to alcohol and drug abuse, to spouse battering or child molestation, to co-dependency and sexual disorders or passivity and chronic aimlessness, to



Darmin Cameron

suicide and crimes of violence - that is not traceable at least in part, to the problem of deficient self-esteem."

That is one scary list, but it also offers hope in that maybe these psychological problems would lose some of their intensity and power if we bolster our self-esteem. It seems having a healthy self-esteem is a foundation for a healthy functional life in all aspects of ourselves, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

But where to start to build this mysterious intangible underpinning psychological attribute?

The Men and Family Centre of Lismore have created a group for men to tackle this slippery little beast called self-esteem. The construction starts by getting together with other men in a safe and respectful environment and sharing stories and encouraging one another. By using the tools of self-awareness and assertive communication skills and exploring such topics as personal integrity, living purposely and self-acceptance the participant can begin to strengthen and bolster self-esteem and start the process of maintaining a healthy self esteem.

Call the Men and Family Centre on 6622-6116 for more information or to book your place for Men Building Self-Esteem. This 12-week experiential workshop begins on Thursday 4th March from 6pm to 9pm. Cost \$10 per session or negotiable if in financial difficulties.

Homebirth, midwifery and statistics

by Susie Goddens

Lies, damn lies and statistics. I have been having a look at the fascinating fluctuations of statistics, not to bolster a weak argument as wikipedia puts it, but as an aside to my involvement with Jillian Delaile and her fight to save her nursing license after three decades of practice as a home birth midwife.

Why am I involved? Jillian was midwife for both my children, she put the effort in to find out about me and my family, she became our friend and supported us in one of the most important times of our life. If I had been transferred to hospital she would have been my advocate, matching her experience against those of the hospital to allow me to give birth as naturally as possible. In return I can only do what I can to help. She is informed and informative and it will be more than a pity if future women wishing to give birth at home in this region are not able to have access to her vast knowledge

Though I have had two babies at home with no complications, I was interested in seeing what the figures were statewide and to see what conclusions I could draw from them. Working with the annual NSW Mother and Baby report, I took the planned venue of each birth and then found the percentage of perinatal deaths versus venue. For example in 2006 there were 790 perinatal deaths that were hospital planned, so 0.9% of babies in a planned hospital birth died, whereas 1.16% of babies born in a planned home birth died.

At first I was surprised that the rate for home birth was so high as hospital births would be dealing with the riskier cases right from the start. In the Netherlands they have recently found, "that planning a homebirth does not increase the risks of perinatal mortality and severe perinatal morbidity among low-risk women".¹ So I delved further, if it wasn't very safe in 2006 what was it like in other years?

TABLE 1

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
% planned hospital birth/perinatal deaths	0.96	1	0.94	0.9	0.88	0.93	0.9	0.9
% birth centre/perinatal deaths	0.21	0.28	0.35	0.27	0.42	0.32	0.17	0.42
% home birth/perinatal deaths	0.55	0	1.65	0	1.52	0	0.66	1.16
% prior to hospital/other	1.38	4.89	3.97	1.9	3.1	3.49	3.78	3.28

As you can see the percentage of perinatal death to percentage of population who planned to have a home birth is either high or non-existent. As I extrapolated these figures it occurred to me that there are so few mothers giving birth at home that it skewed the statistics. There are approximately 80,000 planned hospital births in NSW every year in comparison to somewhere between 100 and 200 planned home births. So I averaged the figures over 8 years and found that home birth came out in between hospital and birth centre, as you can see below.

TABLE 2

	avg over 8 years
% planned hospital birth/perinatal deaths	0.93
% birth centre/perinatal deaths	0.31
% homebirth/perinatal deaths	0.69
% prior to hospital/other	3.22



Homebirthing get-together, 2005

It still is an unreliable figure, in that eight year period only 1210 babes were planned to be born at home, 20 times that (24,563) were planned for birth centres and 550 times (66,2468) that were planned for hospitals. If reliable figures are not possible, then how can the safety of home birth be assessed? I want to be sure that home birth midwives are kept on the straight and narrow just like hospital staff are supposed to be, but the more I've got involved with Jillian's circumstances the less confident I feel about that.

Jillian has been midwife at approximately 800 births. In that time there has been only one death of a babe where there was no apparent abnormality of babe or placenta and three still births. In 2006 the perinatal death rate was 8.8 per thousand babies born and the rate doesn't vary much in the previous eight years, of that approx 73% were stillborn. Jillian's statistics are not much different, the overall perinatal death rate 5 per 1000 babies born with 75% stillborn. More importantly if we

obstetricians she was dealing with.

