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Raised by wolves

'Raised By Wolves' is an upcoming solo exhibition featuring work from local artist Marley Myles at the Muse Contemporary Gallery in Lismore. Marley is a multidisciplinary artist working with ink, acrylics, hand embroidery and screen printing in a highly contemporary, Pop-Surrealist aesthetic.

Marley explains: "The paintings in this collection form a visual carousel rich with symbolism and vibrant colour. Recurring motifs offer a broken narrative of garnering wisdom through experience. A salute to the wild women who raised me."

"Informed by folk-tales, symbolism and my own matrilineal mythology, 'Raised By Wolves' delves deep into the shadows of finding one's wild self again and again."

The exhibition opens Friday 25th May at 5pm, and runs until Saturday 2nd June. Muse Contemporary Gallery is located close to the new quadrangle cultural precinct in Lismore at 131-133 Keen Street, upstairs in suite 4, and is open Tuesday to Friday 9am-5pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm.

For more info, visit: www.missmarley.com.au or: www.musecontemporarygallery.com



Art Trail needs help

The Murwillumbah Art Trail 2018 is coming on 18th-27th May, and it will be huge.

For ten lively days, Murwillumbah becomes the gallery and venue for art, performance and food over 28 venues.

Kaz Rice, Volunteers Co-ordinator (pictured) has put the call out for people to help with the staging of this very ambitious event.

"We need help with running the show and are calling for people to come and give us a hand," she said.

"It's not all a one-way street - our volunteers work in well-defined roles that will add to your skills and give you a cool crowd of people to hang out with at the event."

It's also funny. Organisers this year have created roles and titles to reflect the importance of making sure everything runs smoothly for the community and out-of-town patrons.

Volunteers will be trained in their roles at an information session on 14th May. Everyone is welcome to apply, regardless of abilities.

Please go to: www.themurwillumbaharttrail.com/volunteer to read the volunteers handbook and register. Or simply email Kaz Rice on: kfkaren98@gmail.com for further details.

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Call-out for portraits

The Hurford Hardwood Portrait Prize will be on show from 28th July - 23rd September at Lismore Regional Gallery. The winner will receive \$10,000 (acquisitive prize), judged by Dr Michael Brand, Director, Art Gallery of NSW. Entries close on Monday 11th June. Entry forms are online now at: www.lismoregallery.org/apps/forms/portrait/application.asp

'Amateur' by Vanessa White

Landscape within

'Landscape Within' is still showing at Blue Knob Hall Gallery, and runs until Saturday 12th May.

The variety of work in 3D and 2D has shown that the exhibiting artists have represented in their work the landscapes of our dreams, those places we hold within and those real places we carry within us that are remembered and hold meaning for us.

Robin Moore with Ali Walker

We have the great privilege of holding a three-week exhibition of Robin Moore's work. Robin has made a great contribution to the creative life of Nimbin by helping to set up the Nimbin Artists Gallery and then the community Gallery at Blue Knob Hall. This exhibition is a celebration of her creative life over the last 30 years.

As a practising artist, Robin became enamoured of the felting process through her friends and neighbours Polly Stirling and Sachiko Kotaka.

Her eye for colour and her ability as a felt maker and painter give her felted wall hangings a special quality. The wall hangings have gone all over the country and overseas and are in the homes of many local people.

Robin invited ceramicist Ali Walker to exhibit her work alongside her own. Ali has become very involved in the Blue Knob Hall Gallery and Ceramic Studio. Her exploration of clay dug from her and partner Andy's property at Blue Knob have seen some exquisite ceramics produced. Her pieces are unique and will add another element to this wonderful show.

Opening night will be on Friday 18th May at 6.30pm with guest opener Chris Hyde and musician

Andy Walker.

The exhibition will run from Thursday 17th May until Saturday 2nd June.

Ceramic studio

The studio is now half way through the current eight week cycle, and it is fantastic to see how the students have really embraced all things clay. The trainees are on track in developing a range of exclusive work for the Gallery, and the kiln is being fired every week. We're cooking with gas.

If you would like to know more about the Studio, please contact Heather at the Gallery on 6689-7449.

Blue Knob Choir

Blue Knob Choir is a local community choir at Blue Knob Hall Gallery, which has been in existence for around nine years. We would love to have anyone who might be interested in joining our choir to come along on any Thursday evening from 4.15pm to 5.45pm to sing with us.

We are an acapella group who sing an eclectic mix of songs, some in different languages. We have a lot of fun, and the singing is very uplifting. There is no cost involved, other than your time and enthusiasm.

If you would like to know more, please phone the Gallery on 6689-7449.

Artists & Friends lunch

The next Artists and Friends Lunch will be held on Thursday 31st May at 12.30pm. This is a set menu with mains and dessert for \$20. Please call the Gallery on 6689-7449 or email: bkkgallery@harbourisp.net.au if you would like to come along.



Robin Moore with one of her felted artworks



Ali Walker ceramics



'The Red Rose of Love' by Rupda Wilson

Small school colourss

by Ruth Tsimbinis

'Metamorphosis' is the subject and title chosen by the Community of Learners of Upper Richmond Small Schools, COLOURSS exhibition at the Roxy Gallery from May through to 2nd June.

For a number of years, the Upper Richmond Small Schools of Afterlee, Bakersvale, Collins Creek, Rukenvale, The Risk and Wiangaree have come together to showcase the amazing creative minds of their young students.

This is the ninth year that the COLOURSS group have co-ordinated their collective of small public schools to host an exhibition of the art learning that their students engage in, and the Roxy Gallery is always excited to curate their works in the space, bringing to the gallery new and interesting art.

This year, with the support of local



Student work from Afterlee Public School

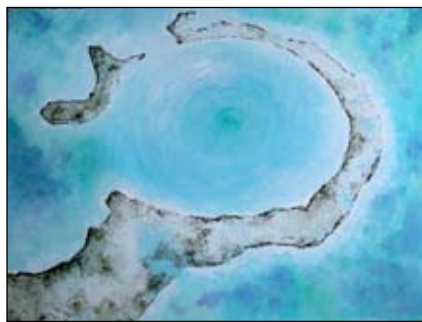
artist Rebecca Tapscott O'Meara, the students have been exploring the concept of metamorphosing themselves in our world. With a collection of ideas on how they would like to create themselves in a new world, these young minds have painted, drawn and sculpted images of other selves, evolving beings from extinct and common creatures.



Student work from The Risk Public School

It is always exciting and refreshing to exhibit art made by young people as they grasp on to non-conforming stereotypes of how art could/should be. The official opening will be held on Wednesday 9th May from 5.30pm and all are welcome to join in celebrating the achievements of these young students in creating such a strong body of artworks.

FRAGILE THINGS - Leonie Jackson



Leonie Jackson learnt the art of silk painting in the early 1990's and secured a reputation and income in Sydney for her hand painted silk scarves.

