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# Food Matters



Neil does his last day on the counter.  
Photo: Sue Stock

by Evie Fairley

**A**s September flows into October a new year for the co-op begins.

Yes, October is membership time so whether you are renewing your support or joining our unique co-op for the first time we thought we'd highlight some of the changes we've made over the past year. They are:

A beautiful brushbox slab older than all of us put together was donated by Gummy and lovingly crafted

into our new counter by local master carpenter Josh Sharman.

A display stand for our locally made breads. Currently we stock locally made Nimbin Sourdough, Sol Bread and more recently we've added a gluten and grain free range of bread made primarily from almond meal and made in Byron Bay.

Volunteering often extends behind the scenes and after hours and this was no exception. The wood for the project was gifted by

Sebastian, husband of Ruby our amazing Bulk Foods Co-ordinator and fashioned into creation by Rob, husband of Lisa our lovely Chocolate and Fine foods Co-ordinator.

Less bespoke and more functional a stainless steel trolley to allow for easier bulk packing for customers.

Two new freezers to keep our delicious vegan and dairy treats from melting away and a new display fridge so that we could extend our range of fresh local produce.

A beautiful painting reflecting life and its continuous flow gifted by Guy Stewart and painted by local artist Jen Harkness

And our latest edition the new point of sale system to bring us into the 21st century and yes we resisted for as long as possible. Soon we will have eftpos as well, in case you left your cash stashed under your pillow.

So come and support the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op where you will find an amazing collection of people who willingly give their most precious asset 'their time' providing our local community and beyond with healthy organic produce, supporting local growers and maintaining an awareness of our footprint on the earth.

Volunteering allows you to be part of a collective, striving for something beyond the individual purpose.

And last but definitely not least we farewell a much loved, long-time volunteer Neil Amor (pictured). The winds of change have swept him off his feet and when he lands I hope he enjoys his new adventure as much as his time with us at the co-op.

No room for a recipe this month. We shall find something delicious for the next edition.

The members monthly specials will start up again in November.

## Antioxidants: the Mediterranean diet

by Thom Culpepper

**A**s reported on an ABC science podcast in September, the Melbourne Greek community is now considered to be the second healthiest community on Earth.

What is this all about? First, Melbourne has the largest first generation Greek population outside of Greece, a culture that is strong on historical food values, now living where the region allows a husbanding of food in a like terroir.

Eastern Australia is similar to the Mediterranean in rainfall and temperature range, and the true olive, *Olea europaea* will grow from Northern NSW to Adelaide and sometimes beyond, even as high, 620m or so, as Canberra and Yass.

Mediterranean food is seldom without olives, and their cold-pressed, high mono-unsaturated oil to saturated-fat ratio, is taken in one form or another daily. Every life-supporting day! The FAO med-food pyramid points directly at this truth.

Oil: the original word meant 'Olive-oil', which may have been of Proto-Greek (e'lon) or the Etruscan, (eleiva) origin, not the paleontological detritus of past life, filtered and accumulated in geo-wells.

Is not peace, or as some say, "Pax", borne by the cooing dove, carrying that fruitful, drupe-laden, leafy olive branch, saying that peace is heralded?

What do Melbourne Greeks eat,



that has proved a wisdom of cultural-cuisine?

They eat to colour. Red and green are the hues of their alimentary historical nous. Peppers, red onion, red garlic, purple carrots, (the original colour; the Dutch bred-up the yellow one, 'free of Beta-Carotene'). Their 'greens' are the wild herbs of the field and home-cultured gardens.

Here's one example:

Take a 'mess' of very red peppers, seed 'em and chop 'em; a bunch of red onions, chop 'em, too; ten cloves, mashed, of red garlic; a handful of fresh garden thyme; half a handful of fresh parsley; wild field herbs; a couple of home-grown purple carrots, grated; a couple of tablespoons of Korean pepper-flakes, (they do 'em to a tee); salt to palate or heart; and drown the

lot in all the olive oil you can manage. Don't hold back on the oil!

In a heavy, deep pan, let it rip, long and gentle. Sauce it up until all the oil is running red, add a few tosses of Worcestershire sauce or a half dozen or so of de-boned anchovies, simmer for about an hour or so. Done!

Hoist it over everything, especially fried or poached duck eggs on oil-fried, olive-herb-impregnated sourdough for breaky, poached in 'the bag' Northern Cod (Aldi) or Barra fillets, baked pork, goat, pigeon or chicken, steamed haricots, spuds or whatever.

**Footnote:** Susan Ryan kicked the mortal coil this week.

No woman has been as fairly effective to her feminist agenda, and to women and the venerable-aged, as this citizen-woman. RIP comrade, profound men will remember you.

Thanks to the Silver Budgie (Hawkie), she made it as the first woman into the best cabinet of Oz, as it should have been. She stood against the 'filth-sabotaging' of the fifth-column press and public servants for their perennial class war and their irredeemable purpose, Me and Mine, with no equality.

Want to banter and have a cook-in as a lark? Let me know. Email: [thewholeearthveg@gardener.com](mailto:thewholeearthveg@gardener.com) for lunch with Thom. Late Mac-book wanted. If you have a Mac-book that I can afford, you'll get a goodie-basket of my stuff as a prezzie.



