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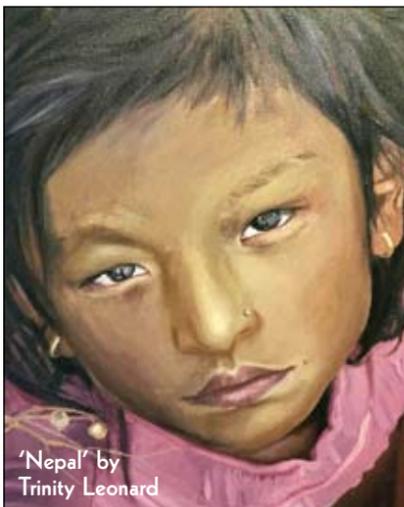
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'Nature's Cycles' is the first exhibition for 2018 at Blue Knob Hall Gallery. The cycles of life we live in, and are not separate from, can spark the imagination in an infinite number of ways. Cycles are a part of our everyday life, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Nature, with its own rhythms and cycles, has often had limitations put on it by human beings in an attempt to control and consequently interrupt this free flowing state. This theme can be interpreted in as many ways as there are artists to interpret it and this exhibition expresses all those possibilities. 'Birds of a Feather' is an exhibition of works by Jenny Kitchener and Deborah Brown to be held in the Gallery's Solo Space, presenting paintings, prints,

Nimbin Artists Gallery

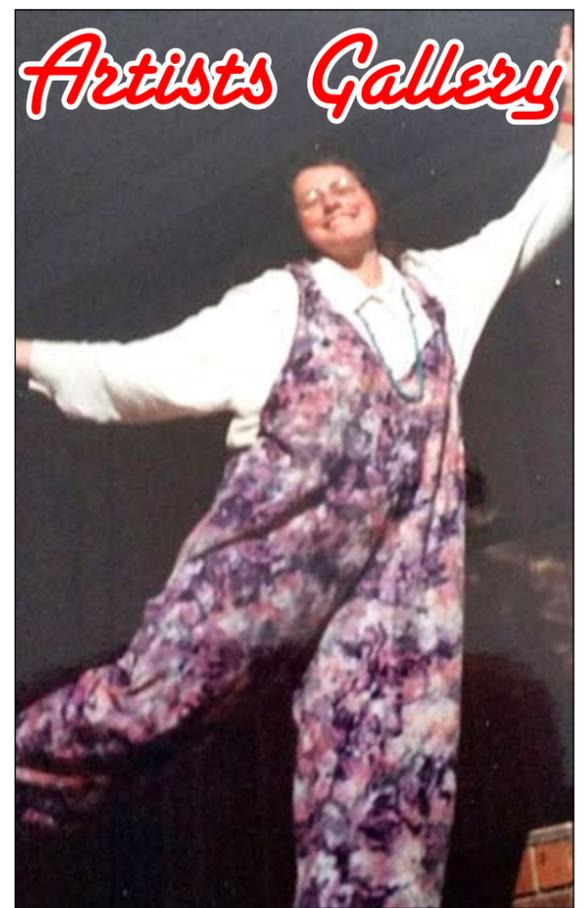
The Gallery committee is pleased to announce the inaugural 'Sally Art Prize' as part of our annual Autumn Arts Extravaganza (AAE), held Saturday 31st March to Sunday 29th April.

A \$500 cash prize will be awarded each year to one artwork as selected by our private benefactors. This is a fabulous and generous gesture in further support of our local art community, and we thank them.

The 2018 Autumn Arts Extravaganza is looming fast and invitations are now out to all artists to provide a proforma of their work by Monday 12th March. Entry forms and guidelines are also available at the Gallery desk.

The Committee also acknowledges the death of one of our founding members, Margaret McLaren (pictured, top right). Margaret spent a great deal of her time over many years helping to develop and establish the community asset we have today, the Nimbin Artists Gallery. Thank you Margaret.

Currently the Gallery is featuring



the delicate and evocative works of new (to Nimbin) artist Trinity Leonard. Her technique of fine colours and shading augers well for a career in the arts.

Gallery hours are 7 days 10am to 5pm (mostly), located at 47 Cullen Street, Nimbin. Visit our facebook page, phone 6689-1444, or email: nimbinartistsgallery@gmail.com



'Nimbin Rocks' by Deborah Brown, 'Bleeding Hearts' by Yvonne Preston and 'Encroachment #2' by Jenny Kitchener

photographs and craft objects which celebrate the bounty and beauty of the natural world.

Deborah Brown and Jenny Kitchener have been friends for over thirty years. The visual arts, teaching and a love of nature have formed the underlying bond to their long friendship. As artists, Deborah and Jenny have exhibited together many times in both individual and group shows.

As teachers, they both taught at Afterlee Public School for many years. And as friends, they both share an appreciation of the diversity and beauty of the natural environment and a concern for the future of the planet.

The Opening Night for both of these exhibitions is on Friday 9th February at 6.30pm. A meal is available on the night,

please phone the Gallery 6689-7449 or email: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au for more information.

Artists & Friends lunch

The next Artists and Friends lunch will be held on Thursday 22nd February at 12.30pm. Book in early!

New opening hours

From Thursday 1st March, the Gallery and Café opening hours will be changing. In order for more consistency in our opening times the hours will be: Thurs 10am - 3pm, Friday 10am - 3pm, Saturday 8.30am-3pm, and Sunday 10am - 3pm.

Many thanks to all our dedicated customers, volunteers and artists who continue to support Blue Knob Hall.

New works at Roxy Gallery

The new season of exhibitions at the Roxy Gallery starts off with two exhibitions by some extremely talented young artists from this region.

Mathew Daymond is an artist, a painter, songwriter, collage maker, poet and instrument player. He makes art his way; art with opinions and also words, exploring his opinions and facts through art.

He is interested in mystery and stories; inspired by the works of art through the ages. He likes to find the age of the works, finding stuff that's never been used before in art. He likes the old world image, the image of black and white is different to modern day colour. He expresses himself and his dreams and madness as it comes out. Mathew's exhibition 'Lost World No Codes' will blow your mind with detail.

RealArtWorks are a post-disability arts company

that engages professional and emerging artists of varying abilities to create quality art through a deep investment in process. Mike Smith, Chris Wilkinson and Ross Hill, with facilitator Zeb Schulz have been using different processes to create artwork exploring personal narratives over the last twelve months. 'Art in Process' is a showing of some of these works.

Both exhibitions will be held from 31st January to 3rd March, with the official opening taking place on Thursday 1st February from 6pm.