In 2003, she was accepted by Southern Cross University (SCU) on the strength of her silk painting portfolio. Leonie received the Kaske Award for her studio work, was awarded the William Fletcher Grant and won a SCU Co-op Prize at the Acquisitive Artists' Book Award.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 2007, her paintings in the grad exhibition sold out on opening night. In that body of work, Leonie utilised water symbols, both archetypal and invented, as a language to convey meaning; themes that she continues to explore in her exhibition 'Fragile Things' at the Serpentine Community Gallery in June.

Ms Jackson was one of the founders of Station Street Studios, an artist run co-operative in Mullumbimby. They held regular group exhibitions from their studio spaces from 2008 until 2010.

In 2008 Leonie joined a new steering committee for Contemporary Art Space and Education Inc. (C.A.S.E.), a not-for-profit art organisation. The new C.A.S.E members staged the hugely successful 2009 'Art for Earth' exhibition.

In 2010 C.A.S.E. revived the popular 'Postcards' annual community art show at Station Street Studios and later at the Art Piece Gallery. On behalf of C.A.S.E., she obtained a grant from the Hepatitis C Council of NSW in 2009, for the 'Walk the Walk' street art project in Lismore.

Collaborating with the writer, poet and academic, Dr Shé Hawke and sharing a *l'appassionata de l'acqua*, a passion for water, they were honoured to be published in the *International Feminist Review*, special issue on water in 2013 titled: *Aquamater: A Genealogy of Water*.

Leonie's artistic practice has been "steeped" in water for the last 10 years – her images convey her concern for our fluid environment and how it copes with stresses from pollution, habitat destruction and climate change and with 'Fragile Things', Leonie dives into the ocean.

Little is really known about the largest living organism on earth, Australia's Great Barrier Reef. It encompasses a globally unique diversity of species and habitats, making it one of the richest and most complex ecosystems on earth.

The reef is a living creature. It is an animal capable of sustaining itself, creating its own food – it builds the coral skeletons we collect. Massive coral bleaching events in 2016 and 2017 have altered the reef forever and half the corals of the Great Barrier Reef are now dead.

Utilising texture and colour, Leonie's underwater-scapes immerse the viewer in a world of quiet depth. A place of silence and stillness, a place where another world unfolds. From above, the contours of the reef become an abstract composition, an alternate way of viewing the universal concept of landscape.

The subjects are taken from photographic research, and these provide a visual starting point for colour and composition. Leonie's interest lies in capturing how the light breaks through the ocean's surface, penetrating into the watery depth below and her work captures the intense blues and greens of the ocean and the rich, vibrant colours of the coral.

The opening night of 'Fragile Things' is on Friday 1st June at 6pm and the exhibition will run until 19th June at the Serpentine Community Gallery, 17a Bridge Street, North Lismore.

A retrospective of local artist Vicki Swift (as mentioned in last month's edition of NGT) will run from 4th to 29th May.

There's a correction that needs to be made – Vicki Swift died in January 2017 not February 2017.

We are very excited about exhibiting Vicki's beautiful landscapes, and hope that all can attend the opening on 4th May at 6pm.

For more information about these exhibitions and any other enquiries, please feel free to contact us at the Serpentine on (02) 6621-6845 or by email: galler@serpentinearts.org

All images by Leonie Jackson



The 34th Annual Bentley Art Prize will be held on 3rd, 4th and 5th August 2018 at Bentley Public Hall.

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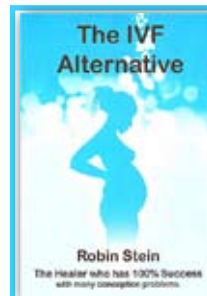
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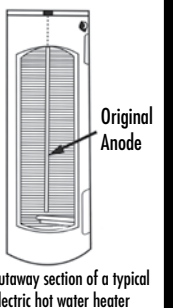
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The personal touch



by Eric Smith

Getting back to our roots

Blue Knob Market is a pretty special place. Whether it is working at the market with a giant backdrop of natural hillside that brings our focus, or the ever-changing array of art and creativity that the Gallery brings to our attention each week, or the slow pace that allows interaction with each and every customer more than any other market I have ever known, who can say. The market is as much an exchange of ideas as it is of produce.

Products that we carry often take time. Ferments like miso and kim chi don't just get whipped up overnight – they break down and develop, bacteria break down some factors, and brings a change that cannot happen in minutes. And while we have rocket that was planted very recently, jackfruit and bunya nuts, and many other foods come off trees that have been there for some time.

Relationships with customers also take time. We take time to listen, trying to make sure that the product that we bring to market is exactly how you want it: speak up, and ask around. If it grows here, you can usually find someone willing to give it a go.

And ask about their own passions – this is how I have found out about many fruits and veggies that grow well here that I had never heard of before I moved here.

And be sure to make your own mark on the Market. Do you have some unique produce of your own? Bring it into the Backyarders Table to share with others.

And don't forget, to augment your garden, we are the only local outlet for Farmer's Choice organic seedlings, and the only place that you can buy directly from Greg and Vanessa, the proprietors.

So if you're in a hurry, like at other markets, we'll understand, and get you taken care of quickly.

But for the true Blue Knob experience, book a little "me time" on a Saturday, gain some knowledge (and sometimes pass a little on), meet up with an old friend at the Café, have an art experience at the Gallery and Ceramic Studio, and walk away with some shopping that you can't get anywhere else.

We're always glad to see you at the Blue Knob Market.

The Blue Knob Market is from 8.30am to noon on Saturdays, in the grounds of the Blue Knob Hall Gallery, near the corner of Blue Knob and Lillian Rock Roads. Check out our Facebook page for upcoming talks and events.

For more info, contact: jamescreagh@hotmail.com



James and Jackfruit

Insets: Sour sop (above), Madrino (below)

Phillip and Jackfruit

by Neil Amor

Nimbin is fortunate to be surrounded by small specialty farms that provide a unique food experience, and one of those farms is Tutti Frutti.

Established by James and Phillip over 18 years ago, following on from their shared interests and passion for a sustainable lifestyle, biodynamic and permaculture principles and a desire to take advantage of the rich soil and temperate climate.

Starting small with Jackfruit, after an initial three-year start-up, they then moved onto Rolenias.

Both James and Phillip were excited about trying to propagate as many exotic fruit trees that they could get their hands on, and now can boast a collection that has seen interest from the Exotic Fruits Foundation amongst others, as well as conducting tours to interested groups.

Some of their produce include rarities such as: Rolenias, Jackfruit, Lakoocha, Sun Sopote, Mamae Sopote, Chumper Jack, Cedar Apples, Yellow Mangostein, Cheromia and Kia Apple.

Shortly after establishing the farm, James noticed that despite many fruit trees, there weren't many bees. So what does one do... become a bee keeper!

Tutti Frutti Farm now has 28 bee hives scattered throughout the property. So successful this venture has been that they started up the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers group.