If our home birth midwives are treated with the respect they deserve by obstetricians and midwives within our hospital system, we would find that our home birth stats matched those overseas. As we can see from the small bit of analysis I've done, home births are not wildly dangerous, they are a reasonable choice for a woman to make while she is still allowed to make it. Giving birth with no professional help, however, tilts the odds alarmingly and if government and nursing bodies make it much harder for home birth midwives, this may be the only option available for women who wish to give birth naturally, in their own and their baby's time.

Jillian has had her licence to practise midwifery suspended, and will yet again be facing authorities to defend herself. Hundreds of families will again write to the NMB to support her because they aren't sure that Jillian and other home birth midwives are being treated fairly. An enquiry into the death of baby Kosh has already been to the local coroners court where Jillian was absolved of any criminal negligence. At the tribunal on 15th March, Jillian will be represented by her lawyer pro bono, which may help her avoid bankruptcy in the immediate future, but if her general nursing license is revoked who knows how she will fare?

If you wish to help support Jillian or would like more information, please contact us at jillianreunion@gmail.com

And if you would like to donate funds to help her pay her expenses, you can transfer money into Jillian's bank account: BSB 802-222 Acc no. 22255509.

References

- <http://www.homebirthsydney.org.au/sites/default/files/Planned%20homebirths%20in%20the%20Netherlands%202009.pdf>
- <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/317/7155/384>
- Professional Conduct Book.pdf pp 164 available from <http://www.nmb.nsw.gov.au/professional-conduct-book/default.aspx>

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Psychotherapeutic Myths Busted

by Dr Elizabeth McCardell, M. Counselling, PhD
(Phone: 0429-199-021)

Recently I was clambering over rocks at Chinaman's Beach at Evan's Head, exploring the headland, when, in a moment of inattention, I slipped, fell and broke my wrist.

After the tedious business of x-raying, plaster and bandaging I popped into a bread shop to get supplies. The young woman asked what I'd done to myself. I told her and she said, "Well that'll teach you to behave like a young girl." I bristled a bit. Do we ever have to stop doing what we love? I certainly don't plan to. But then I got to thinking about the myths we believe in and which dictate our lives. The saleswoman believes women of my age should be more sedate (or sedated!). Then I began thinking about some prevailing myths regarding psychotherapy. It is these I shall address here.

Myth 1. *If you seek psychotherapy, you must be crazy.*

As far as I'm concerned and the way I practise it, psychotherapy is about increasing self awareness and thereby enhancing possible choices a person has and contributing to a happier way of life. Crazy doesn't come into it.

Myth 2. *Going to therapy is a sign of weakness.*

On the contrary, people who come to therapy are courageous for they come to work on themselves and their relationships and are not prepared to carry on doing self damaging things.

Myth 3. *If you seek psychotherapy, you will see a psychiatrist, or at least a medical doctor who will prescribe medication.*

Most psychotherapists are not medical doctors (psychiatrists are specialist medical doctors); they are nevertheless highly trained practitioners who regularly update their skills.

Myth 4. *Psychotherapy isn't necessary if a person is on medication for their problems.*

If you have a chemical imbalance, it is most likely that you've had it all your life. Growing up with a propensity for mood disorders, like depression and anxiety, teaches you to feel very

negative about yourself. So while the medication that a doctor might prescribe for you may alleviate some of the physical and emotional symptoms of your disorder, psychotherapy will help you to see life in a new, deeper and exciting way. You will come to honour yourself more fully.

Myth 5. *Once you finish a sequence of psychotherapy sessions, you won't need to come back.*

Our lives are in a state of flux and different issues arise at different times. A death of a family member, or friend, or loss of a job, or illness may mean returning to see a psychotherapist to explore those existential things as death, life and meaning.

Myth 6. *Psychotherapists only care about your past, your relationship with your mother, etc.*

Speaking for myself, the past is the past and though I will work with elements of the past as they impact on you at this time, my emphasis and interest is on what is arising now, as well as what is happening between us and how this may be similar or different to your other relationships. I might also suggest other ways of looking at what happened before so that the things that arise in the future don't have the same tired or distressing impact as they did in the past.

Myth 7. *Psychotherapy is expensive.*

Most psychotherapists provide affordable services. My rates are lower than most.

Myth 8. *Psychotherapy will affect your ability to get a job, apply for a loan, etc.*

Psychotherapists are ethically bound to confidentiality and this is recognized by law. All client information is unavailable to outside persons, except in cases where the client has committed a criminal act, or violence towards others, or has declared suicidal intent, or there is a court order to gain access to their information. Therapeutic intervention and process may be discussed by the therapist with her clinical supervisor (who is also bound to confidentiality), but full names are withheld.