'Sunflower Heart' by Mike Smith



'Time Runs Back To Light' by Mathew Daymond

Serpentine sends off 2017 with Bubbles



Tropical Fruits marchers gather outside the gallery

by Fiona McConnachie

2017 went out with a bang at the Serpentine Gallery with our "Bubbles" event. We provided pre-parade refreshments coinciding with the Tropical Fruits' Street Parade on 29th December.

The parade was spectacular with so many fabulous outfits and the gallery was packed with happy, excited people... all in all it was wonderful celebration of love and diversity in our community. Jex Lopez kept the mood going with her beautiful singing and piano accompaniment.

We're currently showing until 5th February, 'Transformation', an exhibition by Liz Dowling, Jo Kelly and Kate Naylor who, as well as being practising artists, are art-psychotherapists working in mental health in the Northern Rivers area.

This is an exhibition of their own experiences about transcending the struggles in life and consequently the transformation which may occur. Their aim is to explore where they are as far as their own art is concerned and to promote art therapy, dispelling any misconceptions, to the Northern Rivers community.

The gallery is also hosting Art Therapy workshops with Liz Dowling (MMH Art Therapy, University of Queensland). They are being held on Thursday 1st and



Jo, Kate & Liz with their collaborative piece 'Transformation Mandala'

Saturday 3rd February, both 10.30am to 12pm. Please contact the gallery on (02) 6621-6845 or Liz Dowling on 0421-974-703 for further information and bookings.

The next exhibition is 'Natural and Supernatural' featuring the ceramic art of Ray Moller, Mark Majchrzak and Regina Majchrzak. It will run from the 9th to the 23rd of February, with the opening on the 9th. All are welcome to attend

As part of the 2018 Lismore Women's Festival, we are inviting women artists to be part of our exhibition 'Woman' - an exhibition celebrating the creative women in our region. Please contact the gallery if you would like to participate in this

group show which is open to all women artists, not just members. 'Woman' will run from 2nd to 19th March.

Our next members' exhibition will be 'The Fall', to run from 13th April to 4th May. As usual, the theme is totally open to interpretation and we hope that our artist members find this an exciting concept to work with. For more information, call the Gallery.

The Serpentine Management Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers. Their skills, dedication and sheer hard work keep the gallery functioning smoothly and to put it simply, we could not exist without them. So, thank you Kim, Jason, Jay, Anthony, Heather, James, Michael, Martin, Uli and Violet. A thank you also to our members for their invaluable support over the years and as a community organisation we rely on your contributions as artists and active members of our gallery.

The Serpentine Gallery is looking forward to a great year ahead. Our calendar is filling rapidly, so if you want to book gallery space for 2018 please call us soon.

The Serpentine Community Gallery is situated at 17a Bridge Street North Lismore. To contact us for information on exhibitions or booking a show please call (02)66216845 or email us at: serpentineartsgallery@gmail.com or gallery@serpentinearts.org



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Five years of Fermentation

The fifth annual Blue Knob Fermentation Festival will be held on Saturday 3rd March.

The theme is 'Food as Medicine', and as well as a Fermentation Competition like last year (categories 'Food' and 'Beverage', entrants to label and list the ingredients), and an array of speakers in the morning with emcee Deborah Perry.

There will be a 'Long Table Lunch' afterwards (approx. 2.30pm), with tastings of lively ferments and lively discussions as well (booking essential).

Those interested in booking a stall, contact Ian Slape on 0433-551-436. For general enquiries about the Festival, contact Gillian Tubbs at 0469-775-025 or email her at: gillian@biocharproject.org

The best source for information is the Blue Knob Farmers Market Fermentation Festival FaceBook site, as a vibrant event such as this stays fluid and ferments over time.

Also check the gossip among fermenters at our market every Saturday, from 8.30am to noon, on the grounds of the Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Café, on Blue Knob Road near the corner of Lillian Rock Road.

The Nimbin Organic Food Co-op is preparing plans for a major re-fit of the shop, increasing refrigeration and generally expanding our range. We are hoping to roll out the changes in coming months with as little disruption as possible. Watch this space.

The month's food is the fig. Figs grow on the ficus tree (*Ficus carica*), which is a member of the mulberry family.

They are unique in that they have an opening, called the "ostiole" or "eye," which is not connected to the tree, but which helps the fruit's development. There are well over 30 varieties of figs grown today.

Figs are a good source of dietary fibre, vitamin B6, copper, potassium, manganese and pantothenic acid.

Not only are figs one of the healthiest foods we can possibly eat, they are scattered throughout history, found in religion, mythology, ancient literature and artwork.

In most versions of Buddhist mythology, it is well known that Buddha gained enlightenment under a fig tree. In Hindu mythology, it is believed that the powerful god Vishnu was born under a beautiful fig tree.

Ancient Egyptians believed that figs were a favoured food of the gods. Paintings have been discovered in many tombs depicting figs, and most of the tombs discovered have had dried figs in



Food matters

with Neil Amor

them, a delicious snack for the afterlife.

According to Roman mythology, Romulus and Remus were responsible for establishing the city of Rome. The twins were discovered under a fig tree being nurtured by a she-wolf.

Bacchus, also known as Dionysus (his name means literally "friend of the fig"), is the god that introduced the fig

to mankind.

They were valued so highly in Greece that exporting them was banned, and only citizens were allowed to enjoy them. Inhabitants of Athens, including Plato, referred to themselves as 'philosykos', which means 'friend of the fig'.

Figs are one of the most frequently mentioned fruits throughout the scriptures of the Bible; about 39 times.

Grilled fresh figs and ricotta

Ingredients

2 tbsp honey
1 cinnamon stick
25g flaked almonds
4 large or 8 small fresh figs
1 tbsp rapadura sugar
125g ricotta cheese
1/2 tsp natural vanilla extract
pinch of ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp finely grated orange zest.

Method

Put the honey and cinnamon stick in a small saucepan with 80 ml (1/3 cup) water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer gently for six minutes, or until the syrup has thickened and reduced by half. Discard the cinnamon stick and stir in the almonds.

Preheat the grill to medium-high and grease a shallow baking dish large enough to fit all the figs side by side. Slice the figs into quarters from the top to within 1cm of the bottom,

keeping them attached at the base. Arrange in the dish.

Into a small bowl add the rapadura sugar, ricotta, vanilla, ground cinnamon and orange zest and mix well. Divide the filling among the figs, spooning it into the cavities. Spoon the honey syrup over the top. Grill the figs for 3-4 minutes, or until the juices start to ooze out and the almonds are lightly toasted. Allow to cool slightly, then spoon the juices from the dish over the figs and serve. Until next month, eat well.

Healthy milk alternatives

by Thom Culpeper

Current wisdom of the health of dairy products is being challenged by some major studies that expose the real levels of lactose intolerance in the general population.