And just to prove the old saying that if you want something done give it to a busy person, James and Phillip have been involved in the establishment of Blue Knob and the Nimbin Farmers Markets, as well as their ongoing commitment to Nimbin's Organic Food Co-op.

Come on in and check out their unique range of fruits as well as a wide selection of honey products.

Here's a favorite recipe from James:

Simple mead

Mix together 1 cup Tutti Frutti Farm honey, 4 cups of filtered water, as an option you can add fruit, but make sure it is submerged in the mix using a plate with weight on top. Keep covered with fabric to allow it to breathe and stop insects from swimming in the mix.

Strain off fruit after a few days and let sit for at least 4 - 5 days for the fermentation process to begin. You can drink it after 4 - 5 days. It will be alcohol free at this stage, or wait longer for it to become alcoholic. Refrigerate when taste suits you and fermentation will slow right down.

Until next month eat, and drink, well.

Holistic prescribing: Chronic sinus infection

I have a challenging treatment that I'm prescribing for a patient currently. It gives a good illustration of the holistic approach a herbalist would take to a complex health problem.

My patient has been diagnosed medically with a MRSA (resistant staph) infection in her sinuses. For years she has had headaches and sinus congestion, and has received numerous courses of various prescription antibiotics.

She tested positive to a genetic susceptibility to mould illness, where exposure causes immune system breakdown. She has since moved into a mould-free house.

MRSA stands for methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (golden staph). The pathology test cultures the bacteria in the laboratory, and then exposes samples to a range of antibiotics to see which ones are sensitive and which ones are resistant.

This is the same process which is sometimes used as preliminary studies with herbal extracts to assess sensitivity. It is called in vitro testing. As compared to in vivo which means in real life.

It's important to understand the difference when assessing research, as medicines can act very differently in the body compared with on a culture plate.

People can get very excited about a new remedy as a cure-all, for example stevia extract was found to be more effective than antibiotics at killing Lyme disease bacteria on a culture plate.

So the internet gets very excited that stevia is the cure for Lyme. So far that has not been proven through in vivo studies. But definitely worth further research.

Because of my patient's previous years with prescription antibiotics and the lack of result, I felt we needed a very strong targeted herbal mix to be taken long term.

The herbs I chose are cryptolepis, sida acuta,

artemisia annua, goldenseal, black pepper, ginger, fenugreek, and poke root.

In addition to antimicrobials, the ingredients were also chosen for their ability to provide supportive and enhancing effects to the target site as well as enhancing immune function.

I will explain the mix and the rationale for each of the remedies. It shows a very different approach from the single action 'kill' mechanism of prescription antibiotics.

Cryptolepis, sida acuta: amongst the strongest 'systemic' (carried throughout the bloodstream) anti-bacterial herbs known. They have proven effectiveness against MRSA.

Goldenseal: high in berberine, which has proven effectiveness against MRSA. Berberine, however, is not very effective at crossing the intestinal barrier, so only small amounts circulate via the bloodstream to get to target sites.

These tiny amounts are

sufficient to stimulate IgA (antibodies) in mucous membranes such as the sinuses. Therefore berberine helps the immune response fight infection in the mouth, throat and sinuses.

Berberine can also interfere with an ability that resistant bacteria have of pumping out (efflux pumps) substances they detect as harmful to themselves. So herbs such as goldenseal can sabotage one of the bacteria's mechanisms of resistance.

Black pepper, ginger: obviously if there were a way of encouraging berberine to cross the intestinal barrier and become systemic, all the above functions of berberine would be more effective.

Cleverly enough, black pepper and ginger can act on the gut wall to allow substances otherwise confined to the gut to permeate into the bloodstream. Very exciting!

Artemisia annua: also known as sweet annie or qing hao. Whilst having some anti-microbial properties of



Cryptolepis dried roots prior to tincturing



Nature's pharmacy

by Trish Clough, herbalist

itself, it has been found to potentiate the effectiveness of berberine in the treatment of MRSA.

It is often used side by side with prescription antibiotics as it also makes them more effective in resistant infections.

Fenugreek: recent research has shown fenugreek to be an effective 'biofilm buster'. This means it breaks down the gloopy mesh nests used by bacteria to protect themselves from outside attack.

One reason herbal antimicrobials can be effective against resistant infections is that most of them have additional properties as biofilm busters. Fenugreek is also known to be helpful with sinus congestion and inflammation.

Poke root: also known as phytolacca, this herb encourages lymph gland drainage and is beneficial with sinus congestion.

In addition, I prescribed a nasal wash with fenugreek tea, Manuka honey and salt. An anti-inflammatory diet and gut healing remedies were also prescribed.

We're hoping for a good result, but expect it could take some time.

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

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

The evolution of the 1%

by Robn Harrison

If we are to have a sustainable future, then we need to have a sustainable economy. To do that, we need to question the thinking of those who currently own and control it.

The wealthy and influential run all society's operating systems and have done for millennia. Cumulatively they are extremely practised at it, creating all manner of seemingly reasonable scenarios that suggest they don't.

History teaches us that our evolving social operating systems modified the effects of the wealthy and influential, with democracy gifting the people with self-determination. Legal systems gave the people fairness and justice, political systems gave the people a voice, a free press gave freedom of speech etc.

A study of history itself teaches us that the establishment always writes the history. An even closer inspection shows social operating systems created and modified by the wealthy and influential to suit an ever more educated population, by providing the illusion of systems catering to their evolving expectations.

In reality our legal and political systems, mainstream media etc are the finest such institutions money can buy. Therefore, they are not remotely what they claim to be, nothing like what's described on the wrapper.

The finest legal system money can buy provides fairness and justice only if you can afford it. That's neither fair nor just, no matter how noble and honourable it's

made to sound, or how silly the clothes.

The finest democracy money can buy neatly divides society almost exactly in half, the ideological right or the ideological left, effectively removing the voice of the people. As we know, where ideology rules, logic and reason are never invited. Our hard-won and supposedly precious vote ultimately gives us the choice of the least worst, fully owned, unprincipled lying puppet from either side, no matter how noble and honourable it's made to sound.

Meanwhile, the finest mainstream media money can buy is perfectly placed to give us a full description of the Emperor's magnificent clothes.

Truth can indeed be stranger than fiction, and this mass illusion beats *The Matrix* hands down. But then, it's been in the works for millennia.

This is not a value judgement, simply observation. This situation is neither right nor wrong, simply the way it's always been everywhere. Revolution only ever changed who are the wealthy and influential.

Revolution, start at one point, describe a circle, return to the same point.

Logically the wealthy and influential running the show into the future is more than probable but, if we're to have a future, they're going to have to change the way they do it. Unsustainable has a very real meaning.

The most money buys the most influence, controlling the finest social operating systems money can buy, and changes to economic influence constantly happen. The tobacco

industry had a huge economic influence over our systems until the cover up became too expensive to maintain. The fossil fuel industry has had a lock on our systems but that's changing as the superior economics of the renewable transition take hold. What's more, the cost of covering up what they knew of the effects of greenhouse gases may also get out of hand.

