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Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Mandy Hunter

About 25 members and guests made the journey out along Gungas Road to visit the garden of Triny Roe.

As anyone who reads *Nimbin GoodTimes* would be aware, Triny, who regularly contributes articles, is a knowledgeable and avid gardener.

It was a perfect Spring day, just right for a stroll around Triny's extensive gardens and bush regeneration areas, including a walk down to a rocky creek which ends in a 10-metre waterfall. Her aim is to provide a habitat safe for birds and native wildlife.

Triny has a third share in a 100-acre MO. During the eight years that she has been living on the property she has cleared approximately five acres around her house, unveiling magnificent trees and shrubs which were cloaked in a heavy growth of lantana which in some areas extended up into the tree tops. She has also planted a huge variety of

natives and fruit trees.

Many small garden areas have been carved out of the lawn. One contains a huge lily pilly tree festooned in giant stag horns, elk horns and birds nest ferns.

Another tree has several delicate white native orchids growing amongst its branches. Others contain clivias, bromeliads, davidson plums, bangalow palms and rainforest cassias to name but a few.

Triny does not use any herbicides, instead her trusty secateurs and some ingenious methods such as covering the stumps of giant devil's fig in black plastic weighed down by large stones are the tools she prefers to use.

Some weeds are left in-situ such as small cockspur to provide a safe bird habitat.

Thanks Triny for an inspiring afternoon.

Following last month's tradition, this month two of our members went to



Coffee Camp School to make a \$500 donation to their Gardening Program.

The members were taken around by a couple of enthusiastic students and were extremely impressed with what they do and how they are planning to use the funds.

We do extensive fundraising at the Garden Club, and this was another thankful recipient. If you get asked by someone from the Garden Club to buy some raffle tickets, know that the money raised is always greatly appreciated.

Our next club visit will be to the home of Jake and Lainie Sheddon, at 237 McClelland Road, Barkers Vale, on Saturday 20th October from 2-4pm. Visitors and guests are always welcome. Bring a cup, a chair, and a plate to share.

From little things, big weeds grow

by Triny Rowe

A serious weed infestation can start from a single plant. It might arrive as an uninvited seed stuck in the tread of a tyre, clinging to the mud on the chassis, lodged in the fur of an animal or blown on the wind. Or it could be carried in mud on your shoes to a new location. Falling, happenstance, into a spot that is conducive to germination and survival, the seed sprouts and grows.

Some weeds can grow super fast, appearing quickly. Others take their time to establish. Eventually it is noticed. Where did that come from? Wonder what that is? We live busy lives. Other matters take priority. "Isn't it pretty", as it bursts into flower!

Here in the Northern Rivers, we have a wealth of weeds from the world over. Introduced species from around the globe have found local conditions favourable and the list of pest plants is long. Some we can live with. They are only a mild nuisance. Others we can eat or have medicinal value. A number have the potential to dramatically impact on our health, lifestyle, the environment or the agricultural industry. We don't need any more.

Bio-security is important to prevent new weeds being introduced and is everybody's responsibility.

Seed can be carried to new locations in many ways. Check your shoes. Bindi season is coming up. These annoying prickles are easily spread. Tractors, mowers and other machinery can carry vegetative material and seed from one property to the next. Check that your contractors arrive clean. Hay and stock feed is another simple method of



Blue trumpet vine also comes in white

introducing new species. Inspect feeding points. Animal manure can contain seed. Quarantine new stock before releasing them into the paddock.

If you have been overseas, check your shoes. Plenty of familiar weedy species were observed on a recent trip to Bali, without going off the beaten tourist track. Old friend lantana was spotted in several locations. Water lettuce, *Pistia stratiotes*, floated in the rice paddies, ubiquitous in Ubud. Another scary plant looking like giant devil's fig grew between two buildings on Monkey

Forest Road right in the heart of Ubud.

We admired greatly the stunning vine outside our room in the hotel garden up in the hills. *Thunbergia grandiflora* or blue trumpet vine (also comes in white) is spectacular, climbing over pergolas everywhere in Bali. Mmmm, love to have one of those in my garden back home. But after a little research it was discovered that in Australia this species is designated 'restricted invasive under the Biosecurity Act 2014'. A native of India, Nepal, Myanmar and China, it has naturalised in several African countries as well as parts of Australia.

Reproducing vegetatively and via seed that eject explosively from the ripe fruit capsules, blue trumpet vine escaped cultivation and went feral.

In north Queensland this vine has caused huge problems along coastal streams. It impacts on riparian vegetation, smothering trees climbing 15 to 20 metres into their canopies. The extensive tuberous root system, with tubers up to 70 kgs, can keep shooting, making it hard to eradicate once established. Entrenched infestations need long term follow up as tubers can lay dormant for a long time.

A close relative, *T. laurifolia*, laurel clock vine, is on the Alert List for Environmental Weeds. These 28 species are plants not yet widely established but have potential to do immense damage if they gain a foothold. Also considered environmental weeds are *Thunbergia* species, *T. alata*, black-eyed Susan, and *T. fragans*, white thunbergia.

Prevention is the best and easiest method of weed control. Do not spread weeds.

Happy Weeding.

Checking up on koalas



Simone with joey

Over 15 months ago now, Simone and her joey Ennew came into care from koala hotspot River Bank Road, Monaltrie.

Simone and her small back young had been spotted in the same tree for six weeks. The temperatures were high at the time and they had stripped the tree bare of foliage, leaving them both extremely exposed and hungry.