Science has confirmed that circa 8000 years ago, the adult hunter-gatherers of Europe could not digest the sugars (*lactose*) in milk. Just as few mammals can utilise milks post-weaning.

Agriculturist-farmers arriving from the near east during this era and the subsequent massive Yamnaya pastoralis-herder migrations from from the steppes north of the Black Sea 4800 years ago also lacked the 'LCT' gene that facilitated the adult digestion of lactose.

About 4300 years ago lactose tolerance, together with their light skin, seems to have swept Europe allowing Vitamin D synthesis at low light levels and the digestion of sugars and Vitamin D available in mammal milks.

Blue eyes and the 'Tall' gene accompanied this

migration. These Yamnaya migration episodes may also have delivered the Indo-European languages to Europe.

Lactose intolerance, (the lack of the enzyme *Lactase*), is much wider in the general population than was once understood.

Race genetics appear to be a major vector of adult 'dairy' intolerance, though processed yoghurts, cheeses and fermentation allow a wider utilisation than the genes would allow.

It is now known that about 10% of Northern European to 95% of parts of African and Asian populations are affected. Some estimates say 65% of the world's population are more or less affected by this inability to digest lactose.

Some healthy alternatives include:

Hemp milk

This milk is now gaining in interest, being an ideal choice for vegans and so forth. It contains a balance of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids. It also contains thiamine, niacin, calcium, potassium and useful fibre.

Almond milk

A widely utilised milk rich in Omega-6 fats and *not* in saturated fats. Containing antioxidants and Vitamin E, crucial in warding-off age-related free radicals. 30 calories per serve is of benefit in weight control. Waste water is of a concern in this milk production!

Macadamia nut milk

High in plant fats, this milk is rich in antioxidants, Omega-3 and phytochemicals needed for body and mind health. Makes impressive smoothies with the addition of vanilla and cinnamon. Very popular with vegans.

Coconut milk

A reasonable source of calcium, low in sugars, containing essential minerals, copper, manganese, some plant-iron, selenium and zinc.

Oat milk

Rich in protein, 4-5g per serve, high in soluble fibre, raising the good cholesterol and helping reduce the 'nasty' one. If gluten intolerant, seek organic 'wheat-free' formulations.

Flax milk

This milk is rich in Alpha Linoleic acids, Omega-3 fatty acids, as much calcium as dairy based sources. Some studies suggest this product has anti-inflammatory properties.

Rice milk

A blend of protein, carbohydrates and minimal fats, this milk is a staple among the gluten-free and dairy-free imbibers. Inexpensive to most purses.

Soy milk

When fortified with calcium, riboflavin, Vitamins A and D it is some ways the equivalent of dairy. The presence of isoflavines is said to have been associated with reduced cardiac disease. Some soy intolerance is noted among some cohorts. An impact on men's fertility is also suggested.

Pea milk

A new entrant into the 'plant' milk family. A vegan natural, free of nuts, free of soy, free of lactose and gluten free! More calcium and protein than other alternative plant milks. Being made from yellow pea flour (*Pisum*

Hemp Seed Milk



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strain & sweeten with agave if you like

sativum: YY), it's green in other ways! Don't get your 'Ps' out of sync!

Hazelnut milk

The 'Latte di nocciola' of Italy. This milk is growing in popularity. Many culinary compounds are generated from the hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Nutella and Frangelico being two of the famous hazel compounds.

The hazel is rich in protein monounsaturated fats, manganese, Vitamin E and numerous other essential nutrients.

Some other South American plant materials are now utilised, cashew (*Anacardium occidentale*) for instance, which suggests a future pathway to a dairy equivalent, such as Brazilian Sabra nut (*Pachira glabra* or *aquatica*).

Anxiety and copper toxicity

Anxiety symptoms can be caused by an imbalance of minerals and heavy metals, in particular an excess of copper. This can be genetic, environmental or dietary. Whilst copper is a necessary metal, and a deficiency also causes severe symptoms, it creates toxicity when in excess amounts.

Symptoms of copper toxicity include anxiety, insomnia, racing mind, fatigue, and depression. In last month's column I discussed the important role of neurotransmitter balance in mood symptoms. Copper levels affect neurotransmitter production, with excess levels causing the racing mind that interferes with sleep.

If copper is high, iron storage in the body is reduced. Liver detoxification is also reduced.

The adrenal glands, liver and gall bladder work together to balance copper levels. They produce copper-binding proteins ceruloplasmin and metallothionein. These prevent a build up of excess copper. If the functions of the liver (genetic and lifestyle issues) and/or adrenals (stress, burnout) are compromised, the production of these proteins is reduced. Copper levels then build up.

One important player in the copper story is zinc. One of its many functions is to excrete excess copper from the body, thereby keeping it in balance. Zinc deficiency is very common in adults, occurring in up to 80% of people. High copper levels will reduce the body's uptake and ability to utilize zinc. So it becomes a vicious circle of high copper-low zinc creating higher copper-lower zinc.

Copper excess can also come from a genetic condition called Pyloruria where people shed zinc and Vitamin

B6 through the urine. This creates a chronic deficiency in zinc, which in turn leaves copper levels too high. It is incurable but can be managed through long term supplementation with zinc, B6, and manganese in a balanced supplement. This can be diagnosed with a urine test available through a natural health practitioner or integrative doctor.

So how do you know if you have copper toxicity? Symptoms give a clue, but they can also have other causes. If the picture fits, I advise testing to confirm. Copper detoxing should not be attempted without confirmation of copper levels, as lowering it too much is harmful.

The most reliable test is a Hair Mineral Analysis. This provides a wealth of helpful information including copper levels. The copper level and the ratio of zinc/copper are important. Additionally a blood test can show free copper levels as well as ceruloplasmin. The ratio between these gives an indication of overall copper status. Copper alone is not very useful. The blood will always try to "normalize" minerals, so the hair analysis (which indicates tissue levels) gives a more stable picture.

If a copper detox is advisable, there are a few things we can do. Firstly, support the adrenal glands and liver detoxification with appropriate herbs and supplements. Then include the specific nutrients to reduce copper. These include molybdenum (levels are first checked with the hair analysis), zinc, B6 (I prefer the methyl form called p5p) and Vitamin E. There are some combination tablet formulations which I find very helpful.

In addition, I include chlorella and a micronized zeolite formula for binding



Nature's pharmacy

by Trish Clough, herbalist

and excreting heavy metals. This should be done very gradually, otherwise it creates a "copper dump" into the bloodstream. This can cause a severe escalation in symptoms, so must be avoided.

Dietary sources of copper should be reduced, as well as exposure from copper water pipes (use filtered water). It takes many months to successfully treat copper toxicity and of course needs professional supervision. A follow up hair test after six months is recommended to monitor progress.