The influence of the largest industries on the planet is obvious. If we want a sustainable future we probably need to find something more valuable and insanely lucrative than compulsory mass medication, constant wars and drug prohibition. The three largest industries in the world? Pharmaceuticals, armaments and illicit drugs.

Here's a thought. Since the mere illusion of self-determination has created such a lot of wealth, maybe the reality would be even more prosperous. Maybe people living sustainably, in co-operation with each other and the earth, could be insanely prosperous. There's a clue in the energy transition we're experiencing. The more sustainable it gets the more economically smart it becomes.

All our social operating systems and economies are things we humans have made up. Our requirement for a healthy and nurturing environment is not. In the event of a clash between fiction and reality in the broader physical universe, it's not hard to guess which one will win.

If our species is to survive, it's time for a reality check.

Seeds matter for survival

by Thom Culpeper

Recent moves by the recalcitrant Feds have threatened food and life.

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN at its 35th conference on 3rd November 2001.

Its aims were to protect the diversity of world food crops for the good of humanity, for the guarantee that the benefits of the genetic material would be equitably shared by all, and especially with the countries that were the sources of this material and the recognition of the enormous contributions of the farming communities that had brought many of these food plants into domestication.

64 of the world's most significant crops, that in sum account for 80% of the plant derived material in the world's culinary and fibre sources are covered by this treaty. But, and but it is, the shadow of Monsanto and their seed-monopolist brethren loomed all over the negotiations! Evidenced now by the continued reduction of the freedom of growers and agriculturists to make choices freely on matters of seed and variety selection, due to the further wholesale swallowing of independent



Henry Kissinger (right) and Peter Sellers' parody of him in *Dr Strangelove*

seed producers and seedmen!

Open-pollinated seed is becoming more difficult to access, especially if you belong to the growing cadre of organic farmers. Seed monopolists cull the OP varieties in favour of their hybridised types, making it in many cases, uneconomic to grow without using their AG-systems, their fertilisers, their crop protection and now a creeping control of produce marketing by the seed corporations taking shares in distribution.

The so-called 'vertical integration' of the total food network points to capital moving towards vertical, city farming, growing mass crops in high rise buildings with chemical propagation, virtually next to the supermarkets. Meanwhile superb Ag-lands are being alienated, their farmer-

owners are bought out by city based immigrants with the undeclared 'connivance' of the unbridled avaricious banking-class and in many cases the treacherous self-interest of 'local' authorities.

It could be argued, just how 'local' are real-estate, cashed-up, city raised, sea-and-tree-changer usurper-politicians-immigrants to the Northern Rivers, when many of their super funds are in the pockets and serving the purposes of multinational food-fascists and their own oppression.

Kissinger said, "Control oil and you control nations; control food and you control the people." (1970). This American strategy deliberately destroyed and decimated their own family farming communities and of those abroad, and led to

95% of all grain reserves in the world placed under the control of six multinational agribusiness corporations, eg: Cargil et al...

As mentioned on Aunty's local gardening program two weeks ago by the hirsute one, with the rider, "I knew about it, I was consulted." We, the people, were not! (The Trojan's comment comes to mind, "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts"), especially MSM and state media's appointed presenter-ego-clowns.

Dept of Ag and Aqua resources (DAWR) is piloting a ban on all seed imports that do not have very expensive phytosanitary certification and are not chemically treated. Bang goes the whole notion of organic chemical-free Ag.

Hello Monsanto and co. Welcome to 'your' land of our economic and health slavery. Strategy: Start seed propagation and conservation of genetic varieties and land-races now, grow out and husband seed, or organic Ag, as we wish its future to be, will be well and truly fucked and the Feds will never discourage the 'Ag-coppers' from stuffing up our chemical-poison-free, food pursuits.

Save your seed and support your local farmers markets.

Comment to: svalbardist@planetmail.com

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Help WIRES help joeys like Hush

Hush, the Red-necked wallaby joey (pictured, right) was found on the side of the road in Nimbin on 7th March, with no mum in sight. Since then she has been in care with WIRES, where she has met other joeys in care, including a Swamp Wallaby named JJ (pictured, left).



WIRES regularly receives calls about birds and animals that are injured or orphaned in Nimbin and surrounds and is always in need of more members to assist these vulnerable animals.

While rescue and care is one way volunteers help, not all WIRES members are involved in care. If you don't have the time or space to commit to animal care in your home, there are still many valuable ways you can contribute. Some members help with transferring animals to other carers or vets. In the Nimbin area in particular WIRES greatly needs assistance from people who travel regularly to Lismore (or other centres) and might be willing to transport an animal with them.

Of course WIRES is always in need of volunteers who are interested in

becoming specialist carers, and members can go on to do further training in the care of birds, possums and gliders, macropods (kangaroos and wallabies), small mammals, echidnas, and reptiles. WIRES can assist with loan of some equipment and subsidises the costs feed for animals in care.

WIRES also makes the most of members' various skills and interests. Some WIRES members assist with administration roles including record keeping, writing and desktop publishing. WIRES regularly hold working bees and attend community events, and being a WIRES member is a great way of meeting other people of all ages and

walks of life who share your passion for wildlife.

In the Northern Rivers area some WIRES members are involved in answering calls from the public via our 24 hour a day, 7 days a week Hotline. Volunteering for a 4-hour Hotline shift is a great way of helping wildlife from the comfort of your own home.

All WIRES members complete basic introductory training. You can complete the online part of the accredited WIRES course at any time and then sign up for a face-to-face practical workshop, next held in Lismore on 27th May and then later on 7th October.

Give us a call on 6628-1898 for more information about what being a WIRES member is like, and how you can join and contribute. You can also find out more at: <https://www.wires.org.au/rescue/become-a-rescuer>

Start training now with the WIRES Rescue & Immediate Care Course.

Contact WIRES for rescues, advice or enquiries. The 24-hour hotline is for all calls to WIRES in the Northern Rivers: 6628-1898. Web: www.wiresnr.org

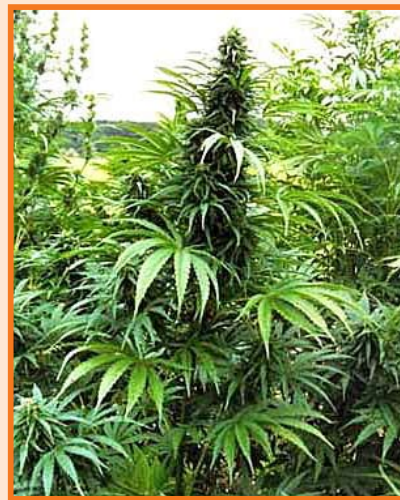
Plant of the month

Cannabis indica

An attractive shrub, growing to 4-6 metres, this popular plant is a worthy addition to any garden with its serrated foliage and sweet fragrance.