Simone was very dehydrated but otherwise seemed healthy, but a koala's health can be more accurately established by watching its behaviour. The fact there were many trees surrounding them that would provide both food and shelter but they remained in this barren tree was a red flag, so both Mum and joey were brought in for a check-up.

It was good news, with an extra bonus. Both Simone and Ennew were in good health, although hungry and quite dehydrated. Mum in particular was very dehydrated because she was feeding two joeys.

Koala Kolumn

by Susannah Keogh,
Care co-ordinator

In addition to her 1kg back young (Ennew), she had a two-month old pinkie in her pouch.

Simone was released with her pinkie a few weeks later as she was deemed unable to care for both joeys as they were both so small. Her back young Ennew was successfully raised and released some months later.

It has been our pleasure and privilege to watch Simone continue to thrive back on River Bank Road as we are out there regularly checking on sick koalas, and she tends to stick to the roadside trees. Also, the pinkie who left with her in the pouch last year, continued to thrive and grow and has just become independent herself.

With all the koalas we lose

doing the work we do, it is wonderful to take time and acknowledge the successes we're responsible for too. Without intervention, it is entirely possible we could have lost Simone and both her daughters.

In a time where every female koala is so very precious and important to the survival of the species, successes like these should be shouted from the rooftops.

Well done to all involved, especially Wendy Bithell from Vision Walks – Eco Tours, who alerted us to Simone's distress at the start, then updated us constantly with pictures of Simone and her pouch young doing so well in the wild (see photo). Simone looks like a supermodel!

While the story of Simone and Ennew is a raving success, it is unfortunately not the norm. Koalas are frustratingly difficult to diagnose and treat for the multitude of ailments they suffer from. Not only that, but they are silent sufferers, giving very few indicators

that they are in fact very sick and/or injured. The behaviour is likely to tell you more about a koala's wellbeing than anything else.

If you aren't sure what to look for, try to think like a koala. Arboreal animals, which are as comfortable in the trees as we are on the ground, koalas should be high in the trees for the majority of their days/nights. They move between trees at least once a day and love being high in the canopy.

A koala low in a tree or sitting on the ground may be a sick or injured animal which might not be feeling confident enough to climb further up, or might not be strong enough to climb any higher. Please call our 24-hour hotline if you are concerned for one of your local koalas.

We are now in the midst of breeding season and koalas are on the move, frequently on or crossing roads. Juvenile males who are kicked out of their colonies by dominant

males are the worst affected and are most vulnerable. We ask people to watch out for koalas – and of course other wildlife – when driving and if you sight one, try to ensure it crosses the road safely and let us know.

If you hit a koala, please do call us preferably as soon as this happens. We know it's not always possible to avoid koalas, but the sooner we rescue them the greater their chance of surviving even a traumatic car hit.

Checking to see whether it's a male or female, and if a female, whether there's a joey in her pouch (even if she's

dead) is very important, so if you are unable to check, we can send someone out to do it for you.

Please put our hotline number in your phone (6622-1233) and keep your eyes open for koalas!

For information about koalas and conservation, or to book a tour, please visit: www.friendsofthekoala.org or email: info@friendsofthekoala.org
Follow us on Facebook.
To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat, ring the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 13-15-55.

Plant of the month



Native Indigo *Indigofera australis*

by Richard Burer,
Bush regenerator

This attractive native Indigo is one of 30 Australian species of Indigo.

This endemic species is not the main source of Indigo, though this local species does produce indigo dye.

The purple flowers, the low growing habit and being a legume, is an important feature of this plant.

It has a symbiotic relationship with nitrogen fixing bacteria.

Found on clay soils, this species is common in understory bushland around the Nimbin area.



Yellow faced whip snake



Carpet python

Snakes awake

by Renata Phelps,
WIRES publicity officer

As the days start to warm up, snakes are becoming much more active.

Like other reptiles, snakes are ectothermic (cold-blooded), relying on their environment for thermoregulation. In winter we do not see them as often, although contrary to widely-held belief, they don't "hibernate". Unlike some warm blooded animals who enter a deep sleep and do not move at all during winter, snakes enter a state known as "brumation", and on warmer winter days will move around and find water.

Many people pass close to snakes every day but because snakes are so afraid of us and prefer to stay out of our way, we never notice. Snakes know the food, water and shelter in their territory and learn the daily movements of the resident humans.

In reality, it is only occasionally that snakes and humans come into conflict – generally because the snake cannot make a quick exit.

During spring, snakes can become more defensive and territorial, so it is a good idea to be a little more wary.

Snakes are protected by law and play

an important role in our ecosystem. A resident carpet python will easily keep rodents in check and deter venomous snake species from moving in!

Relocating snakes out of their territory puts them at risk of not finding water and food, and they may die trying to get back home. A "stranger" snake that does not know your movements may move into that territory and increase the risk to you.

Never try to catch or kill a snake. Snakes are not normally aggressive; however, they will defend themselves if threatened and this is when most snakebites occur.

Discourage snakes by keeping your lawn neat and dispose of excessive leaf litter, garden waste, building materials or woodpiles near the house. Snake-proof your aviaries, pet enclosures and chicken pens with 1cm square mesh wire.

Check that windows and doors have secure insect screens and weather strips to close gaps at ground level. Try to train all family members to keep screen doors closed. Placing water at your fence line can minimise the need for snakes to come near the house.