Plant of the month



Creek Bottle Brush  
Callistemon viminalis

Selected and photographed  
by Richard Burer,  
Bush regenerator

It’s a stunning year for this plant of the month, Creek Bottle Brush or *Callistemon viminalis* / *Melaleuca viminalis*.

The vibrant deep red flower this year reveals a changing season this spring after such an oppressive and dry last couple of years.

This impressive tree is often seen as a shrub in horticulture and selected cultivars are most likely the most popular shrub planted in Australia.

Locally it’s a tree to around 15 metres, and it can be seen as multi-trunked shrub to 8 metres in the dynamic riparian environment. Its weeping habit provides

habitat in the riparian zone, the flowers attracting birds and bats, and its dominance in the mid and understorey is holding our fragile creek and river banks together.

I’m working on the Wilson River in Lismore at the moment, and these stunning old trees are such a pleasure to be working under.

In Nimbin, this tree can be found along creeks where they are very hardy and able to tolerate full sun, but they can be knocked around by frost when young.

Easy to grow and buy as tubestock, this tree can be planted along your riparian zones for erosion control, on the edge of the garden, and it can also be a useful shelter tree and windbreak.

A very valuable landscape plant.

Fire and Nats: deadly combo for koalas

by Dailan Pugh

According to the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA), the National Party has been intentionally misleading the community over their attacks on the new Koala Habitat Protection SEPP (State Environmental Planning Policy).

In a letter sent to the Nationals leader Barilaro on August 21, Rob Stokes informed him that the ‘pink DA map’ (the Koala Development Application Map which triggered the need for koala assessments when submitting development applications) would be removed and they would “revert to a survey process which existed under SEPP 44”.

Given that the Nationals knew the map would no longer be used, they have been deliberately misleading the community by making this mapping the focus of their attacks on the SEPP.

Stokes also informed the Nationals on August 21 that “planning officials would welcome the opportunity” to exclude land clearing and logging from the ambit of the Koala SEPP, meaning that core koala habitat identified in a Koala Plan of Management (KPoM) would no longer require approval to be extensively cleared and can be logged.

With 61% of the North Coast’s ‘likely’ koala habitat remaining on private lands, and probably less than 6000 koalas left, the koala cannot be saved from extinction without protecting its core habitat on private lands.

It is important to recognise that Timber NSW have focused their attack on the SEPP using misleading claims that routine agricultural activities would no longer be excluded, but there is a whole raft of routine agricultural activities that are still allowed without approval.

Before their threat to bring down the Government, the National Party seems to have succeeded in excluding land clearing and logging from the ambit



of the Koala SEPP, so that only leaves development as the real target of their revolt.

The only representation John Barilaro has raised with planning minister Rob Stokes is from a Newcastle property developer with multiple residential developments on the edges of towns including Maitland, Lismore and Armidale. That says a lot about the Nationals’ true motivations.

Now that the map of likely koala habitat has been thrown out, core koala habitat mapped by local councils will no longer apply to logging operations and land clearing. If the koala is to be saved, it is essential that the NSW Government steps up and undertakes urgent and accurate mapping of core koala habitat itself for application across NSW, especially after last summer’s fires.

There is an urgent need to identify and protect areas where koalas and other vulnerable species have survived the fires, given the EPA’s advice that logging of fire refugia could cause catastrophic

population declines in species such as the koala, greater glider and yellow-bellied glider.

The EPA’s Dr Andrew Smith warns that the combined impacts of logging and burning will be devastating on wildlife and contravene state and Commonwealth legal obligations unless there is immediate protection of fire refugia and a reduction in logging intensity.

While the National Party are demanding that the impacts of the fires on wildlife and timber resources be ignored so as to continue logging public forests as usual, it is a welcome change to see the EPA standing up for wildlife against bully-boy tactics.

The National Party are demanding that there be no meaningful protection for koalas on private lands, on the grounds that they should be protected on public land, yet in State Forests they have removed the need to to identify and protect core koala habitat, and are insisting on maintaining logging volumes irrespective of the devastating impacts on native species.

What is a weed?

Weed Words  
by Triny Roe

It looks like a weed, behaves like a ‘weed’, yet *Picris*, *Picris angustifolia* subs. *carlorum-henricorum*, is not an invasive exotic. *Picris* is a native forb.

Forbs are herbaceous flowering plants of the understory that are not grasses, sedges or rushes. *Picris* is named for the Greek word for bitter, as many of this genus have a bitter taste. About 40 species are endemic to the Mediterranean, North Africa, Europe and Asia and around ten are native to Australia.

*Picris* can behave as an annual or a perennial, flowering all year round. Among the first specimens to be collected by Joseph Banks in Botany Bay, back in 1770, it is also known as native hawkweed.

Note that common names for plants can lead to confusion and misunderstandings, so it is important to use scientific names to ensure the discussion is about the same plant. Hawkweed is also the common name

of four seriously invasive exotic plants which are in the *Pilosella* and *Hieracium* genera.

