



# Indigenous plant use

A booklet on the medicinal, nutritional and  
technological use of indigenous plants

By Zena Cumpston



Clean Air and  
Urban Landscapes  
Hub

National Environmental Science Programme

# Acknowledgement of Country

The booklet producers and The Living Pavilion project partners and collaborators would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which the project took place, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Woi Wurrung language group, part of the greater Eastern Kulin Nations. We pay our respects to Wurundjeri Elders, past, present and emerging. We honour the deep spiritual, cultural and customary connections of the Traditional Custodians to the landscape and ecology of the land on which The Living Pavilion is located. We acknowledge that this land, of which we are beneficiaries, was never ceded. We are especially grateful for the contributions of many First Peoples involved in our project and their generosity in sharing their culture and knowledge with us.

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Cumpston, Z. (2020). Indigenous plant use: A booklet on the medicinal, nutritional and technological use of indigenous plants. Clean Air and Urban Landscapes Hub, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

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The Clean Air and Urban Landscapes (CAUL) Hub is funded by the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program.





Nardoo  
(*Marsilea drummondii*).  
Photo by Sarah Fisher

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# About this booklet

## Booklet beginnings

In 2019, the University of Melbourne was transformed by the breathtaking influx of 40,000 plants native to Kulin Country that literally breathed new (ancient) life into the site. These plants took centre stage at The Living Pavilion, an arts/science event that aspired to forefront the University's Parkville campus as an Aboriginal place: a place of belonging. The Parkville campus is built on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri peoples of the Woi Wurrung language group who have belonged to and been custodians of these lands for 65,000+ years.

As part of the plant exhibition, The Living Pavilion's lead researcher, Barkandji woman Zena Cumpston, used signage to educate people about the different plant species' cultural and ecological significance.

This plant research was so popular that many participants asked how they could access this information after the event and if there was a resource available that synthesised this work. Further, greening practitioners, schools and community groups have been contacting Zena to ask for more information and to discuss their educational aspirations to embed understandings of Indigenous ecological knowledge into their gardens and activities.



Signage at The Living Pavilion. Illustrations by Dixon Patten of Bayila Creative, research and words by Zena Cumpston, design and production by 226 Strategic and Print on Wood. Photo by Sarah Fisher

# What's in the booklet?

## Plant information

This booklet contains edited and abridged versions of the information that accompanied the indigenous plants at The Living Pavilion. We share information about indigenous plant use, including the medicinal, nutritional and technological use of plants (such as traps, nets and weapons) developed over many, many millennia by Australia's First Peoples. Mostly, we cover widely available eastern Kulin Nation plants, and some edible plants from further afield that can be grown successfully in multiple Australian climates.

All of the plant information has been edited to fit onto labels that you can print, laminate and use in your garden. These labels provide an ongoing opportunity to learn on Country: gardeners and visitors will be able to interact with plants, smell, touch and taste, whilst they learn. This is an Indigenous way of knowing and learning, it is experiential learning: learning through doing, smelling, tasting, seeing, feeling, sharing and talking.

The plants are presented from an Indigenous perspective; Latin names are second not first. Where possible we have also included information about the animals the plants benefit, in line with the holistic approaches to the environment so important to Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

## Additional resources

There are many resources that provide detailed information on how to make garden beds, plant groupings and tips on choosing plants, where to buy them and how to keep your garden healthy. This booklet does not cover these already well-documented areas, but we have included links to these types of resources.

This booklet also includes examples of citizen-science initiatives that encourage the involvement of community groups and individuals, as well as resources for exploring further educational activities related to Aboriginal perspectives of plant use. There are two sections particularly useful for teachers, which outline some good resources for lesson plans and exploring Aboriginal perspectives of sustainability and plant use.

To prepare this booklet, Zena consulted more than 50 sources and collated information by cross checking and further research. All of the sources used are listed at the end of this booklet to provide a guide for those who wish to learn more through their own research adventures.

## Who can use this information?

This booklet has been designed for any individual or group interested in indigenous plant use, including schools, community groups, greening practitioners, home gardeners and their families. If you don't have a garden, this booklet is still of value, as it aims to illuminate Indigenous perspectives of indigenous plants.

## Why grow indigenous plants?

Indigenous plants, as well as holding cultural stories and great cultural and ecological importance for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, deliver a number of benefits:

- They are very hardy and require little water, which makes them sustainable and affordable to keep
- They have evolved in local conditions, which adds to their hardiness and ability to survive
- They tell stories about the cultural belonging of Indigenous peoples and allow a portal into the rich cultural and ecological knowledges held by Indigenous peoples
- They illuminate the specific identity and history of landscapes
- They require no fertilisers
- They provide much needed corridors and habitat for native animals and contribute greatly to healthy ecosystems
- They can be of benefit in mitigating soil erosion and water evaporation
- They are often medicinal, nutritionally beneficial and can be used to make many items, as well as providing colour and beauty to the landscape.