WIRES snake handlers will come to the rescue if a snake is inside a house. If possible leave the snake an avenue

of escape: close the room off and leave outer doors and windows open so the snake can leave when it no longer feels threatened. If you have a snake caught in netting, see a snake that might be injured or have seen a snake in the same position for a number of days, call WIRES immediately on 6628-1898.

If you are keen to make a difference for the wildlife in our area, consider joining WIRES. Now is a great time to join since their next workshop will be held in Lismore on Sunday 7th October, and there is time beforehand to complete the on-line part of the course. For more information about how you can join and contribute, call 6628-1898.

An all-volunteer organisation, WIRES relies heavily on the generosity of caring people for support. All donations \$2 and over are tax deductible. Our 24-hour hotline is for all rescue, advice or membership calls in the Northern Rivers – phone 6628-1898 or go to: <http://wiresnr.org/Helping.html> to find out how you can help.

Nisargadatta Maharaj – The guru of self-enquiry

by Cameron Storey

Nisargadatta Maharaj (NM) was a Hindu guru of Advaita Vedanta or non-dualism. The publication, in 1973, of "I Am That" an English translation of his talks brought him worldwide recognition and was followed by several other books. Nisargadatta (pictured) was born in 1897 in Bombay and had two brothers, four sisters and deeply religious parents. In 1915, after his father died, he moved to Bombay to support his family back home. Initially he worked as a junior clerk at an office but quickly he opened a small goods store, mainly selling beedis, (leaf-rolled cigarettes), and soon owned a string of eight retail shops. In 1924 he married and had three daughters and a son. In 1933, he was introduced to his guru, Siddharameshwar Maharaj, who told him, "You are not what you take yourself to be" and initiated him, giving

him meditation instruction, a mantra and instruction for Self-enquiry which he followed verbatim, as he himself recounted later:

"My Guru ordered me to attend to the sense 'I am' and to give attention to nothing else. I just obeyed. I did not follow any particular course of breathing, or meditation, or study of scriptures. Whatever happened, I would turn away my attention from it and remain with the sense 'I am'. It may look too simple, even crude. My only reason for doing it was that my Guru told me so. Yet it worked!" Nisargadatta used all his spare time looking at himself in silence practising meditation and singing devotional bhajans (devotional songs). My Guru told me: "Go back to that state of pure being, where the 'I am' is still in its purity before it got contaminated with 'I am this' or 'I am that'. Your burden is of false self-identifications - abandon them all. Trust me, I tell you: you are Divine. Take it as the absolute truth. Your

joy is divine, your suffering is divine too. All comes from God. Remember it always. You are God, your will alone is done."

I did believe him and soon realized how wonderfully true and accurate were his words. I did not condition my mind by thinking, "I am God, I am wonderful, I am beyond." I simply followed his instruction, which was to focus the mind on pure being, 'I am,' and stay in it. I used to sit for hours together, with nothing but the "I am" in my mind and soon the peace and joy and deep all-embracing love became my normal state. In it all disappeared - myself, my guru, the life I lived, the world around me. Only peace remained, and unfathomable silence." NM

In 1936, after two and a half years, his Guru died and in 1937, Nisargadatta left Mumbai and travelled across India. After eight months he returned to his family in Mumbai in 1938. On the journey home his state of mind changed, realizing that "nothing was wrong anymore."



He spent the rest of his life in Mumbai, maintaining one Beedi shop to earn an income. Between 1942-1948 he suffered the death of his wife followed by the death of his daughter. He started to give initiations in 1951 after a revelation came to him from his deceased guru. After he retired from his shop in 1966, Nisargadatta continued to receive and teach visitors in his attic, giving discourses twice a day, chanting bhajans, and holding meditation sessions until his death in 1981, 84 years, of throat cancer. Nisargadatta still gave mantra initiation, with the underlying point being that the mantra

was more than sound, it was the Absolute Itself which could be reverberated throughout life in all circumstance. "The life force [prana] and the mind are operating of their own accord, but the mind will tempt you to believe that it is "you". Therefore understand always that you are the timeless spaceless witness. And even if the mind tells you that you are the one who is acting, don't believe the mind. The apparatus (body/mind) which is functioning has come upon your original essence, but you are not that apparatus." NM

Nisargadatta often read scriptures: Nath saint Jnanesvar's Amritanubhava and Jnanesvari, Eknatha's Bhagavat, Ramdas's Dasbodha, and Tukaram's poems; Yoga Vasistha, Adi Shankara's treatises, and some major Upanishads. "Nowadays people are full of intellectual conceit. They have no faith in the ancient traditional practices leading up to Self-Knowledge. They want everything served

to them on a platter. The path of Knowledge makes sense to them and because of that they may want to practise it. They will then find that it requires more concentration than they can muster and, slowly becoming humble, they will finally take up easier practices like repetition of a mantra or worship of a form. Slowly the belief in a Power greater than themselves will dawn on them and a taste for devotion will sprout in their heart. Then only will it be possible for them to attain purity of mind and concentration." NM The sacred teachings of Nisargadatta can come alive when reading 'I am That', the mind becomes quiet and awareness is all. Sometimes a decade or two of solid sadhana practice and immense surrender precedes the fructification.

The Dharma Centre and Medicinal Gardens is available for overnight accommodation on AirBnB. Call (02) 6689-7120 or Facebook Dharma Centre – Lillifield

Food Matters



by Neil Amor

The Nimbin Organic Food Co Op has been supplying food and supporting local farmers in Nimbin and surrounds for the last four years.