*Picris* can be found growing in river gullies, sclerophyll forests, grassy woodlands, mountain and coastal grasslands, can tolerate a range of soils and conditions including sand dunes. It can also appear in lawns, gardens and paddocks. Though not commonplace, its range includes the Great Dividing Range and the east coast of QLD and NSW, as well as parts of Tasmania. It is probably often mistaken for other common weeds.

There are two other subspecies of *P. angustifolia*: *angustifolia* and *merxmulleri*. These are distinguished by the size and arrangement of elements of the flower heads. Experienced botanists or on-line keys can help. In the family *Asteraceae* they all have a typical yellow dandelion style flower which matures to release light fluffy seeds that blow on the wind.

*Picris* can grow to 1.4 metres in height with a strong taproot. A tall slim plant, it has a branched



flowering stem shooting up from a rosette of leaves with more leaves clasping the stem alternately.

These leaves, which get smaller towards the top, are long and narrow – in technical terms: linear to narrow-ovate or oblanceolate. They can have either toothy or smooth edges. Stiff hooked bristles give leaves and stems a distinct velcro feel. These hairs can be dense or sparse.

Correct and timely identification of new species which appear will help in making land management decisions. Before you remove it, find out what it is. It might be one you want to keep, depending where it is.

New plants will always come. As humans, vehicles and animals continue to move around, the wind blows, the rain falls and the creeks



and rivers rise, there will be transportation of seeds and plant materials to new areas. Happy weeding.

Protests over Bunnings sale of native timbers

by Naomi Shine

There have been protests at NSW Bunnings stores calling on Bunnings to stop selling native forest timber that is pushing koalas to the edge of extinction.

Forest protectors in Lismore, as part of a statewide action, are drawing attention to the plight of the local Banyabba koala population, whose habitat is under threat from Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) logging scheduled in Myrtle, Braemar, Doubleduke and Bungawalbin state forests.

It’s absolutely disgraceful that the Forestry Corporation is still desecrating public forests after our huge summer of loss. (Official findings recently estimated that almost three billion animals were killed or displaced during last summer’s bushfire season, putting koalas on track to be extinct by 2050.)

It is also a real shame to see Bunnings purchase this timber from FCNSW to sell at their stores.

The two million hectares of softwood and hardwood plantations across this

continent are enough to meet all our national wood needs. Every piece of native logging in our public forests is a non-necessity that is pushing threatened wildlife to the brink of extinction.

Customers want Bunnings to safeguard Australia’s unique and sacred species. Instead of driving this destruction, Bunnings could be part of a transition to a local and sustainable plantation timber industry.

Bunnings’ recent decision to halt sourcing native timber from Victoria’s state forests was broadly welcomed by community groups and environmental organisations. Yet NSW groups now fear supply will simply shift to the state’s unburnt forests.

The EPA is currently investigating alleged logging breaches in 14 separate state forests across NSW. We believe FCNSW operates just as recklessly as VicForests.

Groups are calling on Bunnings to put a blanket ban on selling timber from all Australian public native forests if it wants to step in line with community expectations.



# The immune system

Would you like a stronger immune system? Well, I can help you through having regular sessions of Bowen therapy.

The Immune System consists of tonsils, lymph nodes, spleen, lymphatic vessels, thymus, skin, bone marrow and mucous membranes.

Every day we are exposed to trillions of highly diverse living microbes, including viruses, bacteria and fungi. These pathogens are dynamic rapidly mutating to adapt to the ever changing environment. The majority are not harmful, whilst others are potentially lethal.

This is nothing new; in fact, the human species has evolved in a sea of microorganisms. We must remember that we all have an incredibly highly-tuned and evolved body which is geared for survival. It is equipped with the most complex chemical factory and specialist commando cells designed to wage war against harmful pathogens.

Not only are we surrounded by a world of microorganisms, but we are their host and they outnumber human cells by 10 to 1. You could say that there are many 'ecosystems' of specific microbe communities found throughout our body – on our skin, hair, every orifice, and throughout our insides, stomach, bloodstream, even in our cells.

Scientists are still only scratching the surface to fully understand the importance of our living ecosystem in relation to our immune system. Research is finding that microorganisms play a vital



by Sonia Barton

role in optimum immunity function and human health. We are learning that there is a delicate balance between our immune system – microbiota alliance and the maintenance of regulatory pathways to maintain tolerance and resilience to innocuous antigens.

Microbiologists are finding that there has been a gradual decline in the diversity and resilience of our microbiota important to establish balanced immune responses. This is due to the overuse of antibiotics, changes in diet, exposure to toxins and stress. This phenomenon is propose to account for some of the dramatic rises in autoimmune inflammatory disorders and has left us more vulnerable to harmful pathogens.

Given all this, we have the ability to make better choices to support our immune system by understanding the importance of our microbiota. We can positively influence our immune system by creating an internal environment in which our ecosystem can thrive, by simply making better food choices away from processed

foods to fresh fruit and veg, and reducing sugar intake. Increase water intake, reduce caffeine and alcohol. Integrate daily exercise and immerse in the sun for Vitamin D, and bathe in positive ions by spending time in nature. Also integrating practices to calm the body such as deep breathing, meditation, listen to calming music, yoga, and chi gong.