Myth 9. *Psychotherapists fix*



you.

Psychotherapy is collaborative work between therapist and client. If the client isn't interested in doing any work on themselves during and between sessions, there is little that can be done.

Myth 10. *What can a stranger, who knows nothing about you, do when family and friends haven't been helpful?*

The distance between client and therapist actually assists the therapeutic process by providing clearer insight into the client's life, than might be possible between close family members. Therapists are also trained to listen, observe and delve to levels most non-therapists are unable to do. There are numerous therapeutic methods that may be employed to bring greater awareness and possibility of change to problem behaviours and disruptive feelings.

Myth 11. *Why have therapy? Reading self-help books and listening to CDs will do the job just as well.*

What is different is that therapy works with you specifically; books, DVDs and CDs are designed for the mass market. You are unique and your unique life is what you bring to each therapeutic encounter. Change happens mostly when we are listened to individually; when the work we do on ourselves takes specific account of who we are as people.

This is where psychotherapy comes into its own and where myths about gender, age, socio-economic status, etc are sent flying. The therapist works with you, as you work on yourself, with all that you are and you are not judged by any extraneous definition or preconceived notion.

As I have sought to bust myths about psychotherapy, psychotherapy endeavours to bust myths that have dragged you down into black spaces – to free your creativity, to expand your awareness and to allow your courage to take you wherever you wish to go.

A Simple Truth

by Allan Lunare

Quite a few people who have attended recent Earth Gatherings have remarked how wonderful it is to 'do this with other people'. In their own gardens and on their own land they might listen in to various energies but often on their own.

For many people nature provides a refuge from an inharmonious world. A place for us to wind down and feel refreshed. Perhaps even without a conscious connection, this is the case for many of us.

When beginning these Earth Gatherings last year I had envisioned them being mainly for people wishing for a deeper and more lasting connection with the Earth. While this has been the case for some, many that are already well attuned to the Earth are coming too. This has been a great blessing as these people help in rapidly raising the energy and creating a Sacred Space.

Whether experienced or new to this kind of Earthwork the connection with one

another is also profound. We all have a different experience of connecting with nature at these gatherings. Each gathering is unique according to the energetic feel of that particular time. However, the affinity we feel with one another after connecting with the earth is the same.

This time at the conclusion of each gathering is often the most poignant of all. Oftentimes I can feel that we don't really want to get up from our circle, as the feeling is very special.

The processes of connecting to the energies of the Earth have opened in us an awareness of our own truth. This awareness does not come from our minds or intellect but from a direct experience. Suddenly we can experience a deep truth in other things, even in people we don't know, because we are aware with a part of us that is very wise.

And so we don't really want to leave this experience of being 'connected with'. It feels good to know this feeling and to feel it in the company of others is extremely heartening. It shows us how



simple it is to recognise the truth if only we take the time to do so.

Along the way we have also connected with the energies of the Earth and learnt more about ourselves. The teachings of the Earth, as with many things, are only limited by what we allow ourselves to experience.

I welcome you in joining us to connect with the Earth and experience for yourself what She has to say. All are welcome in love.

The Earth Gathering for March - "A Free Earth" - is on Sunday 14th March 9-11am at Sphinx Rock Café, Mt. Burrell. Payment is by donation, with all monies going to local Landcare.

If you have any questions about these gatherings or want to be on the mailing list for future events please call Allan on 0432-047-432 or email fshridle@hotmail.com

Ka-Huna Bodywork and Massage

by Chrissy Schyff

Ka-Huna bodywork originated in the beautiful islands of Hawaii and was used during rites of passage as a transformational massage and healing system. It is also known as Hawaiian Temple Style Massage and Lomi Lomi.

I have had the amazing pleasure of studying this beautiful form of bodywork and Massage at Mette's Institute on the Sunshine Coast and now it is my absolute joy and honour to come and share my Ka-Huna touch with everybody in Nimbin.

Ka-Huna bodywork is unique in a number of respects. As a practitioner I use my hands and forearms in long flowing strokes of varying intensity and rhythm up and down and all around the body moving around the table, incorporating underbody work and stretches. The energizing effects of these exquisite movements are combined with clear Healing intent and Invocations for constructive change on all levels.

Anybody and everybody regardless of body shape, age or state of health can receive Ka-Huna bodywork.

My training also included pregnancy massage and It has been in my experience a complete heartfelt joy and absolute honour to work with mother and baby in this unique and nurturing way.