In that time, we have seen many small businesses start and grow in the local area.

One of those small businesses is Pit Paste Deodorants. Venu (pictured), born and

bred in the Northern Rivers and after a few bohemian years travelling, finally arrived back in Nimbin town. Venu was concerned about contents of many deodorants on the market so she set about making her own, based on her needs for a clean sustainable and socially conscious product.

Two years ago, starting with Google and ending with locally supplied hemp seeds, Venu hit upon an effective recipe incorporating locally sourced and Fair Trade ingredients that are certified organic grade.

Starting off small (she is still a one-woman operation) the business has grown to the point where her product is now sold nationally, proving hard work and perseverance does pay off.

Pit Pastes comes in two scents and sizes, and is available at the Co-op seven days a week.

Venuzi Better Biscuits (makes 24)

Ingredients

1 cup coconut oil / ½ cup coconut sugar / ½ tsp vanilla extract / ½ tsp almond extract / 1 egg (room temp) / 2 cups spelt flour (Option: include ½ cup almond meal) / 1 tsp baking powder / 1½ tbs milk

Method

Preheat oven to 180 degrees. Line two baking trays with baking paper.

Use electric mixer to beat coconut oil, coconut sugar, vanilla and almond extract until creamy and combined.

Add egg and mix again. Sift in flour and baking powder. Add milk and stir until combined.

Roll dough into tablespoon size balls, placing the balls on the lined tray about 5 cm apart (12 per tray). Once all the balls are rolled, use a fork or back of a spoon to squash the balls into a biscuit shape. (Add toppings at this point if you desire.)

Bake for 10 mins. Turn tray and bake for a further 5 mins or until golden. Allow to cool. Eat them.

How to communicate with animals

Animal Talk

by Donna Connolly

People often ask how I communicate with animals? I work with a variety of modalities.

It is worth noting the most common tools I use are the pendulum, psychometry and clairvoyance. Each reading is entirely different and tailored to the individual. I greet each reading with an open mind ready to receive messages in any or all of the following formats.

With daily practice, strengthening my "psychic muscle", I work with an amazing team of spirit guides (both animal and human), a variety of tools and clairvoyant ability.

It is all about energy, frequency and vibration. Not to mention the beautiful individual client souls and their guides too. Ultimately, I am working as a conduit, a channel for the information to come through.

I cleanse all of my tools after each reading and deep clean them according to moon cycles.

Here is a brief explanation of the different modalities and how I utilize them:

- Clairvoyance – means clear sighted. Seeing what is out of sight. Tuning in and seeing a vision in my mind's eye or third eye, sometimes it is like a scene in a film being projected or other times it may just be an object.
- Pendulum – I have a variety of pendulums that are tuned into providing me with Yes, No and not yet/ maybe answers. They are my confirmation tools. I use dalmatian jasper for animal communication. Rose quartz if it concerns a love matter.
- Psychometry – this is where I hold or touch an object to receive messages and vibrational impressions about the person.
- Clairsentience – is the ability to feel something. So in some situations I can feel how someone has passed over. Or sense an injury that someone has, as I will feel it in my body. This ability also works hand in hand with



the psychometry, giving a greater understanding of a place, building or object. Best described as the "gut" feeling. And smells. Sometimes I can actually smell something very strong, usually I have found this helps the person or the animal being read to understand who I am receiving messages from in the afterlife. On the odd occasion I can taste things also, to describe the flavour and textures. (quite weird when you can feel the sensation of crunching through a chicken neck, when tuning into a dog and asking what his favorite food is).

- Spirit Animals & Messages – I find that with each reading I am always looking to the animals for messages and answers. As each animal has its own energy and place in the world that can correspond with our own. For example if I see a Kangaroo I know the message is to move forward in leaps and bounds. If I see a yellow tailed Black cockatoo I know that is grandfather energy making contact.
- Clairaudient – this is the ability to hear messages. I find this is strong when I tune into our animal counterparts. And some spirits like to speak in words, or use music to portray their message.
- Cards – I work with many different cards, however I always seem to find the Spirit animal Deck from Stephen Farmer and Lisa Williams Soul cards have the most easily interpreted meanings. I do this work using photographs



of animals or people that are living or passed over.

Via distance, over a phone call. Or providing answers typed out in a document. When I work in person, I provide the client with the hand written notes of that session. I am happy for the sessions to be recorded to be listened to at a later date.

It is really rewarding to see a greater bond develop between pets and their guardians. Much needed closure after a particularly stressful passing or a mutual understanding of a behavior or dietary concerns. And quite often is confirmation of what they already feel.

Every one is capable of Intuitive connection, it is our birthright. If you would like to expand your knowledge and reconnect with your inner guidance.

Upcoming event

I will be talking about my upcoming courses and workshops in Lismore CBD on 27th October.

- Animal Communication 9-11am.
 - Awakening your intuition & crystal wisdom 11.30am-1.30 pm.
 - Animal & Human Reiki 2-4pm
- Lucky door prizes to give away at each session. Bookings essential. Investment: \$50 = 1 session, \$80 = 2 sessions, \$100 = 3 sessions.