Above all, it is important to connect with friends and have fun. When you feel good your body releases happy hormones and every cell is more energised, your body pH becomes alkaline. When we are happy our body is in "rest-relax-repair" phase (parasympathetic mode). In this state, every cell knows exactly what to do to keep you well.

However, in a state of unhappiness and stress mode (sympathetic), the body gets overloaded and the autonomic nervous system becomes confused and compromised.

Bowen therapy is particularly efficient in gently bringing the back into parasympathetic mode, where all body functions and immunity is optimised. In addition, it greatly assists the body to eliminate toxins and reduce inflammation.

Alongside other positive lifestyle choices, it can quickly boost your immune system for 'ultimate' protection.

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## Are you aware of alienation?

Parental Alienation Awareness Day is held on 12th October 2020 in Australia.

Parental alienation is the outcome of emotional and psychological manipulation and abuse when one parent deliberately damages their child's relationship with the other parent. It is a form of family violence.

Parental alienation can occur even when the relationship between the targeted child and targeted parent was once a very positive one. It occurs when a child is forced to choose one parent's side over the other after family separation and during parenting disputes.

Typical tactics employed by alienating parents used include:

- Denigration associated with the targeted parent;
- Vilification of the targeted parent;
- Interference with time spent with the targeted parent;
- Eradication of the targeted parent from the child's life;
- Information gatekeeping;
- Interrogation of the alienated child;
- Damage to the loving connection with the targeted parent;
- Inappropriate disclosure about the targeted parent;
- Encouraging child defiance;
- Forcing loyalty to the

alienating parent;

- Encouraging an unhealthy alliance;
- Emotional manipulation;
- Utilising outside forces.

The alienating parent can also be a grandparent, a step-parent and even a non-family member.

Grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and step-parents can also be alienated during the process.

The international awareness day falls on Anzac Day 25th April in Australia, so we raise awareness during mental health week. For more information go to: <https://www.facebook.com/ParentalAlienationAwarenessDay/>

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**Applications close Monday 19th October 2020**

## Big brown

by Donna Connolly

I had been back from an animal communication residential with Pea Horsley, for about two weeks. When I was hand-feeding little Pearl (chicken) I had been having visions of a large brown snake for a few weeks, but it was technically still winter and I just thought my mind was still adjusting from the information and training we had received.

I happened to look down and less than 20cms away was the biggest brown snake I have ever seen, 2.4 metres. I picked up lil' Pearl and put her in the coop, and put myself behind the house gate, while the brown went down a hole underneath the chicken coop. My legs were jelly at this point, and I had no idea what to do. I realised I could buy into the fear or use this moment to grow more.

So I stood at the gate with my hands in the air directing Reiki towards the hole and sending love. All of a sudden I saw her head, then she started to come back out of the hole keeping her full focus on me at all times. She did a full figure-8 back onto herself, and just stared up at me.

All I could think to do was create a telepathic communication with her. I apologised for the fear vibration that was emanating from me, but I went on to explain it was primal. Then I heard very clearly, "I am also scared of you!"

That was a huge moment. I promised not to hurt her, and to try and keep



my fear under control when I was around her.

I decided this encounter was a timely reminder to check the chicken coop for holes (always a work-in-progress as the rodents play their part). So I grabbed the tools while the brown sat outside and watched intently. I spoke to her the whole time, reassuring her.

However, I did ask her to go back into the hole while I came out and

tightened some cable ties, right where she was. She completely obliged, coming back out when I gave her the all-clear.

I used to see her daily, in fact, she and Clover the rescue rooster enjoyed sunbathing together. I wish I had taken a photo of this. One of the last days I saw the brown was the day Clover passed, and I swear I saw genuine sadness in her eyes, as she also had lost a great mate.

Living in this area, there is a wide variety of snake species such as yellow face whip snakes and tree snakes, a couple of pythons that feel comfortable enough to live under the house.

I have come to the understanding that we have to learn to co-habitate. Usually they have been here long before us, and are likely to be here long after we go.

It's important to show them respect. This is the thing that resonates the most for me, as they hold the same level of fear for us as we do for them!

We are both deadly opponents to one another. Interestingly enough, there are statistics that show it is very rare for an indigenous person of any culture to be bitten by a snake, and most bites occur only when the snake itself feels threatened. Usually the person in question is very much trying to kill these innocent creatures.

If you see a snake, just stop, calm your breathing, put your arms by your side and allow them to pass, or if they are still/not moving, back away gently, showing them you mean no harm.

"Til next time, take care of yourselves and each other.



# A vision for the future

by Suzy Maloney

‘She was taken to a small box and closed in. Her heart rate increased and sweat trickled down her body as fear filled every part of her being. She could hear sounds around her and feel the presence of others. Suddenly she was free, she ran as fast as she could. She could feel a burning pain on her tongue and gums but kept running.