Trish Clough is a Lismore herbalist who has been practising for more than 30 years.

She now conducts her own clinic practice in Club Lane in Lismore after owning "Traditional Medicinals" for 20 years.

Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452-219-502 or email: trishclough@internode.net.au

The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.

Homeopathy should not be banned

by Robin Stein, intuitive healer

After my year in Vietnam during the height of the war in 1968/69, I became totally allergic to all chemicals and my liver failed. Even my doctor was shocked when blood began to pour from my ears after the council sprayed Round Up close to my home.

If homeopathy is banned, I will not be able to get treatment for any problem I have. There are thousands of people like me here in Australia.

More and more countries in Europe are replacing their Big Pharma vaccination program to become completely homeopathic. And more and more countries are using homeopathy alongside orthodox medications for the simple reason that homeopathic treatments work. They are completely safe, without the severe side affects of orthodox medication. So why on earth is Australia taking the opposite stand?

Cuba was battling the rising levels of leptospirosis during their flood season. They stopped using the US vaccinations because of those rising levels of infection and death, and began to make their own, with no improvement. So they decided to try homeopathic vaccinations. That year, the vaccination of 2.5 million people was so successful that leptospirosis infections fell off the charts.

Something similar was done in India last year to vaccinate millions of people against Dengue fever, and once again, the homeopathic vaccination process was 100% successful.

Italy has now gone fully homeopathic. Israel uses homeopathy alongside



orthodox medicine, as do Germany, Switzerland and several other European countries. Countless millions of people now embrace homeopathy as a safer treatment than orthodox medicine. So if homeopathy is so dangerous, why would so many countries embrace it as a completely 'safe' treatment?

From my own experience, homeopathy is very safe. My liver was destroyed by the chemicals sprayed around me during the Vietnam war and strangely, orthodox medical physicians had no idea why I was dying. Then I met a very famous Scottish Physician by the name of Dr Ernest Llewellyn Godfrey, who not only diagnosed me within minutes, he also cured me and brought my liver back to normal.

Then he treated me and my children very successfully for the next 15 years until he passed in the year 2000. He studied homeopathy because orthodox medicine was not able to cure his own asthma. But homeopathy did!

There is no evidence that homeopathy causes damage. None at all, unless it has

been 'made up' by sceptics who simply want to make trouble. So therefore, we are left with an understanding that the bullying pharmaceutical companies want 'full' control over their chemical cocktails. So much so, they refuse to permit others to have any 'free choice' at all.

And if you take 'free choice' away from an entire country, how then can you call that country democratic?

Banning homeopathy for completely flawed reasons in Australia would make our country a laughing stock throughout the rest of the world, who know perfectly well that it is not dangerous, and in fact, is highly effective. Banning homeopathy would drive it underground, just like anything else the public want which is taken from them. Is that what you want?

Pharmaceutical companies wouldn't want to demonise homeopathy unless it was highly effective. It creates a problem for them because it is so effective. It should therefore be used alongside orthodox medicine.

How can the pharmaceutical companies hate homeopathy simply because it is so effective? That's discrimination! Both orthodox medicine and homeopathy have a place, so surely we must reject points 3 and 4 in their presentation, and embrace points 1 and 2, so that homeopathy can remain loved by so many.

Then orthodox medicine and homeopathy can be used alongside each other as they are now being used throughout the rest of the world.

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More weeds than you can poke a stick at

There are more weeds than you can poke a stick at in the Northern Rivers. Another hot summer with a sprinkle of rain here and there and everything grows super fast. Sometimes it is hard to work out what is a weed and what is not. Plenty of species considered environmental weeds are still to be found growing in private gardens, as street trees in towns and cities, sold in nurseries, and even recommended by gardening shows.

How can you tell what's a goody or a baddy? Here's a tip. If you see an exotic species growing along the roadside, on a creek bank, on fence lines or coming up in the bush, chances are it is a weed. Examples of tree weed species found growing wild locally as well as cherished in gardens include jacaranda, golden rain tree and curry leaf tree to name just a few. Ice-cream bean also has a reputation for weediness. Choose carefully what to plant and where to plant it.

One plant that has not been cultivated as an ornamental for decades, continues to spread. It is groundsel bush, *Baccharis halimifolia*. A native of north America, groundsel had naturalised in Queensland by 1900 and was considered a serious problem there by 1930. The 1960s saw it establish in the Northern Rivers and it is now found even further south around Taree.

Let's work together to reduce the impact of groundsel. Now is the time to check the paddocks, creek banks and sides of dams. This hardy woody shrub



Weed Words

by Triny Roe

will be in full flower by Mardigrass in early May so identify and remove or manage early. Please do not let it flower and develop seed. Be a good neighbour and land custodian. Landholders have a responsibility to control groundsel bush which is a declared noxious species. If you're a renter and you see it, let your landlord know.

Ignore groundsel at your peril. Its ability to spread and quickly colonise new areas has earned it a place on the "hit hard and fast" list. Groundsel bush can be found on grazing land, old farms, roadsides, recently cleared land such as for subdivisions, in open forest or after logging has diminished the canopy.

Don't want the weed inspectors visiting? Don't give them a reason to and do your groundsel.

Stop the spread of this virulent weed in the beautiful Nimbin Valley. A mature tree can produce 1.5 million light white fluffy seeds. These seeds can float up to 40 kms so can end up establishing in new areas. 50% of seeds will fall within 100 metres of the parent plant and groundsel bush will soon take over the paddock if left to its own devices.

Easily identified by its distinctive toothy spade-like leaves you can hand pull small seedlings, especially when the soil is damp. Repeated slashing of large infestations of small seedlings can knock groundsel back, especially if combined with pasture improvement. The key to reducing the weeding workload is prompt attention to the problem plant.

Weed seed and vegetative material of many species are easily carried on machinery. Check tractors and slashers when contractors arrive on your property. Contaminated mud and viable plant material can be carried in and deposited in the new location whilst the job is being done. Keep a sharp eye out for new weeds appearing after earthworks, roadworks and clearing. Anytime the earth is disturbed there will be an opportunity for new plants to appear.

Living in the country is a lifestyle choice. Part of that lifestyle is managing weeds.

Happy weeding.

Starting a garden

by Dave Davies

How to start a garden? Tricky question.

Opening lines in songs often drive the song along. Maybe a good middle bit, a chorus or two and an ending. So too with starting a garden.

We are dealing with life here: the plants, the gardener and most importantly the soil. Soil which is full of life is going to make you and your surrounds feel better.

Working with nature is the direction you need to take

when starting a garden. Use of herbicides, pesticides and artificial fertilisers interferes with nature.