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Understanding the role of fascia in horses

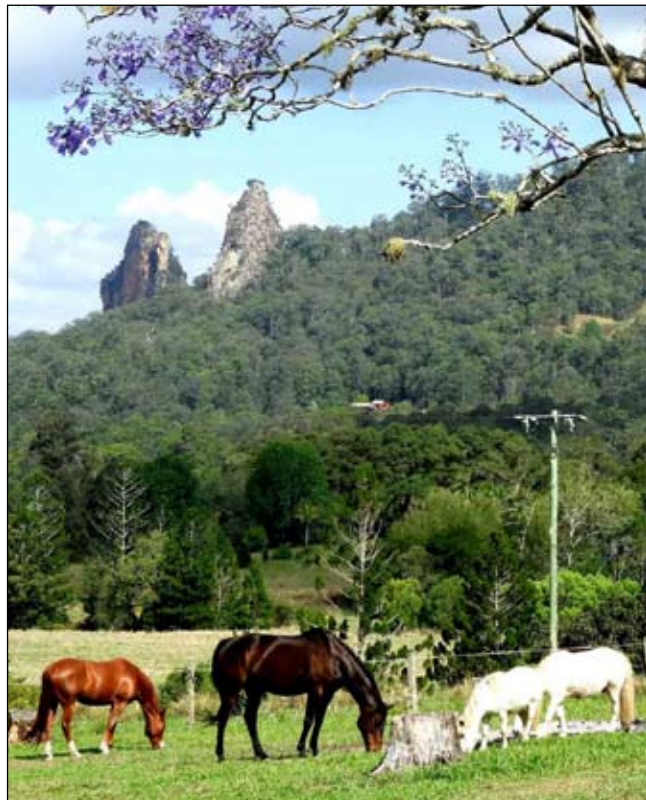
by Les Rees,
Equine naturopath

It is important to have an understanding of the role of the fascia in horses because this has a direct effect on movement and quality of coordination due to its amazing capacity to stabilize the joints and muscles of the body, yet it is often missed in diagnosing lameness and other issues.

The fascia system consists of a continuous, densely woven web like structure that covers every muscle, bone, organ, nerve, artery and tendon throughout the body and contains a communication system that can transmit information at lightning speeds to the entire body. Its nerve sensing capacity transmits information that initiates the co-ordination and stability of muscles, joints and organs to ensure that the horse can perform efficiently.

In its normal healthy state, the fascia is relaxed having the ability to stretch and move without any restriction. However, the fascia can switch to protective mode by tightening its tension and restricting movement and these restrictions can exert excessive pressure causing a number of symptoms that can produce pain and inflexibility.

The connective tissue



of the fascia system helps to determine the range of motion via its ability to flex and contract providing muscle elasticity and lubrication. Flexibility and contraction is determined by the individual needs of each horse, depending on a number of things including posture, tight muscles, accidents, repetitive strain injuries and trauma, etc. This controls the flexibility of each area and serves as a protective layer to help with damage control.

Problems arise when

induced forces such as injury, stress and trauma cause imbalances within the fascia system causing the tension of the network to shorten and become dehydrated with loss of lubrication. This affects muscle and joint mobility which in turn causes pain and stiffness. Unfortunately, it also affects the system's ability to send information around the body and therefore weakens the ability to protect it.

Localised areas of pain and/or scarring can create adhesions that can become

severe if not treated, so it makes sense to seek further help and advice from a professional therapist such as chiropractic, osteopathy, massage etc. They can work on your horse and also create a schedule of training and stretching exercises designed to release the tight areas that will address and aid the return to healthy function.

It is important to remember that once a problem starts, it will escalate causing chronic posture problems that will surely affect the biomechanics of the horse and curtail any sports activities you may have planned for yourself and your horse.

When you think about it, having to put up with a rider can create a particularly hard job for the working horse because humans also often have muscular and skeletal issues which can lead to added problems for the horse, since not only has it to compensate for its own posture problems, it is being made worse by also compensating for yours! Horses weren't actually designed to be ridden so it is advisable to ensure that we too are fit and healthy and up to riding these beautiful creatures.

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Finding the perfect timing

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

In most articles or books about horsemanship you'll find a reference to timing.

While many people are aware of the idea of effective timing, the practise of it can be quite difficult to master. It's one of those things that set the distance between a beginner and an experienced horse trainer. It can appear to be a small thing in the moment but the progression of effective training is totally dependent on it.

The single most important area where timing is crucial is the release of an aid. Many people release too late, resulting in a slow and sometimes frustrating learning experience for the horse.

When you apply a pressure, such as a rein aid, the moment the horse starts to soften and give to the pressure is the moment you release. This is literally on the moment, the very second you feel the first give. This marks the spot, the place where the horse softens, and it lets the horse know 'yes...that's the correct response'. The horse will continue to give a little more beyond where you release the aid. If at that point you want more movement you seamlessly reapply the aid, using a soft, squishy rein aid as if you were squeezing water from a sponge.

The idea is that the beginning and the end of your aid are soft and somewhat gradual. I don't mean taking more than a few seconds but the aid needs to have softness on both ends.



Suzy on the mountain

The jerky and sudden application of aids does not create a soft horse. In this way you continue to have a conversation with the horse. Every single time your horse gives you give. As you continue to ride this way your horse will start giving bigger and bigger responses with less and less rein aid from you. As I'm always saying, less is more.