Fast-growing from seed or by grafting from a healthy female, *Cannabis indica* prefers well-drained sandy soil and a sunny north-facing position, but will grow satisfactorily in a range of locations, including indoors.

Care must be taken to protect the plant from air-borne pests, including



helicopters, and it is prone to attack by pigs, wallabies, brush turkeys and some neighbours.

Historically, this versatile plant has many uses, but is most valued for its medicinal qualities since antiquity, with seeds found in the ancient tombs of Egyptian pharaohs.

Medicinal preparations can be made from the flower heads of the female plant, either dried and smoked in a pipe, or processed into resin, tincture or butter.

The plant will continue to grow after maturity (90-100 days), but to ensure a long-lasting display, collect the seeds for future germination.



Goldenrod

WEED WORDS

by Triny Roe

Most of the year goldenrod goes unnoticed despite several colonies existing along roadsides in the Northern Rivers. There is a significant infestation on one of the roads leading out of Nimbin. Unnoticed that is, until it flowers spectacularly in April and May.

Canada goldenrod, *Solidago canadensis*, hails from the north of North America but it now found across the planet. There are several cultivars of *S. canadensis* and a number of different *Solidago* species with similar and varying qualities.

Goldenrod is a versatile plant with medicinal and industrial properties but it also has a reputation for weediness, even in North America when it is out of range.

Taken to London in 1635 it was popularised there as a garden plant. By 1900 goldenrod was present right across Europe from Norway to Italy. It can be found in many European countries naturalised on roadsides, in abandoned fields, on forest edges and on river banks.

Introduced to Shanghai, China, as an

Goldenrod infestation

ornamental in 1935, goldenrod quickly escaped cultivation and has now invaded 20 provinces. It impacts on agriculture, reducing yields. In some areas it has displaced native species. Goldenrod has also naturalised in Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and Japan where it has colonised abandoned rice fields following the Fukushima disaster.

Adapted to a range of soils and climates, goldenrod likes best full sun. It will tolerate part shade but not complete shade so unlikely to invade the rainforest. It likes moist but not waterlogged soils.

Goldenrod grows as a single stem to two metres from a stoloniferous root. It is usually found in dense stands as it will spread vegetatively via the roots. Entrenched stands can have over 300 plants per square metre displacing all other vegetation.

The elliptic or lanceolate leaves are stalkless, tapering to the stem. The leaves are rough on top and often hairy below with sometimes sparse toothy margins. The bright yellow flowers consist of numerous tiny florets on branching stalks.

Spread can also occur via seed. One stem can produce 10,000 tiny seeds, each in a tiny fruit called an achene. The achene has a hairy tuft which helps in wind dispersal. Seeds can also be carried on vehicles or people pick flowers to take home for a decorative display, throwing them on the mulch pile when the flowers have expired. Dumping garden waste

in the bush has also contributed to its spread.

Medicinally goldenrod is used in teas, tinctures, infusions, poultices, powders and juices to treat a range of conditions from muscle aches and pains, to kidney issues, allergies, fevers and fungal infections. It is high in anti-oxidants and rutin which is beneficial for the heart and cardiovascular system. Note this information should not be considered medical advice or encouragement to harvest wild specimens for herbal cures. There is wide variation in phenotype in this species. Consult a naturopath or other qualified medical practitioner to treat ailments or buy the herb from commercial outlets to ensure efficacy.

After World War 2, attempts were made to produce rubber from goldenrod. The species *S. leavenworthii* contains 7% latex. Thomas Edison was involved in breeding and establishing ideal cultivation methods to maximise latex production. He achieved a level of 12% however the quality of the rubber produced was not sufficient to warrant commercialisation.

Reducing and restricting seed production by removal of goldenrod flowers will help stem its spread, as long as they are disposed of appropriately. Tillage and repeated mowing combined with over-sowing with desirable pasture species can also help control this species. Goldenrod is palatable to stock so grazing will limit its range.

Happy weeding!



by Anastasia Guise

A year outside of time

camp, we leave the track the horses take, the iconic Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) as it strikes out north towards the Timbarra plateau.

This 5,000-kilometre trail traverses the entire spine of Australia's eastern seaboard, alongside National Parks (18), State Forests (50), and multiple other tenures, including private land-holders.

Ever since I discovered its existence in 2008, completing part or all of the trail has been a dream of mine.

It's not only being immersed in such varied and spectacular country that appeals to me, but the notion of a year outside of time. Outside of news cycles, political posturing and every real and imagined impending catastrophe.

I grew up riding. I still remember the staccato of hooves on the road, the smell of horse-sweat and wax, the sound of our tin cups jangling atop our packed saddle loads.

Sometimes during our return journeys, worn-out and happy, we would loll about and read paperbacks while the horses picked their way home.

Once, after a long lunch and a leisurely afternoon swimming, we pushed on into dark, eager to get home to the comfort of the farmhouse fire and our own beds.

Night fell down thick and fast, and the road was nothing but an inky swamp with neither here nor there. My child-like incredulity at our animals' ability to both navigate in the dark, and sense the way home, is still with me.

Eventually the stars came out, and not long after we could hear the distant whinny of the horses we'd left at home, racing madly up and down the fence-line.

My mare nicked back as we plunged into the final river crossing before the home paddock, and everything was right with the world.

Today I stand at the crossroads longer than necessary. To have

finally set foot on the Trail, leaving it behind hurts.

To the north, the ridges echo one another into the distance, a clear creek forming a series of waterfalls down the Demon Fault Line.

Somewhere in amongst the sclerophyllous scree I know little red and yellow triangles mark a passage through.

Instead we leave the crossroads, and my dreams behind, and wind our way on foot into Grassy Creek camp.

I don't keep horses anymore, farming soil for vegetables instead. I know how to walk, I console myself. Human bodies are made for walking; maybe by walking.

Pilgrimage, exodus, walking country – these have all been central to the human experience for thousands of years.

I have the privilege of walking for the challenge and pleasure of it. I am not fleeing, unless you count the horrors of late capitalism as my persecutors. The Trail will wait for

me, by foot or with beast.

I reflect too that leaving the problems of the world behind for a little while may not solve any of them, but it sure helps me see past them.

With a pannikin of tea, and a little campfire of dead wattle wood crackling, I watch a lone Glossy Black Cockatoo come wheeling into the Allocasuarina stand behind me, its grating call distinguishing it from the larger Yellowtails.

From amongst the trees comes a quiet response, and then there are two of the birds cavorting above me, preening and feeding.

Soon enough, I have forgotten myself. Nobody is watching me. I am listless, without my list. Free.

Later I'll get out my notebook, and start one of my most exciting lists ever: preparations for the BNT.

Anastasia Guise is an author and environmentalist, writing on ecology, science and humanity.

Facebook: [anastasiaguiseauthor](#)

The track underfoot is peppered with white quartz, weathered out of the giant granite boulders that preside over the trail like watchful parents.