There are many benefits you can receive from your Ka-Huna experience from calming to re-energising, rejuvenating, releasing old patterns, making way for new patterns, holistic healing (physical and emotional), totally nurturing, bringing clarity and overall allowing more love, more happiness and more balance to flow from you and to you. The magic and power of this healing system goes beyond what words are able to express.

A session may last from 1 to 2 hours, depending on circumstances. I am offering an extra ½ hour massage for free during this month of March as an introductory offer and a little bonus to those of you who want to take this opportunity to allow yourself some healing and nurturing.

Every time you have some Ka-Huna bodywork you will experience something different.

Appointments can be made for each Wednesday at Nimbin's Birth and Beyond, by phoning Nimbin Apothecary on 6689-1529, or drop in to make a booking.

I look forward to working on all your beautiful bodies. Aloha.

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Koala Ecology Workshop

Friends of the Koala is hosting a workshop to be presented by internationally acknowledged koala authority, Steve Phillips. The workshop, titled: *An Update on Aspects of Koala Ecology, Conservation and Management*, will be based on Steve's current work in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria and in particular, projects in the Northern Rivers.

Dr Phillips is an independent scientist with the NSW Koala Recovery Team and principal of Biolink Pty Ltd, Ecological Consultants. He has over 35 years of experience with koalas.

The workshop will be held on Saturday 27th March at Southern Cross University's Lismore Campus. Registration from 9.30am for a 10am start (sharp), until 4pm.

Cost will be \$10 for Friends of the Koala members, other licensed rehabilitators and concession registrations and \$20 for others.



Dr Steve Phillips and wife Sue, in the field at Tyagarah

Morning Tea will be provided, but participants will need to self-cater for lunch.

Bookings are essential by phoning the Friends of the Koala Rescue Hotline on 6622-1233 or by emailing info@friendsofthekoala.org

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass



People often ask about the size of a koala's home range, or territory. They vary enormously – less than a hectare to around 135 hectares, depending on food tree density. The size of a home range characteristic of the Northern Rivers has been estimated at around 14 hectares. Males have larger ones than females and they travel further, especially during the breeding season.

The distances that koalas cover are quite surprising. Prior to establishing a home range, they have been known to disperse up to 10 kms, although around 3-4 kms is more common. A few years ago now, 2004 in fact, an old female and her malnourished back-young were brought in from Booerie Creek Road.

The mother sported a tag so we knew she had history. I couldn't believe my eyes when I checked our records. That koala had been injured and taken into care from Goonengerry, ten years before. She had been released back to the site she was taken from a few months later.

My immediate thought was human error – the recorder of the day had made a blue, confusing Goonengerry with Goolmangar. I checked out the tag numbers on either side to see where they had been used and sure enough they were koalas from the Goonengerry locality. Was it really possible that a koala had traversed a distance of 30 or 40 kilometres over sometimes difficult terrain during the course of a decade, or had she been given a lift somewhere along the line?

Expert ecological advice was, yep, well within the

realms of possibility that a koala, even a breeding female, could travel that sort of distance over that period of time. I was amazed, speculating about the tenacity of the animal and the circumstances that had

caused her to move on; wondering how many offspring she'd had along the way. Riddled with cancer, she had reached the end of her life. Ruby, her back-young, was given a new lease on hers. After several months in care she was released. Has she continued in her mother's nomadic pawsteps, I wonder?

Before European settlement the sub-tropical rainforest of the Big Scrub would have been a natural barrier to the movement of our koalas due to lack of food trees. Its loss over the past 100 years or so has provided a rare opportunity for koala distribution to expand. Koalas aren't strong swimmers, although they can paddle along if needs be, so big rivers can present topographical barriers, as can cliff-lines.

These days, koala movement is constrained at landscape as well as at site level by the modifications we make to suit our own needs. Razing the natural habitat for replacement by agriculture or urban and semi-urban land uses is as much of a barrier as any natural phenomenon. The difference is that we have the knowledge and tools to achieve a balance between conservation and human land use in landscapes where koalas occur. There are signs that slowly but surely we are accepting responsibility for making this happen.

Over the past twelve to fifteen months Lismore City Council has embarked on a directional change to strengthen its management of the environment. Organisational restructure and a consultative Delivery Plan process have given high



Pineapple

priority to the preparation of a local government area-wide biodiversity conservation strategy and comprehensive koala plan of management. Recruitment of staff dedicated to environmental sustainability is still underway.