Now I'll explain what I often see, so it's easier to understand the difference. A rider knows what they want from the horse, e.g. a right hand turn at the corner, and will maintain the aid until the horse has completed the turn, when they then release. I know this seems logical to us but from the horse's perspective something different is happening. They are not being given the feedback that turning is correct. The reward comes after they've finished the turn, when they're straight. So to

the horse's brain going straight is where they get the release of pressure. This is where the pressure was released so this becomes the point that's marked in the horse's brain. Over time the horse becomes less and less responsive to the turning aid, which is the point where it starts to look like the rider is pulling the horse around the turn.

Every time I apply a turning aid with a horse, in my head I am asking for a yield. I want the horse to soften and yield to the pressure from the rein, this is more important than the actual turn. Doing yields on the ground is a great way to practise this, and then take that same soft feel to the reins when you're riding. All the riding aids are yields. This is how you get a soft and responsive horse. Having this idea in your mind when you apply the rein aids will result in you really feeling the horse with your hand, having a two way conversation.

While this article is about rein aids, in particular turning, the principles apply to all aids you apply to a horse. We want our horse to be a willing partner. Riding should never be something we inflict on our horses. By having a conversation with your horse and being super clear about what you're asking, this will be your reality.

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A sociology of gaslighting

In September's issue of the *Nimbin GoodTimes*, I wrote of why gaslighters gaslight. In this article I explore the subject a little deeper, in order to understand how and why a person may acquiesce to being gaslighted.

Gaslighting is a popular term used to describe a co-dependent dysfunctional relationship where the gaslighter attempts to control the sense of reality of the other person so that they come to doubt their sanity. Gaslighting is abuse, plain and simple, but its existence is bound to a cultural way of thinking about male/female differences.

A gaslighter does what he or she wants (gaslighters can be either gender, but for the sake of simplicity, I'm using "he") as strategy is an attempt to silence the other person, to belittle her, and thus to prove his idea of male superiority (superior, dominant, more intelligent, more rational, or whatever).

Women are often conditioned to collaborate and empathise and this makes her want to appease her partner when he pulls the "superiority" card. She'll embark on a sort of iterative mouse wheel of explaining, complaining, crying, begging, pleading, etc. which reinforces his belief in his supposed rational superiority.



Gaslighting is a major obstacle to forming a healthy sexual relationship. It's hard for women, for anyone really to maintain an interest in sex when their sense of safety is destroyed. It is not uncommon for a woman's body to simply stop responding and, at that point, for the man to start forcing her into sex that hurts. I say to the gaslighted, listen to your body, your body knows something is wrong. Get out and find your own life again.

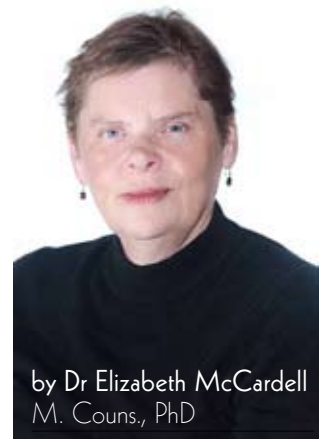
Sociologically, an examination of gaslighting reveals a lot of social conditioning and cultural beliefs about what it means to be male or female. That baggage contains ideas that have little to do with actual biological differences, a fact revealed when softer men are described in feminine terms. The language surrounding male-femaleness says a lot. You'll hear in there the idea that women are weaker than

men, that their opinions are irrelevant, that her wants are not legitimate nor should be listened to, etc.

Gaslighting is thought control and it's done by the gaslighter to avoid feeling vulnerable and open to emotional pain, to avoid feeling "feminine". It is significant that with this closed-heartedness comes lack of empathy and, quite often, cruelty to self, others, and animals. Gaslighters are frequently hard-nosed, no nonsense, driven men who fight tooth and nail to get what they want. They are resistant to change, narcissistic, and often, sociopathic, and cannot bear the idea of a relationship based on mutual respect, intimacy and equality.

Traditionally, many of us in the West are brought up to believe that women's role is to make men happy. Again, I'm not just referring to actual women, but the idea that in a relationship of any kind there has to be a strong, rational masculine person and a weak, irrational feminine one who clings to the man of the house for her very life.

Women who identify more strongly with this paradigm often stay in a gaslighting relationship because they don't know what else to do, how else to be. He has the financial stability, she has never learned to manage her finances. He has the house,



she will be homeless on her own. He says he loves her, while telling her she is worthless. Maybe it isn't all bad, and so she stays – to risk her own sense of reality, her own sanity.

And so the light flickers, goes out, comes back on, flickers again. Nothing is safe, nothing is predictable, and she doesn't know herself anymore. Maybe if she gave up everything that she is, he'll truly love her, maybe not.

Fortunately many in this weakened position do get enough clues to see what is being done to them and how they agree to it, at some level, and they get out. This is the beauty of the power of information about gaslighting. We can now see it for what it is and reclaim our own identity, our own truth, and be gaslighted no longer.

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Explore your beliefs about birth

Believe it or not, you already know a lot about birth. Since you were a child, you would have come into contact with birth stories and perhaps been influenced by the media.

You most likely have been exposed to birth scenes in movies, documentaries or the internet. Maybe you have read books or magazines or heard stories from other people. In a way, it's hard to escape the bombardment of information.

My childhood birth memories

I grew up on a farm and had the privilege to witness my horses give birth. They seemed to know exactly what to do and were able to birth their foals with ease. I didn't make the connection that horses are mammals just like us.

It wasn't until much later that I realised that as mammals we have similar needs when it comes to giving birth. Birth flows better when we have a safe space that is warm and dark and undisturbed.