We wind through mosaics of perched swampland, and into peppermints with twisted histories held aloft, their giant glaucous leaves hanging lipstick-lined and exquisite.

Not far from an old tin-miners'

Nimbin Garden Club notes



This month, we were treated to a visit at the home of Gabriel and Heather on Crofton road.

As we wound up the driveway to the near hundred-year-old home, we passed pigs grazing on the grass, alongside cows and goats. Parking under magnificent ancient fig trees, we were welcomed by yet more of the farm's animals. Nutmeg, the matriarch of the pigs, greeted us noisily as she demanded a pat and scratch behind the ears.

Heather and Gabriel bought the 100-acre property four years ago, after searching for nearly five years for 'the one'. On a visit to an animal shelter on the Gold Coast to rescue a dog (but coming home with two) they mentioned moving to a large farm and were subsequently contacted with regards to rehoming a couple of pigs that had been roaming freely and not been claimed. They were told they were miniature pigs... well if you call 150kg pigs miniature then I'll eat my shoe! Gabriel informed the group, as he talked about his beloved pigs, that there is in fact no such thing as miniature pigs. Only pigs that are starved and malnourished stay small. That definitely isn't the case with these lovely creatures. Healthy, and happy as pigs in... well you know. They are actually very clean animals though, and highly intelligent. At the time of our visit, the pigs numbered 50, with one glorious Berkshire sow

named Ella, about to give birth. The very next day she increased the number by another 8... cutest little things ever! The ones that have names come when they are called, which is more than I can say for our supposedly well trained dogs! To prove the point Gabriel call out "Scotty", and low and behold, a two-hundred kilo boar came running to him. It was the same with the goats... calling "Nelson", a magnificent Angora buck came trotting toward the house with his flock of nannies and kids trotting closely behind. The goats too, all started from rescue animals, as did the chooks, ducks and Guinea fowl.

As we gaze over the animals home fields Gabriel tells us of the benefit to grazing all the animals together. Between them all, every weed is eaten, the soil is tilled and the biodiversity from the manure of all the animals creates a very healthy weed-free environment.

What a wonderful place for them to find a new home, and a great visit for all our members. Thank you, Gabriel and Heather for sharing it with us.

Our next visit will be on Saturday 19th of May from 2 – 4pm at the home of Paul and Peter. Amazing gardens with magnificent views. They are at 117 Link road Wadeville, next door to Wadeville Woollies. Guests are always welcome. Bring a cup, a chair, and a plate to share.

Koala Kolumn

by Julie Reid, Vice President

More land in private ownership needs perpetual protection to ensure koala survival in the wild.

When Derek Skingle bought his 30ha property at Goolmangar in the Jiggi Creek Catchment in 1989 he knew he had something special. Being from mother England, Derek never imagined that one day he would have Koalas living on his piece of Australian bush.

The property 'Sandy Pinch' is an area of high conservation value, having a number of threatened species and abundant wildlife.

In 2006 Derek commenced the process of applying for a Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) with the Nature Conservation Trust (NCT) to ensure that what he had was protected well beyond his mortal timeline. Eighteen hectares was put aside for protection.

A Voluntary Conservation Agreement is a joint agreement between landowners and the Minister for the Environment. The Agreement provides permanent protection for the special features of the land and is voluntary. The area under the Agreement is registered on the title of the land ensuring that if the land is sold, the Agreement and management requirements remain in place.

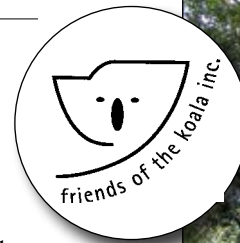
It wasn't until 2010 that Derek's sister, a keen twitcher, followed her gaze upward and saw the first recorded koala on the property.

In the late 1900's Derek planted a eucalypt woodland on the edge of his natural forest. This woodland, now established, contains a variety of eucalypt species preferred by koalas locally and has become a popular haunt for the iconic marsupial, mostly heard rather than seen.

The new Conservation Agreement (CA) arrangement is still a popular way of acknowledging and protecting our unique fauna and their natural habitat. If you have koalas on your property and vegetation you would like to protect, consider applying for a CA. We cannot rely on koala habitat being protected as development and land clearing pressures lead to their demise. Koalas need more protected land in the hands of private ownership to ensure their survival.

Derek said; "There is enormous satisfaction and gratification from doing this. I wouldn't hesitate in recommending it to others, it is life affirming - go ahead!"

The NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust was established with the commencement of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. The BCT (formerly NCT) is responsible for assisting landowners to get protective mechanisms on their property to protect the natural assets in perpetuity.



For more information on protection covenants contact BCT at: <https://www.bct.nsw.gov.au/contact-us>

For landowners living in areas known to support koalas, now is the time to start thinking about forming partnerships with neighbours with the aim of enhancing existing habitat and

creating greater connectivity between remnants. Should funding become available you will have a project ready to go that will benefit koalas and the community.

It is to a landowner's advantage to report koalas that are sighted. When applying for financial assistance to restore koala habitat it is essential to have your sightings on the national and state data base.

Go to the Friends of the Koala web page: www.friendsofthekoala.org top right corner (binoculars) 'Report a Sighting'. This only takes a few minutes. FOK want to know where koalas are living and ensure future restoration work is directed to those areas that will benefit koala movement and survival.

For injured or dead koalas, call the koala 24-hour rescue hotline (put it in your phone): (02) 6622-1233.

Update on previous koala stories

Sadly, our lovely Mafeking, who we had high hopes for after surviving blood transfusions he had after having had huge numbers of ticks, had five weeks of treatment but suddenly suffered renal failure and had to be euthanased. RIP lovely boy.

On a brighter note, Chunky and Monkey were released back into the wild – well, into the 'wilds' of Goonellabah, so we're keeping all our digits crossed that they stay safe despite being in an area which has had, and is having, significant residential development with all the threats that brings for koalas and other wildlife.

– Susannah Keogh, Care Co-ordinator

The miracle of moderation

by David Ward

The miracle of moderation: Placing yourself in the hands of your practice.

To the cynical mind of disbelief and addiction, concepts such as our practice and our meditation can seem corny and feel out of reach.

Unhelpful pride and conditioning can also deprive us of the things that we may need most in order to progress and develop.

Calling lifeline in the moment for instant human interaction, using a technique like tapping in order to empower ourselves to move forward, or even dosing with emergency essence, are all means of breaking with our current state.

Trusting in a practice like yoga to allow us to change our whole reality, getting out of our own way, opening ourselves up to believe in new possibilities: this is an area rich with rewards.

We almost owe it to ourselves to experiment at a certain point, should the curiosity arise, it can also be fun as I have discovered, our intuition will tell us if and when this is appropriate.

This is where proof of the magic of transformation lies, the proof that further helps us to believe and have the certainty to trust in our new powers.

This miracle of moderation is one of the many rewards for our hard work. For some of us, things like having our coffee, sugar, tobacco,

cannabis or alcohol were or still are the first thoughts that come into our heads on any particular day.