Having achieved increased staff resources, Council's next move will be to seek Ministerial approval for a special rate variation to include \$200,000 for an environmental levy. This will provide the funds to progress priority projects. Community support for a higher rate bill can't be a foregone conclusion, so a consultative campaign of engagement will be embarked upon.

We are pinning our hopes on Council succeeding in winning the support it needs. Costs associated with programs such as koala conservation and management should be shared. With funds allocated for the purpose, Council will be well placed to leverage additional amounts from the state and federal governments.

Information about koalas, their food trees, Friends of the Koala and how you can help our conservation effort is available at www.friendsofthekoala.org or email info@friendsofthekoala.org or phone Friends of the Koala's (24/7) Rescue Hotline: 6622-1233.

Until next time,
Happy koala spotting.

The Lismore Urban Koala Tracking Program, which commenced in September 2008, is a joint study being conducted by Lismore City Council, Southern Cross University and Friends of the Koala.

The Council funded purchase of 10 radio tracking collars; the University's Senior Lecturer in Wildlife Ecology, Dr Ross Goldingay, is the study's scientific supervisor and Friends of the Koala volunteers are carrying out the tracking.

Oscar and Pineapple (pictured) have recently joined the study, the purpose of which is to gather information on the long-term status of koalas returned to the wild after rehabilitation, as well as track the movements of Lismore's urban koalas.



Oscar

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Peanut Tree *Sterculia quadifida*

Selected by Richard Burer
Project Officer, EnviTE

While the creamy white flowers are rather dull, just wait for the amazing edible satin black seeds encased in a dark red fruit, which are a must in garden and rainforest plantings.

The edible nuts can be roasted or eaten raw and the leaves are known to treat wounds and stings.

Locally this tree is most often found near the coast, often by creeks. A particularly fine specimen

can be seen in Heritage Park, Lismore.

Sterculia quadifida makes an excellent feature tree providing shade and is very hardy. It

is easy to grow from fresh seed and will enjoy a frost free sunny position in the garden, where it will grow to a height of 6-18 metres.

Sterculia comes from the Latin *Sterculius*, the Roman god of manure heaps.



EnviTE is a not-for-profit organisation providing employment, training and professional environmental services.

EcoMart Northern Rivers – Call for Volunteers

After a spirited response to public meetings at the end of last year, a small but very keen group of volunteers are working to to have the

producer and consumer co-operative selling local produce and goods set up by June.

With the application for the co-op having been

favourably received by the Department of Fair Trading, the incorporation is likely to be completed in the next few weeks. The community-based co-op is looking for a warehouse or hall in Lismore that can be used for sorting groceries one day a fortnight.

More volunteers are urgently needed to help with IT, technical writing, publicity, bookkeeping, phoning and sorting groceries. Maybe you have other skills that could be useful.

If you would like more information, or to volunteer in any of these areas, please phone 6681-2056 or email volunteer@ecomartaustralia.org

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Toxic DVDs still being sold

by Peter Hardwick

There's been requests for a follow-up critique of the wild food plant safety on DVDs featuring Koa Windsong.

Koa admitted publicly (NR Echo 12/11/09) that he had made a mistake by saying that billy goat weed and tobacco bush were "safe" to eat – but months later the DVD 'Walking Softly with Koa 2' is still being sold, in which billy goat weed is clearly shown by Koa as an example of a plant that he considers safe to eat.

In the DVD, Koa justifies billy goat weed's safety based on what is obviously a seriously flawed "edibility test" and bizarrely, Koa also says in the DVD that he didn't know the name of the plant but still considered it safe.

The cardinal rule is: if you don't know what it is – don't eat it. There is no such thing as a reliable "universal edibility test" for unknown plants – it's a particularly erroneous and



dangerous concept because some plant toxins won't show up harmful effects in the short term – with the billy goat weed an overt case in point.

People have eaten billy goat weed on a regular basis because of these DVDs – with the risk of necrotic damage to internal organs as a consequence.

There are several other toxicity mistakes on the 'Walking Softly with Koa' DVD series, including black nightshade, thickhead and wandering jew. In a survival situation, or on a regular basis, these poisonous weeds are not safe to eat. For public safety,

it's about time this series was withdrawn from sale. As Koa acknowledges, children are heavily influenced by these DVDs – but this is a major worry, as children's lower body weight makes them more vulnerable to poisoning.

Fortunately, the very problematic DVD 'Bush Tucker with Koa' has been withdrawn from sale. It targeted children specifically – encouraging them to eat poisonous plants like tobacco bush, billy goat weed, Grevillea, grasses and wandering jew. The producers should refund returned copies, as the mistakes are potentially fatal and the DVD should not be in circulation.