When it came to hearing stories about human birth, things seemed to happen 'behind closed doors'. My mother went to the hospital to give birth and I didn't know much about the process.

First childbirth teacher

Do you remember the first time you heard about or saw birth? What is your earliest memory? Do you know the story of how you were born? How has this affected the way you think about birth?



Birth and Beyond

by Kirrah Stewart, Doula wisdom

Birth in the media

The media tends to dramatise birth and presents it as scary and perhaps even dangerous. It is often portrayed as a medical emergency with a woman lying on her back screaming. Natural birth seems to be under-represented because drama sells and is more 'entertaining'.

Birth in social media

With the rise of social media, people now have the opportunity to see real-life birth photography and videos. In 2018, Instagram finally changed its policy to allow uncensored birth photography to be shared. This was a movement led by Katie Vigos who runs empoweredbirthproject.com.

I feel this new wave of imagery provides a welcome balance. My instagram account ([@DoulaWisdom](https://www.instagram.com/DoulaWisdom)) has over 40,000 followers. This shows

that people have a real desire to learn about and appreciate birth in all its glory. You can see all types of births from vaginal births to cesareans to water births. This means holistic birth education is now more accessible than ever.

Explore your beliefs

I strongly encourage you to take some time to look at your beliefs so that you can decipher which ideas are helpful and which beliefs could do with some revision. I imagine you've formed some ideas around what you would like for your birth.

Taking time to explore your memories about birth will help you uncover any limiting beliefs you may have. Our beliefs shape our thoughts and feelings about birth and will effect what choices we make. I think it's a really great idea to visualise how you'd like to birth and to work towards making this a reality.

You may even like to go searching on social media like Instagram or Facebook to find stories or images that resonate with what you're wanting. It can be very inspiring.

If you want to feel more confident about birth and postpartum, please get in contact to receive your natural birth checklist which will help you feel more prepared. Visit: www.doulawisdom.com/natural-birth-checklist or contact Kirrah on 0429-308-851 or: kirrah@doulawisdom.com

Chinese medicine and five element theory

Five element theory is often talked about and used in diagnosis and treatment in Chinese medicine, the five elements being wood, fire, earth, metal and water. These make up all phenomena and are constantly changing. Water nourishes wood, which transforms into fire as it burns, resulting in ash (earth), which gives rise to metal.

Five element theory proposes resonances between the organs and the seasons as well as the five senses, with each organ having an associated sound, colour, taste and smell. For example wood is associated with the liver and gall bladder, the colour is green, season is spring, climate is wind, taste is sour, smell is rancid.

Constitutional types are proposed in five element theory. Wood types are tall thin and sinewy. They may not be physically strong but are intelligent and hard workers. They can have a tendency to overthink and worry.

The archetype for fire types is someone with a red complexion, curly or scant hair, with small hands and feet. They are often keen thinkers, energetic and short tempered.

Earth types have strong shoulders and legs with well-built muscles generally. They walk with firm steps without lifting their feet high, are calm, generous and steady.

Metal types are relatively pale, have a square face, strong voice and move swiftly. They have keen powers of thought and are honest and calm; they are good at leadership.

Water types have a darker complexion and a round face, large abdomen and a long spine. They are sympathetic, loyal and good negotiators.

In observing different body types, it has to be remembered that there is a large variation between people, and a physical trait does not always correspond to a five element body type. Also someone may be a combination of different types. These are archetypes but there will always be variation within them depending on how people live their lives.

Their usefulness comes in knowing what is normal for a particular person and in knowing strengths and weaknesses.

Walking quickly, being quick and energetic is normal for a fire type person, if a fire type does not have this energy it may indicate a

problem. However these same traits may indicate an excess of yang in another type that does not have this natural tendency.

All the types have tendencies to specific imbalances. It is better for someone to have a disharmony pertaining to their own body type than another type of disharmony, which can be more serious and difficult to treat. For example, a wood type would be likely to have problems with a liver disharmony affecting bones and sinews, a fire type heart and blood vessel patterns, water type kidney related, earth type spleen related, and metal type lungs. These tendencies show both what should be taken special care of but also what is a strength when health is good.

Generally, observing tissues is useful in determining the health of organ systems. Sinew stiffness or weakness suggests a liver/gall bladder disharmony, muscle weakness indicates a spleen deficiency, brittle bones are



by Brigid Beckett

indicative of a kidney deficiency.

One body type in five element theory is not better or worse than another. Differences should not be seen as pathologies.

But these observations can be helpful in knowing strengths and weaknesses. A fire type person may not be happy at an unchallenging desk job, a liver type may not be as suited to heavy physical work long-term, a metal person is

likely to be good in a leadership role, a water person is probably not suited to shift work, an earth type person thrives with some physical activity.

Recognising and making the best use of natural tendencies is part of five element theory, as is being in tune with the climate and seasons, and seeing the connectedness of all phenomena.

Brigid Beckett is a registered acupuncturist working at Lismore Community Acupuncture. She can be contacted on 0431-702-560.

The best of both worlds

Vital choices
by David Ward

In between habitual use and total abstinence of your chosen substance or range of substances, there exists a third state of being; that of occasional controlled use. In some ways it could be argued that we could have the best of both worlds when we find ourselves in this third realm. Here we can enjoy our cannabis or other substances for what they truly are.