The problem with this pattern being that it simply left us with less time and energy to be more creative and courageous about what we did with our time, the resultant secondary aspect being the slow and steady decline in our health and quality of life, before our time.

Once a lengthy abstinence period has been achieved, self-reliance attained, and a touch of mastery experienced, proof of our new powers can help strengthen our position further.

Having a coffee once or twice a week, indulging in cannabis once or twice a month, the odd encounter with a small amount of sugar or even alcohol can be enjoyable while at the same time a valuable part of this strengthening and testing process, indulgence can be a practice in itself.

The conscious connection made with your intuition will guide and protect you here, a gentle reminder of what is at stake were you to relinquish your control once again.

I make no mention of tobacco here, my intuition makes no mention of it either.

Maybe proof of power over tobacco will one day be the ultimate test for my daily practice.

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

Rehoming...

Animal Talk

by Donna Connolly

A subject close to home. I've chosen this topic for May as it is a subject fraught with emotion.

Have you ever had to rehome a beautiful soul that has become a part of your life?

It seems that everyone has an opinion...

Just watch the vitriol come thick and fast if you see a post on social media. Very rarely are the comments useful, quite often state the obvious, can be hurtful and personal in nature.

From a human perspective, in a lot of cases, it isn't a spur of the moment decision. There has been much deliberation, heartache, long conversations and sleepless nights.

Sadly I've heard of people having all of their animals euthanised, rather than cop the backlash and heartache of rehoming their precious friends.

"Free to good home." How does this sentence make you feel?

Do you think they need to try harder, they haven't explored all their options? Why? What happened?

When did we become so judgmental?

There is usually a major event or catalytic moment where they realise that the current situation is no longer working for all involved.

Some of the reasons for rehoming I have encountered are:

- Domestic violence situations
- Health issues for the

- animals or guardian
- Death in the family
- Living situation has changed
- The animal doesn't get on with another animal or human, potentially endangering them
- Mental health issues
- Can't keep the animal properly contained for the health and safety of themselves and others
- Financial hardship
- Mobility issues
- Unexpected accidents
- New family member, eg: baby
- Allergies
- Objectionable behavior

Obviously, there are people who don't really have an "acceptable" reason, and some seem to be serial offenders.

In these cases I find it is a better outcome for the animals anyway.

From an animal perspective, they really are content and happy being loved, cared for and well fed, with comfortable lodgings.

Animals are resilient creatures, and in some cases actually know who their new guardians will be or what their new living arrangements are. And can express this in telepathic messages.

I have been doing some work in animal shelters and the animals have the answers to most of the questions.

Part of their gifts and soul contracts include enduring situations, hardships and multiple "owners". In order to assist us with our life lessons, personal growth and to discover our soul purpose.

When I communicate



with animals that have had multiple homes, their stories usually have a theme, and quite often there are commonality between the animals and guardians.

In some cases even the same start in life or similar illness, giving each other a unique empathy, anxieties that can be worked through together.

It really is wonderful to see two souls, engage, mirror, and essentially save one another.

Next time you feel triggered by something. Ask how you can help? Can you share the post?

Did a vision of someone you know come to mind when you saw the picture, pass the information on.

I really hope you don't have to rehome your best friends. However, if you do, may your decision be met with understanding.

The world could really use some more kindness and compassion. There is already more than enough judgement and opinion.

And if you have some room in your heart and home please consider rescuing a shelter animal. Your life will be a whole lot richer for the experience.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about your furred, feathered or finned friends.

I work with Animal Communication, Reiki, and Crystal therapy.

Animal communication is fantastic for understanding behaviors, situations and any trauma carried forward.

Reiki is powerful in releasing and transforming anxiety and trauma from previous existence.

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

Much Aroha

Email: rivergem88@gmail.com

Website: rivergem.com.au

Facebook: [RiverGem Readings and Reiki Intuitive Animal Healing](https://www.facebook.com/RiverGemReadingsandReikiIntuitiveAnimalHealing)

Instagram: [donna_dolittle](https://www.instagram.com/donna_dolittle)

The healing powers of Ayahuasca tea

Ayahuasca is prepared by boiling or soaking the bark and stems of *Banisteriopsis caapi*, which contains β -carboline alkaloids, which are potent MAO inhibitors and various admixture plants. The admixture employed most commonly is *Psychotria viridis*.

The leaves of *P. viridis* or related species contain the potent short-acting psychoactive agent N, N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT). DMT is not orally active when ingested by itself but can be rendered orally active in the presence of a peripheral MAO inhibitor, and this interaction is the basis of the psychotropic action of ayahuasca (McKenna, Towers, Abbott 1984).

Although there have been numerous scientific studies on Ayahuasca, I will focus on a classic study. In 1993 Dennis McKenna headed a team of scientists from several countries to investigate the effects of Ayahuasca on members of the Uniao Do Vegetal (UDV), translation: The Union of the Plants, a Christian Spiritist Church, founded in 1961, with over 17,000 members across six countries.

Its adherents ritually drink the sacred ayahuasca tea (around once



by Cameron Storey

every two weeks) to heighten spiritual understanding, perception and bring practitioners closer to God.

Teenagers as young as 13 years are given the tea as are pregnant women with many even taking it during labour to facilitate the process. In 2006 the US supreme court unanimously declared to support the defence of the freedom of religion of the UDV to practise ritual ayahuasca use despite the fact it cost more than three million dollars to do so.

The scientific research in British Columbia facilitated by Dr Gabor Mate on the treatment of addiction

with ayahuasca have produced some remarkable results but Health Canada sent a message to Gabor threatening to withdraw his medical licence if he continued the work.

The results of this study have been published in a number of peer-reviewed publications (Grob et al. 1996; Callaway et al. 1994, 1996, 1998) and are summarised in a comprehensive review (McKenna et al. 1998).

Among the key findings were that long-time members of the UDV commonly underwent experiences that changed their lives and behaviour in positive and profound ways; and that there was a persistent elevation in serotonin uptake receptors in platelets, possibly indicative of similar long-term serotonergic modulation occurring in the central nervous system that may reflect long-term adaptive changes in brain functions.

The study did establish that "the regular use of ayahuasca, at least within the ritual context and supportive social environment that exists within the UDV, is safe and without adverse long-term toxicity, and, moreover, apparently has lasting, positive influences on physical and

"Of the numerous plant hallucinogens utilised by indigenous populations of the Amazon Basin, perhaps none is as interesting or complex, botanically, chemically, or ethnographically, as the hallucinogenic beverage known variously as hoasca, ayahuasca, caapi, yagé or 'vine of the souls', which is applied both to the beverage itself and to one of the source plants used in its preparation, Banisteriopsis caapi." – Schultes, 1957

mental health." – from *The Ayahuasca Experience* by Dr Ralph Metzner.