A summary of significant toxicity mistakes in Koa Windsong's DVDs include:

- **Tobacco bush** (*Solanum mauritanium*) – berry. Contains high levels of neurotoxic glycoalkaloids in the ripe and unripe berries. Fatalities have been recorded.

DVD: BT with Koa.

- **Billy goat weed** (*Ageratum houstonianum*, *A. conyzoides*) – flowers. Contains a suite of toxins, including coumarins, triterpenes and pyrrolizidine alkaloids. Causes necrosis of internal organs. Cases of liver damage linked to mass poisoning.

DVD: BT with Koa, Koa 2.

- **Black nightshade** (*Solanum nigrum*, *S. americanum*) – berry. Contains variable and sometimes very toxic levels of glycoalkaloids in the ripe and unripe berries. Also, a high risk with unknown toxicity levels in the native black nightshades.

DVD: Koa 1.

- **Grevillea** (*Grevillea* spp.) – nectar (flower). Many garden varieties are highly allergenic because of a very similar toxin to what is in "poison ivy" – risk of throat closure and anaphylaxis. Flowers also contain hydrogen cyanide.

DVD: BT with Koa.

- **Wandering jew** (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) – tips. Contains an unknown but very allergenic compound. Risk of throat closure and

anaphylaxis for sensitive people. Confuses toxic wandering jew with edible scurvy weed.

DVDs: BT with Koa, Koa 1.

- **Thickhead** (*Crassocephalum crepidioides*) – leaf. Contains the liver toxin, jacobine and shouldn't be eaten regularly.

DVDs: Koa 3.

- **Grasses** (*Poaceae* family) – seed and leaf. Some grass species contain potentially fatal toxins.

DVD: BT with Koa.

• "Universal edibility test"

Faulty and dangerous – many plant toxins will not show-up in self-administered field tests.

Potent neurotoxins are not always skin irritant and some toxins have delayed poisoning effects. DVDs: Koa 2, Koa 3.

NB The dust-jacket on Koa 1 has a disclaimer about over-generalizations on wild food plants, but it's not clear which plants are being referred to. Dust-jacket disclaimers are inadequate because the reality is that DVDs get copied and separated from dust-jackets.

Save seed to save the planet

by Susie Godden

I've just been to Djanbung Gardens for the second Nimbin Community Seed Exchange Network meeting. The first meeting was centered around watching *Our Seeds: Seeds Blong Yumi* which is a great way to learn what can be gained by saving our seed and what is being lost by the overuse of hybrids and the globalisation of our agriculture.

At this second meeting, Robyn Francis, director of Permaculture College Australia, gave us a much more detailed look at how we can save our seeds... and really it is not as simple as it looks.

Why do we want to save our seed?

One of the most compelling reasons for saving seed is to grow plants that are more acclimatised to this particular environment. Take for an example the famous Richmond Cucumber. It is said this cucumber is all but resistant to powdery mildew, I plan to grow it to see for myself. I suppose I could work at producing my own variety but that would take years.

Each year I would choose the healthiest cucumber plant, (planted from the seed stock of last years), the one with the least mildew, get up before the bees to hand fertilise a female flower before she opened and then bag the flower so the bees couldn't get in after me and fertilise her with another plant of the same species but different variety and end up making a west indian cucumber gourd (it's possible, just look in the back of the seed saving bible – same species cross pollinate). Now I can just sit back and watch my cucumber grow, the bag can come off in a couple of days, once it is apparent that fertilisation has occurred.

So my best plant is growing one cucumber that I cannot eat and because I have to leave this cucumber to develop its seeds, the plant is in no rush to produce

more cucumbers, it still will I'm told, but not to the same degree as a plant that has its fruit picked regularly.

At this point it is important to remember to mark your cucumber and inform all those who pick in your garden that the red tie doesn't mean 'I look gorgeous, eat me now' which you hope the fruit will be saying. When mature, the cucumber seeds are washed then dried, which can be done in a paperbag, marked of course with the plant variety, date harvested, where the original seed came from and hung from the rafters or somewhere similar, free from vermin, bugs, moulds and mildews. When the seeds are fully dried they need to be stored in a dark, dry, relatively temperature stable environment in well marked containers until the time comes to plant again. In this humid environment there are ways to beat the damp, you can put silica crystals in your seed containers or mix some dry fine white wood ash with your seeds, which will also deter insects.

So the hard work is done... or is it. You go to your bank of saved seeds and find you can't read anything on one particular container, perhaps the cockroaches have come along and eaten the label... you can pretty much tell which species you've got, but how old is the seed and is it viable? Just plant 10 seeds into a pot and see how many grow, one out of ten and you've got a viability of 10%, so you will need to plant around 10 seeds for every one plant you are hoping to harvest from.