Many years ago, my sister gave me a copy of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. It made a huge impact on me, with the spelling out of what happens when we poison the environment.

Weeds are there to add biomass, minerals and food for soil organisms.

Outside Geoff Dawe's house, there is a sign that says: "There are no weeds in my garden". Geoff, who

passed away recently, was a great believer in working with nature.

Some years ago, I helped Geoff plant lomandra on his steep land, on the contour. Using a builder's dumpy level, we planted the lomandra close enough to create a natural swale. We share the planet with nature and connect with her through the garden.

Big Sky Organic Farm is at Nimbin Farmers Market on Wednesdays 3-6pm and Blue Knob Farmers Market on Saturdays, 8.30am-noon.

Imponderable Flight

*Life is imponderable flight
Infant baby light
Meagre heights
Downward turns
Hearts that yearn
Starry eyed brides
Passion Picasso rides
Littered losses of faces
Lovers crosses
Borne up roads
That wind
Platinum smiles that greet
the dawn
That seem to grow in
dimmer light
So let life grow
Imponderable flight.*

Dave Davies

Plant of the month

No tree edition

by Richard Burer,
Natural area restoration consultant

For those who read this community column, you may remember I like to throw a curly in for February, like a tropical fruit tree or weed tree, but this month I'd like to remember some of those iconic trees around the Nimbin landscape that are no longer with us.

This year we lost the big old Bat Wing Coral going up the Stony Chute, which has featured in 'Plant of the Month' over the years, I wasn't the only one who noticed, it certainly affected those who care, as the odd person commented about it falling over. I'm not sure how old this one was, but it's a very culturally significant tree species to Aboriginal people, and this one by the road certainly had lived a life.

Also out on Stony Chute Road on the rise at the 3km mark, who could not remember the "Tree of Death",



a gloriously large yellow Stringybark with its crash marks like modern graffiti, telling stories of previous days and years. It knocked up a few for sure before it was removed.

Perhaps one of the saddest removals was the hitching tree, a Forest Red Gum on the corner of High Street. This tree offered shade, protection and a sleeping place for those who hitched a ride out of town. I always kind of felt it was easier for people to get a lift, as the tree offered a blessing somewhat and kept the traveller in

good condition.

Further on the road on the right after Bazzana's quarry was the Flame Tree that warmed the heart of travellers on the way to Lismore. A few years back someone wrote a letter to the editor of the *GoodTimes* remarking how they were going to miss this lovely tree after a storm took it out.

Several years back, the widening of the road just past the Bishops Creek turnoff took out a giant Lacebark that surely predated Europeans to the district. These are just some of the trees and native vegetation that gets lost to the progress of this district; some get lost to old age.

Last year there were logging trucks taking rainforest and other logs out of the district, right through town, often in the early hours. Ironic don't you think, after the activism that this town proudly displayed in the saving of local rainforest not so many years back?

This month looks like a few showers to start off the season, so get those trees in the ground. The earlier you plant the better, because the best time to plant was 20 years ago, or today.

The sound of mangoes falling

On windless nights I lie awake listening to the mangoes falling from the trees. It's like the sky is falling. Whump, whump. In little pieces. The possums bound expertly from rooftop to treetop and back again, gorging themselves on the golden fruit. In the morning, the lawn is littered with their leftovers, and all of the whole succulent fruits they've knocked down. Then it's my turn. With a wheelbarrow and milk crate I hunt and gather, tossing the spotty and rotten, carefully placing the smooth-skinned beauties in the barrow until it's loaded high. And then I wheel the thing out to the curb, set up a table, chalk up a sign.

You see, I've come to see how the other half live. Their acres of lawn. Their black jeeps and brand new surfboards. Their boats, dogs, and every other gadget, their respectable, mainstream lives.



by Anastasia Guise

I wrangle the kids into it: one is spelling out M-A-N-G-O-E-S, the other grinning at passers-by. We haven't even finished the sign before somebody stops. Two bodies, actually. Phil and Graham are two extremely happy older men, who buy four bags of mangoes (three dollars a bag, thank you very much) and give us a dollar extra for the size of my daughter's smile.

I'm in a food desert, and it's not my cup of tea at all. Locked behind large corporate doors in the groaning air-conditioning are those packets and tins we've become so accustomed to; even grateful for. As if not having twenty-one different kinds of cheese is a kind of poverty (I'm telling you, pre-sliced and pre-grated is taking things a little too far!). They're the tins and packets we're grateful for when we come zooming back in on a plane from some orphanage or refugee camp, shell-shocked by the bland genetically-modified rice we fed skeletal babies there. They are the tins and packets we're grateful for when our town is underwater and everything – normal life – grinds to a halt, except here in the cool, clean interior, musak is playing, and by some miracle we can buy salmon and water crackers, mineral water and chocolate.

Yep. Grateful

But this isn't my garden. Here, I cannot find foods I know. Instead there are a million little cardboard and tin soldiers, all dressed up for a party I feel like I should be invited to, (everyone else is going!) and my ticket in is just the innocent little sum on the price-tag.

Except the party's over. This is the wavering mirage, the very places that help us waste 5.3 million tonnes of food every year in Australia, at an estimated cost (by the Office of Environment) of 20 billion dollars (which doesn't include accounting for the fuel, water, fertiliser, labour or livestock which went into producing the wasted goods). We can't afford to do it anymore; not economically, and not environmentally.

Give me real food any day. Let me eat mangoes. Give me a farmer with dirt under her fingernails and the day's work settling in her sleeping bones. Give me seeds, and



freedom, and dawn and soil and earthworms and the simple transaction of a stall, a basket (and maybe a bit of bitcoin).

I realise, maybe we are the fresh breeze. We're not about to crack the suburbs open, but our mango stall is a riot. The neighbourhood comes alive,

just like neighbourhoods everywhere. People are hungry for change. I realise, this may not be my garden, but it's still home.

Anastasia Guise is an author and environmentalist, writing on ecology, science and humanity. Facebook: [anastasiaguiseauthor](#)

Removal of koala food trees is always risky

Koala Kolumn

by Susannah Keogh
Care Co-ordinator

We received a call on Dec 21st that a Mum and Bub had come down with a tree on a property being cleared for development in Goonellabah, despite having an experienced spotter on hand. The baby was thrown from the mother's back during the fall, and once they hit the ground, Mum, full of adrenaline and desiring safety, ran up the first tree she could find, leaving the baby on the ground.

The baby, with a round head and tiny ears, was named Monkey, as he was very active and quite cheeky. He was rushed to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital for assessment and thankfully, nothing was broken – but he did have some serious bruising across his back which restricted his movement for a few days. He stayed in care for four days while we tried desperately to capture his mother. During that time, he was difficult to feed and jumped at any small noise – he was a nervous wreck. Meanwhile, his mum stayed at the top of the tree she had climbed, also scared by the experience.