‘A sharp pain on her side kept happening again and again. She tried to run away from it, but it came with her. Her leg started hurting, and she tried to slow down, but every time she slowed the pain on her side increased so she kept going, trying to ignore her leg. She was sure she was going to die; terror filled her heart. There was no escape.

‘Suddenly it was over. She slowed down, limping as the pain in her leg was bad now. She was placed in another box, a bigger one this time. A man said, “This one is no good now, call the doggers truck...”

We are fortunate living in Australia to have laws preventing animal abuse. If someone is seen whipping a dog, they can be convicted. For some reason, our laws do not apply to horses. One



Grace and Rex

of the biggest animal cruelty issues our society faces is the overt abuse of horses with bits, whips, and spurs. Not only do our laws fail to protect horses, but the abuse of horses is publicly accepted. Every day horses are being raced with people pulling thin metal bars inside their mouths and whipping them relentlessly. Grown men and women publicly whipping horses while the observers cheer. It reminds me of the gladiator days. If you look at still photos of racing horses you will see their mouths open trying to escape the bit pain, the bulging fearful eyes and popping blood vessels.

And it is not just happening on the racecourses. The Olympics features dressage horses with two bits in their

mouths, a shank, chain, spurs and whip, a total blanket of pain. People watch it and think it is beautiful.

I do not understand the lack of empathy humans have for horses. For me I clearly see the fear and pain on their faces and in their eyes. Are there filters over our eyes?

My mother used to bet on the horses every Saturday. After a while of talking with her about bits and whips and how racing is for the horses, she saw it. She told me that once she really looked at the horses faces, she could see their pain. Once she saw it, she couldn't not see it. She never bet again.

Horse sports, shows, gymkhanas, all can continue without the instruments of pain. Racehorse people say the horses love to run, and

this is true. If they used bitless bridles and threw away the whips the horses would still run. There would still be a winner and people could still bet. Nothing would change for the people, but heaps would change for the horses.

The same applies to dressage and competition horses. It is possible to train horses to do dressage completely at liberty without any gear at all, so it is obviously very achievable to train them to do dressage in a bitless bridle. The bits, whips and spurs are not necessary. The competitions can still go ahead without causing direct pain to the horses. People all over the world are already doing this. If the public demanded it, more people would do it.

We need to stop supporting the sports where cruelty to horses is happening. If we withdraw our money and support and say why we are doing so, the treatment of horses will change. We have the power; it is up to us.

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## Queensland itch

by Les Rees

Queensland itch season has arrived and is already causing problems to those poor equines that have Culicoides hypersensitivity.

For them, this season of year represents a harrowing time of torment and continual itching that can cause further damage to the skin as horses continually scratch and rub themselves in order to find some relief.

I came to live here six years ago, having brought three horses with me from the cool climate of Tasmania. I can tell you that it was a rude awakening for me as I found that they weren't coping at all well with life in the subtropics.

Since then I've been researching the various treatments on the market and developing some ideas by experimentation with my beautiful family of equines all of whom had fallen prey to these nasty biting Culicoides midges.

So what exactly causes the problem?

The answer lies in the midge saliva. When the skin is pierced the midge injects protein rich saliva containing vasodilators, anticoagulants and pro-inflammatory mediators. An onslaught of

midge bites in hypersensitive horses causes a defense reaction in the body that sends antibodies, histamine and inflammatory mediators to the damaged area to coagulate the blood in order to restrict flow to the site.

But the clever thing about midge saliva is that the proteins send a counter signal that inhibits this process, reversing the effects of the horse's defense ensuring that the anticoagulants in the saliva will enable a stream of blood to drink.

This can cause extreme reactions in sensitive horses, as damaged areas of skin become inflamed causing subsequent itchiness and further infection, due to the horse attempting to attain some relief by constant rubbing.

If left without intervention, the horse can develop broken hair and subsequent alopecia, skin erosion and ulceration which can be extremely painful; and in the chronic stages hyperkeratosis, lichenification (thick leathery patches) and scaling can develop.

Treatment includes topical creams, oils and sprays and internal medications. There is a vast array available on the market as well as veterinary products but science has yet to discover a way round the counter signal in midge saliva.



Therefore we can only address the symptoms and for each equine those symptoms can be varied. That may explain why some products on the market have positive responses for some horses and not others!

### Preventatives

- Addressing diet modification and adding supplements. This may help make the blood less palatable for biting insects as well as supporting the overall health of the horse. There are several herbs that can help support equines with sensitivity issues and it is advisable to have each horse assessed individually.
- The removal of horses away from marshy areas, still water and streams inhabited by midges.
- Keeping yards free from manure will help reduce the midges' breeding ground
- The use of light rugs, especially overnight when the midges are out. A lot

of people may not like to use rugs but I'm of the opinion that if your horse is suffering, you need to address it in any way you can to make it comfortable and keep it healthy.

- Keeping the coat free from sweat, a simple sponge down and the removal of excess water with a scraper will help deter the insects.
  - The use of natural insect sprays, essential oils and creams. The oil based products seem to create a barrier on the skin and blended oils have a number of uses including antiseptic, anti-itch and anti-microbial actions.
- I've recently developed an essential oil based spray that is working on my horses and has received some positive responses from clients around Australia. If anyone is interested in trying it out please contact me.