Simply in terms of tolerance, excessive cannabis consumption for example, virtually renders its use unnecessary or even detrimental to our equilibrium. We are born with our autonomic nervous

system to run our basic bodily functions and our intuition to help us in making choices and decisions. Overriding these attributes with cannabis does little to enhance this situation and can leave us tired, confused and disorientated.

Aside from the enjoyment factor, which reaches its full potential when we are not battling with tolerance, measured use appears to provide a number of psychologically and physically therapeutic benefits. In my own experience I find that this discipline in use acts as a valuable reminder of just what is at stake should I slip into regular dependant use, there's a lot to lose. It's possible to fully let myself go here while

remaining confident that all traces will leave my system through the night and my brain and body function will be restored to its natural state.

Ritual and discipline leads us into a more respectful and appreciative relationship with our favourite substance and could go a long way to improving its general image. In terms of enhancing our innate systems I've already spoken at length in previous articles about what does it best, namely a healthy dependence on practices such as yoga over substance use, it appears there really is no way around this. This approach for me represents the best of both worlds; I can have my cookies and eat them too.

Got sore feet, anyone? Bowen helps

Plantar fasciitis can happen to anyone, from an active runner to a worker who is on their feet all day. You may not be aware, but the foot is made up of numerous tissues, muscles, and bones that can become damaged quite easily if the foot is not properly cared for. The foot has a thick, fibrous band of tissue called the fascia that reaches from the heel to the toes and provides support to the muscles and arch of the foot. When this tissue becomes overly stretched, tiny tears can occur on the surface, resulting in pain and inflammation.

Plantar fasciitis is described as a painful condition predominantly caused by inflammation of the bands of tissue connecting the heel to the toes. Many factors can contribute to you developing plantar fasciitis. While men can develop this condition, it is more often seen in women, as well as individuals who are older, overweight, or who are on their feet for several or more hours a day. The risk for patients developing plantar fasciitis increases if they



by Sonia Barton

also have flat feet or a very high foot arch, tight Achilles tendons, wear worn-out shoes with thin soles, often wear high-heels, have an unusual walk, or have an atypical foot position.

There is no definite cause for plantar fasciitis, as anyone can develop it, but certain individuals are more at risk if they meet some of the above criteria.

The most predominant symptom my clients experience is pain in the bottom of their foot, or at the centre of the heel bone. For some individuals, they might notice the pain is excruciating and at its worst first thing in the morning, known as 'first-step pain.' Pain can also occur when they are standing after having sat for a long time, and right after exercise as well.

There is a protocol I can go through to help heal that foot pain and get your body back into alignment. I check and release:

- Tight glutes;
- Tight hamstrings;
- Tight calves;
- Tight ankles;
- Tight feet; and
- Jaw alignment.

So you can see that sore feet can be caused by any of the above conditions as well.

A lady came to me with sore feet and was stressed because she was going to Cuba on a tour to learn to dance and wondered how she would cope. It turned out that her jaw was out of alignment which in turn affected her feet, would you believe. After one session the pain stopped and she went on her tour with no trouble. Bowen Therapy can certainly help this condition.

The following preventative steps can help to stop plantar fasciitis from developing or from the condition from worsening.

- First, you should take care of your feet by wearing shoes with good arch support and heel

cushioning that provide the feet with proper support.

- Doing exercises to stretch the Achilles tendon at the back of the heel is essential before sports or for non-athletes.
- Staying active, maintaining a healthy weight, and establishing good exercise habits all are things individuals can do to prevent plantar fasciitis.
- Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers can greatly help, as the feet are not receiving the proper support they need in these instances. This is hard to do in summer for most people!
- Lastly, you can apply ice wrapped in cloth to wherever you are experiencing pain, for fifteen to twenty minutes three or four times a day, or after an activity, as ice can help to reduce pain and inflammation associated with the condition.

Sonia Barton is a Bowen Therapist and Reiki Master. Phone 0431-911-329. Email: soniabarton@yahoo.com www.BowenEnergyWork.com.au

NATURAL LAW

Many will be feeling a level of alignment and integration has occurred. Even so, loud expressions of chaos and disharmony dancing in the superficial layers of our consciousness, are ready to dissolve into nothingness – if we allow it.

Keep yourself peacefully present and grounded and this passing will be gentle. Your environment can be a wonderful support to you, so ensure you are surrounded with light, clarity and inspiration.

The integrity of our relationship with self is one that is often overlooked, yet, in an interconnected world, our intrapersonal dynamic directly informs how we conduct ourselves in outside relationships (with people, animals, land, plants, skyways, waterways, ancestors).

This month, take steps to strengthen the relationship you have with yourself. This will look differently for everyone.

You may choose to do some reading on a theme that has been playing havoc in your world for an age (eg rejection, abandonment, need for sex etc.). You may commit to daily meditation for the month, because you know your mind needs to rest and realign. You may decide to invite more creativity, social contact, prayer, self-praise – whatever will help you make more sense of your story.

When we nourish ourselves and strengthen the integrity of our relationship with self, the quality of our 'outside' relationships naturally improves.

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by Helene Collard

deeply restful. Many of my clients feel that reiki is like a 'coming home'.

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Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing (Law & Justice), is a Reiki Master and currently practices and teaches Reiki in Lismore. Helene's approach to wellbeing is focused in personal growth, and she has been writing Natural Law and delivering wellbeing workshops since 2008. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: www.yemayacentre.com.au or phone 0405-656-797.