On the fourth day, at 3am of course, Monkey's mum was finally caught in our trap. She was a big, strong girl so we called her Chunky, and she was even more petrified than her joey. Once we had established Chunky didn't have any obvious injuries and had no trouble climbing, we attempted to reunite her with Monkey. It was a very nervous few moments



Chunky and Monkey



– Monkey knew exactly who his mum was but she was so scared she almost jumped away from him in fear. We left them alone for a while to re-establish their bond and within a few hours, Monkey was happily suckling with his head inside Chunky's pouch.

They were taken to Currumbin the following day for Chunky to be assessed. She was dehydrated, hungry and had some minor injuries from the fall but most of all, she was terrified. Her terror lead to inappetence which resulted in significant weight loss during her first few weeks. She also developed mild chlamydia so was treated with antibiotics. Slowly, her nervousness decreased until she eventually became quite a calm patient. Meanwhile Monkey was as happy as a clam – he had his mum back and nothing else mattered to him.

Chunky is still in care (with her fluff-ball son) at the care centre and if she continues to improve, we hope they will soon be back in the wild, safe and healthy as they should be.

Bodhi's Story

This beautiful fellow, Bodhi (pictured), has had skin issues for quite some time, causing hotspots and extreme itchiness. He had got to the point of wearing a head cone to stop the licking and scratching.

His lovely guardians gave him the best of everything, including much love. They had tried all alternatives, including the best vet care, organic food, elimination diets and imported topical treatments.

Bodhi and I had an animal communication and Reiki session, in which Bodhi expressed he had certain food and environmental allergies that were having a cyclic effect. More importantly, he prescribed the best way to treat his existing hotspots.

These included two topical treatments that I wasn't familiar with, (in fact, I had to Google and research for my own knowledge).

After the initial session I made a house visit where we used the pendulum to determine the best way forward with food he can eat.

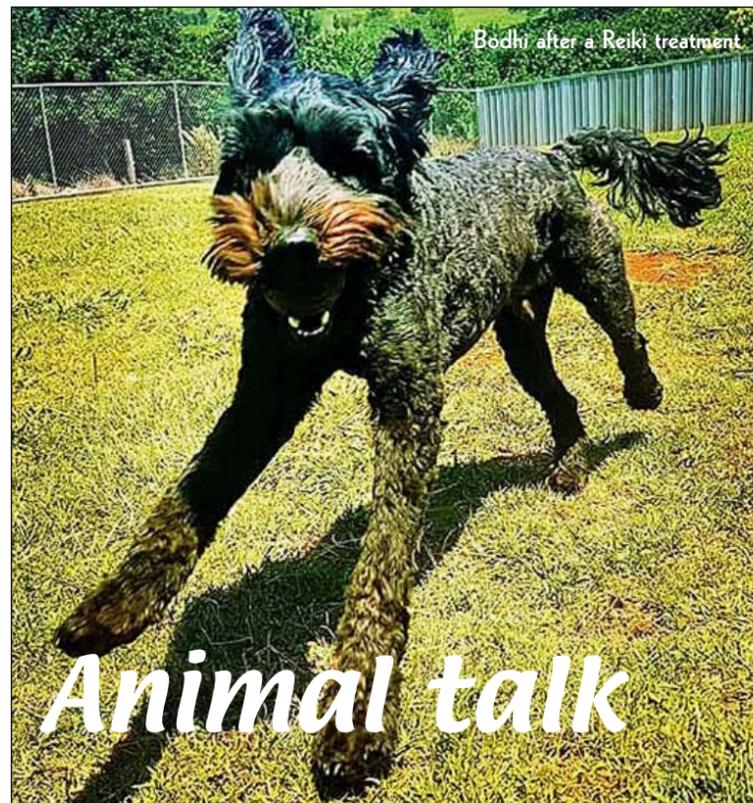
Meanwhile the Reiki had a calming effect on the discomfort while his skin healed.

I have worked with Bodhi a few times since. Once when he was feeling poorly, and upon tuning in, we discovered that he had ingested some bat poop on a regular walk. He was back to normal in 48 hours.

The recent change of season has brought about some further skin issues that have appeared. He is receiving regular Reiki sessions and we are tweaking his diet so he doesn't have the same sort of flare-up, as he has incredibly sensitive digestion and allergies to summer grass seeds.

Animals are truly amazing. They quite often know the answers; they just need an interpreter at times.

Bodhi has added two more naturally sourced treatments to my ever expanding tool kit, curated by my own research and animal suggestions over time. Occasionally, I'll try the treatment



Bodhi after a Reiki treatment

Animal talk

by Donna Connolly

on myself to feel the vibrational energy and have a deeper understanding of how it works.

Less is more, in the food department, for most animals. They see eating as a survival tool. They don't have the same 'palate' humans do. Dogs, for example, have ten percent of the taste buds that humans have. Their sense of smell is off the chart though.

Quite often, in a session, animals will send a taste sensation through when describing their favourite food, or a food that they can see themselves benefiting from. (Chicken necks were hard to deal with at first)

Not every treatment works in every case. Each client/animal is completely unique, I approach each case with a completely open mind and understanding that there will always be something to learn.

I often use the pendulum to determine the best way forward for

the client and guardian and also assists me in checking chakras and any disharmony within the body.

I use crystals quite often in treatments too.

Dalmatian Jasper is the perfect stone for animal communication if you would like to try it for yourself. Rose quartz is wonderful when placed in the animal's water, they really benefit from the pure love vibration.

Reiki and animal communication work wonders with all sorts of ailments; anxiety, behavioural issues and some unexplained medical conditions. It can give comfort at the time of transition or in some cases can answer questions surrounding a passing.

I will be facilitating classes throughout the year. Please email me to express your interest.

Email: rivergem88@gmail.com

Web: www.rivergem.com.au

Facebook: [Rivergem Readings & Reiki Intuitive Animal Healing](#)

Instagram: [donna_dolittle](#)

Sustainable living in an unsustainable society

Recognizing all the aspects of an unsustainable society is probably the first major step in moving towards sustainable living. Usually we have to stop, take time out and reflect on how society operates and see who benefits from the status quo.

All human beings, no matter where they travel have basic needs that have to be acquired these are: waste elimination, water security, food security, land to live on with accommodation, energy supply, community contribution and interaction.

Recycled toilet waste

Let's start our sustainable living with a composting toilet. The contents of the toilet can be relocated back to the food garden where it becomes valuable fertilizer for fruit trees and vegetables. Rather than just being a waste product that is dumped into a septic tank, or worse still piped out into the ocean, your waste is recycled by you with no added water wastage.