Our meeting drew to a close with many unusual and common varieties of seeds swapped and gifted and much useful horticultural info exchanged. We are extremely lucky in our region because we have organisations, community or otherwise and individuals who have been gardening and seedsaving for years, if not generations and with a little organisation we will all be able to share and contribute to the fruits of their efforts. Michel and



Jude Fenton are recognised internationally for their work preserving plant varieties and getting the message out. Our survival depends on preserving and maintaining plant variety.

Other local seed banks include Dharmananda community and Djanbung Gardens. Most seed banks aim to preserve enough seeds to share generously around the greater community. There are quiet seed savers around with some rare and valuable varieties that they have been keeping going, passed down from grand parents or wise friends etc. If you happen to know any, please inform them of the important job they are doing and ask them to join our network and share their packet of genetic diversity with us and part with some of this precious plant stock for the sake of improving our plant security. Remember it's not just about food: keep your eyes, ears and noses open for any unusual and useful plants. Those that can be used for medicine, dyes, fragrance, erosion control, clothing, roofing or string are some of my favourite things.

So how do you join in?

We have started a seed swap table at the Lismore Organic Market, which will hopefully run every week (Tuesday mornings, 7.30-11am at the Lismore Showgrounds), if you have seed to be cleaned we can do it collectively on a rug at the market. We don't have much seedstock coming in to swap at the moment but you can all help with that. We are also working on a virtual community at www.wiserearth.org/group/nimbinseedexchange where we will be announcing meetings and events.

Bushfood & Restoration Ecology course

Discover the amazing world of bushfoods and useful native plants with Peter Hardwick, bushfoods authority and permaculture designer.

Peter shares insights into the rich heritage of Aboriginal ethno-ecology and ways to integrate bushfoods and native plants into productive landscapes and ecological restoration at Djanbung Gardens, 23rd-26th March.

"Good food is at the heart of bushfood permaculture. Local native species conservation takes on a new and more immediate meaning. Some bushfoods are amazingly productive, with the added advantage of being packed with intense, wild flavours. It's just the beginning of a rediscovery process" – Peter Hardwick.

Peter Hardwick is passionate about bushfoods and is widely regarded as one of the leading authorities on bushfoods of the east coast sub-tropics, North East NSW and South East Qld.

Peter began his pioneering work three decades ago and established Australia's first specialist Bushfoods Nursery in Byron Bay in the 1980s. He has researched local bushfoods, worked with the Bundjalung elders and communities, identified desirable strains for the fledgling bushfood industry and designed and consulted on numerous projects and properties engaged in ecological restoration, commercial bushfoods and permaculture.

For the past 15 years, Djanbung Gardens has hosted an annual Bushfoods and Restoration Ecology course with Peter Hardwick. Peter has worked closely with Robyn Francis in the bushfood plantings throughout the gardens and they often combine creative ideas for developing bushfood cuisine, preserves and other products.

The course includes an introduction to Aboriginal cultural ecology and ethnobotany, ecological restoration as productive ecosystems, domestic and commercial bushfood production, garden to table tips and tasters and the general integration of native plants in permaculture design.

The course usually concludes with a bushfood banquet on the Friday night, cooked by Robyn Francis.

Bookings essential. Phone 6689-1755, or email admin@permaculture.com.au,



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Fashion Focus

by Christine Chester

Fashion is definitely the focus at the moment for a well-matched Steering Committee (Dionne, Phil and myself).

We are working on funding applications and setting up the legal structure for the Nimbin Fashion Co-operative.

So far it's all looking very positive and thanks to quite a few letters of support from the Nimbin and Lismore community, and lots of very interesting new contacts in the world out there, it feels we will be able to achieve our goals.

Now is the time to become a paid member in the Co-operative, so that you can

benefit from the support which is available.

Our first AGM annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th March at 5.30pm at CC-Design, 39 Cullen Street, and we really need you all there to become members and elect a board.

Bring a plate so we can celebrate the first formal meeting of our Nimbin Fashion Co-operative.

If you have any questions and need more info please contact christina@ccdesign.biz or by mobile on 0427-326-790.



Designer: Bija



Designer: Tara Austin



Designer: Judy Who



Designer: Raquel



Designer: Corinne Isabel



Student Designers

Cook's corner

Recipe of the Month

by Carolyne



with baking paper, fill with dried beans or rice, place on oven tray, bake in moderate oven for 15 minutes. Remove paper and beans; wrap a strip of foil around edges of tin to protect sides from over browning. Bake uncovered, 15 minutes or until pastry base is browned.