Ayahuasca has also been shown to facilitate neuroendocrine changes in plasma prolactin, cortisol, and growth hormone shown with rapid and dramatic increases over basal values from 60 minutes (cortisol) to 90 minutes (growth hormone) to 120 minutes (prolactin).

A few things that are very important: one is preparing before taking the medicine, whether that is fasting, prayers, meditation, etc and another is the choosing of the right setting – a safe, supportive environment where you won't be distracted.

Another aspect is choosing the person or people who will be guiding and caring for you during the journey, whether this is a shaman from Brazil or Peru or the UDV church or Santo Daime and the last aspect is dosage.

"The dangers of ayahuasca are primarily psychological rather than physiological." – Rick Doblin PhD.

If the dosage is too high, people can have fears and anxieties surface,

or be disorientated especially when sensing energy spirits. While there have been deaths associated with ayahuasca use, these deaths have been inconclusive due to the use of other toxic substances like nicotine or misadventure due to drowning.

The evidence is clear that many people are obtaining substantial benefits from the ancient medicinal beverage ayahuasca when used in a sacred and supportive context, and it is indeed worthy of further investigation to understand all its applications.

People have a fundamental and inalienable right to this and all plant medicines. With the influx of Brazilian people onto the Gold Coast, it's just a matter of time before the UDV starts up a new branch church. Can I get an Amen and thank you Jesus?

The Dharma Centre and Medicinal Gardens on Lillifield Community has three Yoga Classes and a Friday 9.30am Yoga Class is at Birth and Beyond, Nimbin. Call 02 6689-7120 or Facebook "Dharma Centre – Lillifield".

Make it easy

by Suzy Maloney BEqSc

Here's a good question to ask. When I am with my horse am I making it easy for my horse to succeed, or difficult?

I see people making things very difficult for horses, resulting in stress, fear, reduced learning and animal health issues due to raised cortisol levels. There is no need for this and it can all be fixed with a slight shift in the way you think.

When a horse presents with an issue, we basically have three choices. We can accept the issue and proceed anyway, we can try and make the horse do it or we can change what we're doing to make it easier for the horse.

Sometimes the first option is not available due to work or safety requirements, and the second option results in stress, so I vote for the third option.

One reason I see people being aggressive with horses is because they've seen it online, in videos etc. People watch these then think they know how to train a horse.

With no real understanding of horses but armed with a plethora of knowledge, they approach the horse as a machine that needs to be controlled and

dominated and show them respect. It's a one-way trip with no heart, no empathy and no respect for the horse.

Recently I observed a woman in a stall with a loose horse constantly hounding it to move its hindquarters away. He was new and had yet to find his way in the new environment.

She told me confidently that the horse must never present its hindquarters to a human and continued harassing the horse to yield its hindquarters and face her.

The poor horse had its ears back, was showing signs of stress and had no idea why she was hounding it. She continued doing the same thing over and over with the same result. In her mind this was the way to do it and she wouldn't stop until the horse did exactly what she wanted.

In the process the horse presented his hindquarters to her about 10 times.

Someone asked me to demonstrate what I would do in this situation. I went in, said hi to the horse and held his halter while stroking and scratching his head and having a nice time with him.

She asked me when I was going to start training. I told her I'd already achieved my goal. I'd walked in and



gone straight up to him and interacted with his head. Not once did he present his hindquarters to me and I was showing him that humans are good to be with and to have the head toward me.

Very quickly there was no need to hold the halter as he was happy to be with me and we started to form a relationship. This is a great example because it's so simple, but our two approaches were so different.

Hers resulted in multiple presentations of the hindquarters with the resulting potential danger, plus stress for the horse. Mine resulted in higher safety levels as not once did I have his hinds facing me, and the beginnings of communication, understanding and relaxation.

It seems simple, so why is it so hard? I feel one reason is because people are over-

thinking. While thinking is important in learning, when present with a horse it seriously gets in the way.

When we're with a horse we need to come from the heart and stomach, using intuition, not the head. If we come from the head we miss the communications from the horse.

Horses don't operate on that level, so we can't operate on that level when we're with them. This is the single most important thing you can do to improve your relationship and training with your horse.

Instead of thinking 'how can I make my horse do it' think 'how can I help my horse do it'.

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Respiratory function in horses

by Les Rees, equine naturopath

The respiratory system is a complex mechanism that brings about gas exchange by taking in oxygen and excreting carbon dioxide.

It enables the oxygenation of cells to release energy from feed and transport it around the body directing energy to muscles, providing the horse with the stamina needed for performance.

The upper respiratory tract is lined with a mucous membrane that acts as a filter to remove incoming debris, and warming the air on route to the lungs.

The larynx (voice box) demarcates the junction between the upper and lower respiratory tract and from there the trachea runs down the neck, into the thorax (chest) where it divides into two tubes (bronchi) each of which extends to a lung.

Within the lungs the tubes extend out even further subdividing into even smaller passages at the end of which are microscopic air sacs (alveoli).

It is here that oxygen is transferred to the blood stream during respiration when air is taken in and carbon dioxide from the blood is expelled. The oxygenated blood is then transferred from the lungs to the heart where it is pumped through the body.

This may all seem relatively simple, but the anatomy of the upper respiratory tract is complex consisting of a network of nerves, muscles, cartilage and other anatomic structures that synchronize to create unobstructed air flow.

Furthermore, it is subject to extreme fluctuations in pressure as the horse exerts high energy during the flight



response or during competition. The horse has a capability of dynamic changes in speed that requires huge amounts of energy and part of the equation of creating it involves continual monitoring of the function of respiration.

Considering the complex nature of respiration, it is not surprising that so many horses suffer from respiratory tract dysfunction.

Respiratory ailments include infections such as coughs and colds caused by viral and bacterial infection, allergies, sinusitis and pulmonary haemorrhage, all of which can be addressed using herbal medication and fitness training.

There are many herbs that work well for respiratory function both as preventatives and for respiratory issues especially when targeted for the horse's individual requirements and fitness training

Fitness training is important for all horses according to the nature of their

work load. This makes it extremely important for performance horses as their respiratory needs are under intense pressure.

The gradual building of strength from appropriate exercise routines increases the horse's respiratory fitness and capacity to work without injury.

It increases the levels of oxygen available for the heart and vascular system and subsequent delivery to the muscles, and as fitness progresses, it strengthens the heart muscles and circulatory output and increases muscle strength.

There are also specific things you can do to avoid adding to the likelihood of developing respiratory problems:

- Avoid using overly tight girths – horses need room to expand their ribcage when taking in breath. There are several options of anatomical girths available on the market that can help to avoid this issue.
- Over flexion of the neck can cause restriction to the airflow when the pharynx is compressed. This is often seen in dressage horses when riding over bent!
- Always do warm up exercises before asking the horse to perform any moderate work.
- Stretching and massage helps keep muscles supple and healthy.

Above all, never get on your horse straight from the paddock after a long break and expect it to perform without injury.

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