Water security

On-site tanks can be used to provide 100% of daily requirements for all those living on the property with no dependence on local councils or state governments who provide water complete with unwanted costs, and additives like fluoride and/or chlorine. Coastal Northern NSW is blessed with a high annual rainfall.

Food security

Food security can be provided by growing an ever-increasing range of fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs (all non-GM) on site, to provide as much as possible of the daily requirements of those living on the property. Extra food can be bartered with neighbours. Developing connections to other farmers, food co-ops and community markets are also parts of the solution.

Eliminating debt

Debt is one way to keep people working as cogs in the system. If your government mandates debt



by Cameron Storey

to each and every tertiary student in the form of a HECS debt, then the priority is to pay back the debt rather than re-evaluating your life, wondering how to make an ethical living and evaluating the very nature of the system itself.

Land debt, not practised by indigenous peoples, is a greed-based foreign introduction within the last 200 years. The first generation to make land cost made heaps of money and passed the debt down the line; sound familiar? No other animal pays for the use of land;

humans are the only ones stupid enough to fall for this scam and think it's "NORMAL."

Multiple Occupancy communities represent an intelligent movement towards reducing land debt and living costs rather than being stuck in increasing rental costs and reduced autonomy or exorbitant freehold prices with little viable farming land. Parking fines, speeding fines, GST, stamp duty, car registration and a thousand other tax scams all increase individual debt while providing very little service in return.

Sustainable power

There is a nearly endless supply of power radiating from the sun but due to vested interests, corrupt governments rarely support a genuine movement towards solar power for the vast majority. Managing your own power requires a minimal understanding of the energy usage of your appliances, some maintenance and upfront investment in panels and batteries rather than increasing power bills, regular storm-caused blackouts and coal dependence.

Ethical living and community

There are people who support sustainable living in the directions outlined above and there are people who live unsustainably dependent on a fragile system for water, food, work, power and connection.

Sometimes we are just caught in the system, unable to make changes until the opportunity presents and sometimes we can start making little changes in the right direction.

The most well paid jobs I've ever had were where I was just an unethical cog in the unsustainable system unable to effect changes and the most sustainable job I've ever had involves me managing my own power supply, my own water supply, my own food supply, recycling my own waste and finding ways to meaningfully contribute to the community.

The Dharma Centre and Medicinal Gardens on Lillifield Community has three yoga classes and Friday 9.30am yoga class is at Birth and Beyond, Nimbin. Call (02) 6689-7120 or Facebook: Dharma Centre - Lillifield.



Traversing dimensions

by David Ward

By altering our brain chemistry through using a powerful substance like cannabis, we are enabled to readily slip into other dimensions. From here we can view our reality from another perspective and enjoy these other versions of life recreationally and therapeutically.

The reconfiguring of our brainwaves is a major shift; just as the mind begins to find itself at home in this other dimension, the drug effect begins to decline and we are forced back to reality.

The mind resents having to reverse and at this point the logical thing to do is to re-dose, maintaining that sense of escape to another place, where things appear to be more comfortable and interesting.

The problem is that once we become permanently fixed in that other dimension, the resultant tolerance to the substance means we've achieved little more than a new normality, devoid of much of the magic that was present in the beginning.

On a recent trip to Far North Queensland, I had a conversation with a stall-holder at a local market. As I related to him my discovery that controlled cannabis use was possible,

his eyes became wide as he listened intently, and he went on to state that although he was dosing at 40 minute intervals, he hadn't been "stoned" in 30 years.

We made a strong connection on this point: the possibility of change seeming to be just what he needed to hear about. Maintaining our place in this altered state consumes substantial resources and energy reserves with relatively little other gains beyond that maintenance.

The same energy and resources are very useful for moving us forward in our natural waking life, and as such have a potentially high value. With regards to recreation, mental health and sheer manageability of life, there can be a lot to lose from becoming numb to your substance of choice.

Adjusting these factors to establish a pattern of use no less than two weeks apart goes a long way to easing the load on our brain chemistry.

This suggests a range of replacement therapies along with a degree of discipline, which can easily be sourced through your daily yoga practice. And as for the rewards, imagine lighting up as if for the very first time, everytime.

The Vital Choices Program offers proven strategies to end all addictions. Phone David on 0447-820-510.



by Betti Wille

I know that you, fear, are my strongest ally in order to survive. And that you hold potentially enlightening messages for me.

So, instead of just feeling ashamed or disturbed by your presence, I am going to befriend it. I'm intending to be a wide open space for all movements under your name to pass through.

Not that I'm going to enjoy your touch on my autonomic nervous system. I feel you as heat, tension, contracted chest and guts, agitation, dull pain or disorientation... just to name a few. The novelty is to meet these sensations in a different way than usual.

Our natural tendency when experiencing fear is to push it away, into the closet. More and more stuff is shoved in there, repeatedly. Overfilled, it will eventually send emergency messages. Violent outbreaks, depression or other types of destructive self-management could be just that: a call to wake up and tend to our suppressed emotions.

By pushing my fear into dark corners I'm not getting rid of it. On the contrary, in the darkness it grows monstrous shapes, haunting my days and nights. Suppressed fear will eat away my joy and ability to relate peacefully and lovingly.

I've watched myself moving from total denial of fear towards

DEAR FEAR

recognition, then interest and eventually acceptance. Most recently, befriending those movements from within has become a priority. It does involve discomfort – but I can now apply compassion and some newly learned skills.

Such powerful skill is my ability to pause and observe. I can decide to pause and watch that physical sensation, let's say it's a shakiness in my stomach. I 'sit back', relax and observe. IT is flooded with awareness. Suddenly there is a sense of spaciousness around IT.

IT is not even 'personal' anymore... and I can hold IT with compassion.

Without fearful attachment, emotions naturally move through the body within 90 seconds. There might be a vibrating tension, a squeeze in the chest, a lump in the throat, heat or cold, a sudden tightening or maybe even a jolt of some kind. If I can observe these phenomena 'sitting back', possibly with the help of conscious breathing, I am merely watching a physical sensation.

It moves, changes and disappears.

A habitual Fight or Flight reaction may appear just because someone looked at me or said something in a certain way. By choosing to Attend and Befriend this phenomenon, a holding spaciousness shows up. Do you sense the freedom that lies here?

When observing, I cannot be that which is observed. It is possible to stop identification with disturbing things such as fear, without pushing it away.

Still, processing emotions in this way is not an easy task. While I've been experiencing just glimpses, someone else might either struggle to sense

anything at all or have a very strong experience. Anyone who has lived through severe trauma, be cautious and only enter this space with a therapist or good friend at your side. There must be balance between radical inquiry and safety to prevent re-traumatization.