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## POSITION AVAILABLE



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# Breaking free, with awareness

I was doing a hypnosis the other day and thinking, at the same time, about how much of what we do in daily life as if in a trance.

Driving (much of the time anyway), eating, drinking, smoking, reading, watching television/movies, walking, singing, writing even, are mostly done in a semi-conscious state.

It is no wonder, then, that the habits we have seem to run on their own steam and apparently drag us along for the ride. We forget that we, as a friend used to put it, are the drivers of our own life.

The trance state, it should be noted, is a very useful space to be in, as long as we can emerge from it at will.

The trance state can be very creative, and full of possibilities. It is a relaxed, yet focussed dreamy state for the job at hand. Most of us know how that feels. It is as though we are locked onto doing what we're doing.

Yes, we are aware of outside things: wind in the trees, a gecko chirp, water boiling, smells of dinner or the heavy scent of Jasmine in the afternoon, but it is in the doing of what we have chosen where our mind is at.

In other words, it is in that quasi-awareness of outside

things that we have the key to breaking free from being a slave to the trance state, if that's what are interested in doing.

There is, in here, a choicefulness in what is paid attention to in the gestalt of awareness (figure-ground, ground-figure), and, isn't it interesting that we can be aware of both at the same time?

The art of breaking free of doing something inherently bad for us: things that undermine our health and/or self confidence and/or a block to creativity (writers, painters, etc), can be learned in hypnosis.

Hypnosis plays with the trance state, so that, coupled with expectation for change, the client experiences new internal statements as being part of the trance and also as part of ordinary life.

In other words, the person's preferred way of life is introduced in hypnosis as though it is just part of the 'now' of life, even if in fact, it hasn't been part of ordinary life for a long time.

A smoker who wants to give up smoking, experiences – in the hypnosis, and beyond – life without cigarettes and also a sense that smoking is now just a



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

vague memory, without in any actual present interest.

In hypnosis, time is traversed freely backwards and forwards, now, in a year's time, yesterday, tomorrow, at Christmas time, five years' time, so that what is learned in each hypnosis session (and three sessions is the minimum required for some people; more is usual) feels to the client as though that knowledge has always been there, and is felt to be preferable to what went on before.

On top of that, there is a sense of a hidden observer, an agent of the self who can observe or witness our behaviour whenever we do those things we, until now,

have habitually done.

An observer that can step in whenever we drift off into unconscious habit activity and turn things around to doing what nourishes and heals us, instead of performing harmful things.

Hypnosis is a tool where the hypnotic trance is introduced as a place of change, and not a place of just doing what we always do, outside awareness.

Hypnosis is thus paradoxical, where the awareness of the hidden observer is introduced, or enhanced, while in that lovely relaxed, focussed, dreamy state, and we become aware of our own capacity for change, we enter the path of choice, as opposed to feeling a slave to unhealthy being. The clinical practice of learning mindfulness also has that purpose.

Being hypnotised feels good because feeling relaxed feels good and the beautiful thing about the process is that you never lose control, but can step out of the trance whenever you like.

You are comfortable in your relaxed, focussed state, and may thereby avail yourself of the freedom that awareness brings.

## Why mamas need to be massaged

### Doula Wisdom

by Kirrah Stewart

Nearly everyone loves a good massage. The benefits are even greater for pregnant and postpartum women. Their bodies are going through such immense changes that some nurturing touch can make a huge difference.

It's very common to have aches and pains in pregnancy as the body accommodates the growing belly and prepares for birth. Prenatal massage can be fantastic for alleviating back and hip pain.

By helping the muscles to return to balance (not too tight, not too loose), it can help the baby to move into the best position for birth.

Regular massage during pregnancy can help reduce stress levels and increase oxytocin levels which can lead to better outcomes during the birth.

The main benefits of prenatal massage are:

- Relieving muscle tension (particularly in back/hips);
- Increased relaxation and reduction of anxiety and stress;
- Improved circulation and reduction in swelling;
- Better moods and sleep.

The best position to receive a pregnancy massage is side-lying so that no

excess pressure is placed on the uterine ligaments/belly or back.

After birth, a newborn mother can feel exhausted and very sore. Massage is an age-old tradition for helping new mothers feel nourished and contributes to their healing and recovery from birth. In many cultures, the new mother would be massaged daily.

During postpartum, nurturing touch can help soothe muscle tension and also help the mother to release endorphins and oxytocin.

High levels of oxytocin assist with bonding with the baby, increasing milk supply/let-down and being more sensitive to the non-verbal cues the baby is sharing. This helps the caregiver be more in-tune to the baby's needs whilst also helping everyone to feel calmer and more connected.

The new mother will be doing a lot of 'baby gazing' (whether she is breastfeeding or not) so her shoulders and neck can get quite sore. Massage is fantastic for relieving this tension.

Massage can help the new mother to relax, reduce anxiety and generally improve her moods. This can help lower the chances of postpartum depression.