3. Frangipane: Beat butter, rind and sugar in a small bowl with an electric mixer until creamy. Add egg, flour and almond meal, and mix until combined.
4. Split dates in half; remove seeds. Place dates cut side down over base of pastry case. Spread frangipane mixture over dates. Bake 30 minutes or until browned and set to cool.
5. Brush tart with warmed jam and sprinkle with pistachios just before serving.

For information call Carolyne at the Coffee House Nimbin, phone 6689-0590

Almond Date and Pistachio Tart

Ingredients:

1 cup (150g) plain flour
1/3 cup (55g) icing sugar
90g cold butter, chopped
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon cold water
Approx. 300g fresh dates
1/4 cup (80g) fig jam, warmed
1/2 cup (70g) toasted pistachios
Frangipane:
100g butter, softened
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind
1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar

1 egg
2 tablespoons plain flour
3/4 cup (90g) almond meal
1. Grease a 23cm loose based flan tin. Blend or process flour, sugar and butter until combined. Add egg yolk and enough water to make ingredients just come together. Knead dough on floured surface until smooth. Refrigerate 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to moderate (180c/160c fan forced). Roll pastry between sheets of baking paper until large enough to line prepared tin. Ease pastry into prepared tin, press into sides; trim edge. Cover pastry case

Welcome, Jayanti

Nimbin has a new Natural Therapies practitioner, working on Mondays at Birth and Beyond.

Jayanti, formerly a registered nurse and a graduate of the Dorothy Hall College of Herbal Medicine, is just returning to natural health practice after a break of six years.

Before that, she ran the Natural Therapy Centre in Tamworth for 15 years,



coordinating 12 therapists.

Jayanti utilises a number of modalities: iridology, herbal medicine, Bach flowers, dietary and lifestyle advice, massage-based therapies and Reiki.

"I use a range of mind-body therapies to get to the root of the problem in the body's cellular memory," she said.

Jayanti can be booked for sessions between 10am and 4pm on Mondays. Then, from 4pm to 5pm Mondays she conducts a Satyanda yoga group.

Phone her on 0431-302-448, or book through the Nimbin Apothecary.

Jayanti also works Fridays in Murwillumbah.

BURNING FEET AND BOWEN TREATMENTS



by Tonia Haynes
Bowen therapist and Pranic healer

SOME CAUSES OF BURNING FEET

For those of you who are reading this lying on your back with your feet up the wall because you are more than over the pain of burning feet, I sympathize.

In fact after the heat of this summer, I hesitate to confess, but I also empathize.

For those of you who are still blissfully unaware, burning feet are akin to all the blood in one's legs rushing to the toes and associated nether regions for a hot spa party, with an accompanying serenade from Metallica.

A hot and throbbing affair, burning feet, while encouraging one to waddle like a penguin, unfortunately will probably not bring one a starring roll in the sequel to the children's movie, 'Pretty Feet', because anything remotely associated with dancing forces them to scream the most non-childlike profanities. Albeit silently.

There are many and varied reasons for this malady that usually plagues the lives of the more mature in body, I will not mention them all here, but further information is available on the web.

These need a diagnosis and assistance from a Naturopath, Homeopath or Doctor:

- Blood Disorders
 - Diabetes
 - Obesity
 - Thyroid Problems
 - Heavy Metal Poisoning
 - Vitamin deficiency – B6, B12, Thiamine, Niacin
 - Gout
- These can be improved with Bowen Therapy and associated treatments:

- Bad Circulation
- Pinched nerve in the lower back, or lower back problems.
- Arthritis

Finally, once again I feel impelled to question an old Ozzy icon. Yep, too much alcohol will give one burning

feet and also encourage many of the above mentioned symptoms.

If you have seen to all of the above and the blood is still rockin' in the tootsies, I have been given a no-fail recipe from a senior citizen, which they say is guaranteed relief for burning feet:

Bread soaked in castor oil and strapped around the feet for a few nights in a row creates a poultice that draws out the lactic acid, (the stuff that makes our feet ache and burn).

Not a recipe that encourages intimacy, so for addicted cuddlebugs, Epsom Salt baths also assist in drawing out the lactic acid from the muscles, although when it comes to burning feet, one might need to just bite the bullet and sleep alone for a few nights.

I am in clinic in Nimbin, Tuesdays and Saturdays.

For appointments phone 02 6689-1361 or mobile (limited range): 0439-794-420.

In the meantime, love light and laughter.

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