Another powerful approach is to pull things out of the closet by naming and sharing them.

"I carry fear of death and loss of control. There is fear of abandonment, not belonging, feeling lonely and not being good enough. Having to perform gives me the creeps, even though I'm usually quite good at it. I'm afraid of being useless, saying the wrong things, not loving well enough and not finding a suitable intimate companion."

Be creative. It can be painted as a picture, turned into a song, speech or whispered to the trees...

May some of you be inspired to inquire more deeply while staying safe and connected.

Epilogue:

This column started off with information about Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy and then became an outlet for other topics close to my heart. Some of it was deep and sensitive stuff. I know it was appreciated by some. Thanks for reading, sharing and considering. And thanks to the NGT team for supporting our community spirit. For the time being I'm leaving this space for others to fill.

Befriending my fears will keep me occupied for a while. Apart from that, it's time to focus more on the light side of life, like playing co-operative Scrabble with Francis.

I'm still available for Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy. For inquiries contact: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com or phone 0490-292-138.

The power of adaptogenic herbs

by Les Rees,
Animal naturopath and massage therapist

I was talking to a client the other day about the nature of the adaptogenic herbs and I'm not sure that I gave a very comprehensive account of how incredibly useful they are. This got me thinking that an article about them might be an interesting read for aficionados of natural medicine.

Adaptogens are herbs that help the body to adapt to stress, support metabolic function and aid the recovery of balance within the body. They are unique in their ability to balance endocrine hormones, modulate the immune system and support metabolic processes.

They have the potential of bi-directional activity producing changes by stimulating several systems in the body having the capability of either toning down those that are hyper-functioning or strengthening those that need activation (hypo-functioning).

An example of bi-directional activity can be found in Asian ginseng. This herb contains ginsenoside Rg1 which stimulates the nervous system as well as Rb1 which calms it. In other words, adaptogens fine-tune the stress response by increasing adaptive energy!

This may sound a bit out there, but there are plenty of positive accounts of these superior healing herbs found in Chinese and Ayurvedic literature as well as a host of studies on their safety and efficacy for use in western natural medicine.

Many of the herbs I use on horses and other animals include the adaptogens, because they can be so useful for the following reasons:



- they are capable of modulating or boosting immune response, the latter by triggering an increase of white blood cells;
- they have antioxidant actions;
- they can delay fatigue during exercise;
- they protect the heart muscle;
- they can lower and stabilise blood glucose levels;
- they can optimise fat utilization for energy;
- they have anti-stress qualities that aid the stabilisation of the neuroendocrine system.

When you look at this list, it becomes apparent that the adaptogens can be used to great effect for a number of conditions affecting horses including fitness training, equine metabolic syndrome, Cushing's disease, insulin resistance, and also strengthening the ability to withstand the pressures of physical and mental stress by enabling them to adapt quickly to challenges without succumbing to exhaustion and/

or disease.

Having worked with the rehabilitation of traumatised horses, one area in particular that interests me is adrenal fatigue. The prevalence of this is hardly surprising when you consider the nature of the horse in the context of the flight mechanism.

We continually ask our horses to act against their natural response by locking them up in stables and transportation for hours on end, then we expect them to react benignly to controlling gadgets such as saddles, tack whips and spurs, all of which act against the animal's natural instinct to free itself from restraints. Is it any wonder that things can get out of hand, both mentally and physically!

Adrenal fatigue is caused when the adrenal glands cannot meet the demands of chronic stress due to the diminished output of hormones from over-stimulation, subsequently producing a cumulative effect within the whole body. Chronic fatigue is the outcome of over-compensation when other areas of the body are forced to work harder. Adaptogens are extremely useful to aid the adrenal glands to shut down quickly and they support adrenal function by allowing cells access to more energy and preventing oxidative damage.

I'm of the opinion that adaptogenic herbs can be very useful, in combination with other herbs, for many aspects of equine management, especially when you consider that stress occurs in so many forms ranging from light tension to life-affecting conditions which can involve the physiology and psychology of the horse.

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For most of the history of horse domestication, we've assumed that communications between humans and horses are unidirectional. Humans order. Horses obey. But now many people are thinking that communication could be a two-way street. Horses do try to communicate with humans, it's just that many of us don't learn their language.

If the cognitive abilities of horses are misunderstood, their treatment may be inappropriate. Equine welfare is dependent not only on physical comfort but on mental comfort as well. For some this is a challenging thought. If horses have mental capabilities, then they are also susceptible to mental health problems.

Potentially horses could experience post-traumatic stress disease (PTSD), depression, have learned helplessness, anxiety and numerous other mental health disorders that we now accept occur in humans. It has taken a long time for mental health problems in humans to gain social acceptance, so it may take a while to extend this to animals. However, it's not that great a leap to make.

Horses do talk. They are trying to communicate with us. We are so conditioned



Horses talk

to having one-way conversations with horses that we often miss what they are saying. Horses don't use vocal cords, they use their bodies. They are the masters of body language. They are communicating all the time and when we start to listen, and change what we do and say in response, they realise we are listening and increase their communication.

This has a snowball effect. I've met horses who are completely shut down because no-one has ever listened to them. After a while when they realise you're listening, because you make changes based on what they're saying, they open up and communicate more and more. This results in a horse that trusts you better too because they know you are not always going to over-ride

by Suzy Maloney

their desires and needs, so they can relax around you knowing you will not hurt them.

An example is a horse I worked with recently who was speaking loud and clear, but for a while wasn't being heard. The current custodian of this horse asked me to help him as he was having troubles getting the horse to go over a bridge. I was going to drive up ahead while they rode and we'd all meet at the bridge. However, the horse refused to go through the gate to leave the property. I got out and helped them through the gate. Then we set off and she refused to cross the road at the corner. Again I went back and helped, but by now I was seeing a pattern.

The third time he went to walk the horse beside the road. Again the horse stopped but this time I didn't help, instead I gave feedback on what I'd been seeing. To him the horse was being stubborn and refusing to go. What I saw was that each time she didn't want to go, there were rocks present. Between each of the stony patches (the gate, the corner, beside the road) she was moving freely. She was communicating clearly that her feet were hurting in the only way she could. The horse is now going to get hoof boots.

While this may seem a simple situation, it demonstrates what horses are going through over and over. Humans get very caught up in their own agenda, what they want to do and how they want to do it. We can forget to check in with our horses and see how it is for them. If you make it a practice of trying to see things from your horse's point of view it will be easier to realise what they're saying. The benefits to be gained from listening to horses are enormous, both for yourself and for the horses.

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