If it's not possible to receive full body massages,



the mother may like to include self-massage in her self-care plan. Taking a minute to rub some nice oils into the body will boost oxytocin and help the mother feel calmer and more grounded.

Or perhaps a family member or partner can give the mother some foot rubs or shoulder rubs. Anything to help the mother take a moment to relax and be nurtured will be super helpful.

If the mother can feel nourished, she'll have more energy for all the nurturing the new baby needs.

I love this feedback from Caitlin: "Kirrah's postpartum massages helped me to relax and improve my transition from pregnancy to postpartum. It

is very powerful to be cared for and receive nurturing touch while caring 24/7 for a newborn. I consider postnatal massage to be an essential part of self-care protocol as it helps you ease into motherhood with grace."

Kirrah offers pregnancy and postpartum massage from her studio in Nimbin and at the Lismore Birth House. Visit: [www.doulawisdom.com/massage](http://www.doulawisdom.com/massage) for more information, or text 0429-308-851. Make sure you have also received the free natural birth checklist so you can feel more calm and confident about birth.

For more information about Kirrah's services, head to: [www.doulawisdom.com](http://www.doulawisdom.com)



# Record-breaking rainforest trees found in The Channon Gorge

by Nan Nicholson,  
Water Northern Rivers

Record-breaking Water Gums (*Tristania laurina*) have been discovered in The Channon Gorge, in an area that would be destroyed by the proposed Dunoon Dam.

Growing on the banks of Rocky Creek in regionally rare warm-temperate rainforest on sandstone, they measure up to 155 cm in diameter at breast height (dbh).

The largest Water Gums recorded by Alex Floyd, the renowned rainforest botanist, are 145cm in diameter at Dingo State Forest near Taree. One of the trees in The Channon Gorge has multiple trunks that have regrown after flood damage, and its dbh of the base measures 178cm.

The age of the trees is unknown but they are believed to be pre-European because The Channon area was first settled only 120 years ago. Some of the trees are heavily battered and deformed by floods which are very severe in the narrow gorge.

Another rainforest species in the Gorge, grey myrtle (*Backhousia myrtifolia*) has been measured at 53cm dbh. The largest of this species previously recorded is 40cm dbh, according to Alex Floyd.



Water Gum on The Channon Creek. Photo: Andrya Hart

It is unclear why these trees are so large. It could be because the rugged terrain and poor sandstone soil in the gorge has made it unattractive for farming and the forest has been left alone.

Subtropical rainforest would also be affected by the dam. The two types of rainforest total 62 ha of Lowland Rainforest Endangered Ecological Community. These rainforests represent 6.6% of the remaining Big Scrub, which has been reduced by 99% since white settlement.

The land on which the trees are found is privately owned and exploration without permission is not encouraged at this stage.

A study commissioned by Rous County Council, the Environmental Flows Assessment: <https://rous.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-XLS-67-52-33> spells out the danger to this gorge from increased flooding when the dam overflows during

large floods. Water falling on an overspilling dam is immediately translated into downstream flow, producing rapid and magnified flood risk downstream.

A decision on whether to proceed with feasibility studies for the proposed dam will be made by the Rous County Council councillors at their December meeting.

Water Northern Rivers has recently formed to urge Rous County Council and its constituent local governments to adopt the many well-recognised methods for securing water for the region without constructing a large, financially risky and highly destructive dam.

The group is urging anyone interested in protecting our beautiful natural places to make their objections known, politely, to Rous County Council. If you want more information, go to: [waternorthernrivers.org](http://waternorthernrivers.org) or you can ring Nan Nicholson on 0428-886-335.

## Hempstone workshop success

A few fortunate people attended a hempstone crafting session in September at the Synergetic Systems workshop alongside the hemp farm in Cecil Street, Nimbin.

Hempstone is an air-drying moulding material made in Nimbin from just hemp fibre and water. Besides its beauty, it's biodegradable, renewable, superstrong like steel, and vegan.

The hemp pulp used for moulding into stone hard objects, in our case beads, is grown in France, processed and bleached in Barcelona and imported into Australia in a dry paper-like material. Only the outside fibre of the hemp stalk is used. The French grow it for making cigarette papers.

We don't have the raw processing ability in Oz yet, but Martin Ernegg is working on a small-scale processing plant to turn the imported hemp pulp into a usable molding material with a million uses and the ability to replace plastics.

Martin has been making his legendary 100% hempstone didgeridoos and bowls etc for some time now, experimenting with the strength and beauty of fashioning usable products with hemp and developing a new micro industry in our community. He says hemp is nature's strongest fibre,



however, little is known about its ability to naturally harden like a rock.

Hemp can be molded into stone hard plastics, as Henry Ford showed the world trying to stop its prohibition touring America in a car made of hemp and other natural fibres, bashing it with a sledge hammer to make his point.

Martin mixes water with the hemp pulp in a 6-1 mix to increase the hydroxyl bond of the hemp nanofibres. The watery mix is then pumped through a pair of giant grinding wheels driven by a Mercedes engine out of a snow plough from Denmark. The local power supply couldn't do the job! The smaller the particles, the more surfaces they have to bond with each other, and like magnets they lock together clinging to each other increasing the strength.

Moulding hemp fibre is like a mix of paper making and pottery. Hemp fibre is also easily dyed with natural dyes. Oxides bond particularly well. We used purple, red, brown, orange, yellow and green oxide and biocharred hemp stalk for black.

Martin is also experimenting with building materials, fireproof hemp bricks with magnesium cement and wall panels made with hemp, lantana, devils fig and other weeds. The finished panels are lightweight, fire resistant, anti bacterial and grown with a low carbon footprint.

Our biggest problem with using hemp is that we have very little processing infrastructure in Australia and that is something that hopefully will be invested in soon. Hemp as a raw product can be processed into fuel, fibre, food, medicine, plastic and building materials. Hemp truly is a master plant.

1kg buckets of Martin's hempstone mix are available from Nimbin's HEMP Embassy for \$15.

Martin plans to hold regular workshops: Hempstone every second Saturday of the month and Building with Hemp and Other Plants every fourth Saturday, 10.30am start. For contact, email: [martinernegg@gmail.com](mailto:martinernegg@gmail.com)

# Getting to know your Constitution

by Miriam Latif

As a herbalist, the question I most often get asked is: "Which herb is good for..." My response is always the same, it depends on your constitution. Constitutional medicine is, I believe, one of the biggest differentiators between the modern approach, and traditional medicine.

So what is a 'constitution'? In its simplest terms, your constitution represents your 'type', and therefore, your tendencies. The common thing about every constitutional system the world over is that it is based on the elements of Nature – because Ancient traditions knew that our physiology is continuous with nature.

There are some of us that are like deserts, and some like the ocean. Just as there are different external terrains, there are different internal terrains – and these internal terrains form the landscape in which all our symptoms appear.

From Ayurveda, we have a system of constitution known as the 'three doshas', which is perhaps the most widely known. Chinese medicine has a constitutional system, although it tends to focus more on patterns of imbalance.

The lesser known constitutional system, and the one which I find the most applicable, comes from the birthplace of western medicine – Ancient Greece. I personally find a lot of utility in this system, because it is borne of, and therefore speaks directly to, western psyche.

In the western tradition we have four constitutions or 'temperaments' – based on the four elements: Earth (Sanguine), Air (Melancholic), Fire (Choleric) and Water (Phlegmatic). The beautiful think about the western tradition is that it exquisitely links our physiology to our psychology. The word 'temperament' comes from the latin word 'temperare', which means 'to mix', because each of us is a unique mix of the elements.

The next question you may ask is: "Why is it important to know my constitution?" Knowing your constitution is an important part of health autonomy. We live in the information era, and there are swathes of 'health' crazes out there that can easily lead one toward overwhelm.

Modern natural medicine tends to make sweeping generalisations about 'what is good for you'. Traditional systems of constitution help us build nuance into our approach to



healing – they tell us that what is good for one person, is not necessarily good for the next, and it gives us reasons which are intimately connected to a language we innately know and sense – the language of nature.

A great example of this is juice fasting. Whilst very trendy, if you are depleted, nervous or have a 'cold' constitution, juice fasting is likely to eventually deplete you further because what you need is warming, building and nourishing; not cooling, draining and detoxing.

Constitution also allows you to seek more specific treatment. Stress in a 'Fire' constitution may manifest as histamine-mediated anxiety and irritability centred around the liver (in which case we might reach for wood betony, brahmi or skullcap), while stress in a 'Water' constitution may manifest as cortisol-mediated hyper-vigilance, fear and insomnia centred around the adrenals (think withania, reishi and liquorice).

If we know this, we can take our generalised 'stress' herbs and specifically angle them towards how stress appears in your constitution.

Once we know our constitution, we then learn how to balance it. Balancing our constitution requires access to the entire spectrum of elements within. This process is profoundly healing, because in turning our attention toward the parts of our selves we don't normally express, we cultivate health in the truest, and most original sense of the word: 'wholeness'.

## Natural Law

As the unravelling continues, we have the opportunity to begin forging new paths. This involves mindfully choosing new ways of responding to life. Use the change of season to stop something that is causing you pain.

Making new tread can often feel difficult, particularly if core issues from childhood, and family of origin, remain unreconciled. In addition, the science of Epigenetics verifies that we carry the stories of our ancestors within us.

This has brought relief to many, who now understand their prolonged experiences of emotional pain and sorrow, includes the generational stories of their family, passed down.

We can't change what happened, however, we can change how we feel about it, how it sits within us, and how it impacts on us, and

those around us.

Every family has its trouble, and every family has its medicine. Many of my recent Reiki sessions have involved clearing and balancing the energy along the ancestral lines.

Just as intergenerational trauma is passed along, so is intergenerational healing. Many now understand themselves as conscious conduits for intergenerational healing. When this occurs, healing is passed on, to all those who have passed in the family, to all those living now in the family, and to all those who are yet to come. It's powerful work.

Call on the well and healed ancestors in your family, and ask them to guide you. Focus on healing the trouble, and call forward your unique ancestral medicine. It's time.

Love and rainbow light blessings.  
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