## How 40,000 indigenous plants benefited biodiversity

The Living Pavilion was an excellent example of how including indigenous plants in the design of small urban greenspaces can provide substantial biodiversity benefits. Research on the insect fauna at the event showed that the installation of locally indigenous plants increased the diversity of native insects across every group surveyed including bees, butterflies and bugs. This was likely due to the diverse array of food and habitat resources provided by the indigenous plant species.

Luis Mata conducting sweep netting surveys to observe insect biodiversity in Kulin Nation and introduced plants. Photo by Alison Fong



## What Country is your garden on?

Indigenous knowledge relating to plant use, like all cultural knowledge, is very specific to the Country and the communities within which it resides. The project this research was based on was in Melbourne, on the lands of the Wurundjeri peoples of the eastern Kulin Nations and many of the plants featured may not be appropriate for your project if you are in a vastly different geographical location. However, many of the plants chosen have a wide geographical range across Australia and were chosen because of their widespread availability.

By choosing plants specifically from and common to the Country you are on, you will not only increase the plants' chances of survival but add greatly to the biodiversity of your specific place. Many animals benefit from indigenous plants, which provide shelter and food and fit within their specific ecological context. We encourage you to find and explore your local indigenous plant co-operative or nursery. As well as being able to sell you quality, affordable local plants they will know a lot about plants specific to your area.

## Learning from Traditional Owners

Learning from the Traditional Owners of the lands on which you live is the very best way to learn. If you can, we advise you reach out to Elders or governing bodies of the Traditional Owners of your area to come and speak with you and your group. They will hold information specific to their Country, handed down over thousands of generations, with which no book can compare.

Please keep in mind that Traditional Owners are often under-resourced and over-stretched so being respectful of their time and capacity is of utmost importance. They may not offer outreach programs but may be able to let you know of upcoming community events where knowledge-holders will be speaking.

If you do send an email or make a call you should be willing to pay for their time as a respectful way of acknowledging the privilege of receiving such a visit. This will compensate Traditional Owners' groups for their time and help resource their many collective and cultural aspirations. Remember it is not their 'job' to share their time and culture with outsiders and goodwill does not put food on the table!

You should also look for publications from your local Indigenous corporations or governing bodies. These will provide you firsthand information from Aboriginal community members that specifically relates to and illuminates many cultural aspects of the Country you are on.





River Mint  
(*Mentha australis*).  
Photo by Alison Fong

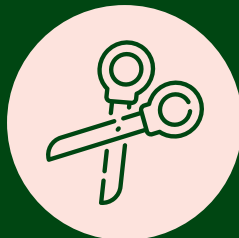
# Plant research

## How to use the labels



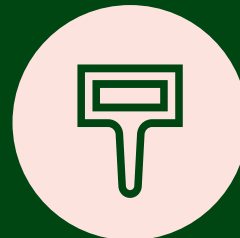
### Step One

Print and laminate the labels



### Step Two

Cut along the dotted line



### Step Three

Display the labels either vertically or horizontally. You could use something to help prop them up (we've used popsicle sticks in example one) or stick them straight into the ground vertically (example two).



If you use the plant labels, we'd love to see them and hear about your experience. Please message your photos to us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/CAULHub/](http://www.facebook.com/CAULHub/)) or Twitter ([www.twitter.com/CAULHub/](http://www.twitter.com/CAULHub/))



Example one

Example two

## Kulin Nation plant list

devised by Zena Cumpston and Charles Solomon with Ecodynamics

The following plants are all found on Kulin Nation Country and were featured across the landscape of The Living Pavilion.

- Marsh Club-rush** (*Bolboschoenus medianus*)
- Knobby Club-rush** (*Ficinia nodosa*)
- Hollow Rush** (*Juncus amabilis*)
- Rush** (*Juncus flavidus*)
- Green Rush** (*Juncus gregiflorus*)
- Broom Rush** (*Juncus sarophorus*)
- Fen Sedge** (*Carex gaudichaudiana*)
- White Correa** (*Correa alba*)
- \*Ruby Saltbush** (*Enchylaena tomentosa*)
- Spiny-headed Mat-rush** (*Lomandra longifolia*)
- Tussock Grass** (*Poa poiformis*)
- \*Kangaroo Grass** (*Themeda triandra*)
- Tall Sedge** (*Carex appressa*)
- Paroo Lily/Flax Lily** (*Dianella caerulea*)
- Pale Flax-lily** (*Dianella longifolia*)
- Wattle Mat-rush** (*Lomandra filiformis*)
- Wallaby Grass** (*Rytidosperma spp.*)
- Sticky Everlasting Daisy** (*Xerochrysum viscosum*)
- Hop Wattle** (*Acacia stricta*)
- Gold Dust Wattle** (*Acacia acinacea*)
- Lightwood/ Hickory Wattle** (*Acacia implexa*)
- Black Sheoak** (*Allocasuarina littoralis*)
- Coast Banksia** (*Banksia integrifolia*)
- Silver Banksia** (*Banksia marginata*)
- Common Spike-rush** (*Eleocharis acuta*)
- Common Wheat-grass** (*Elymus scabrus*)
- Hop Goodenia** (*Goodenia ovata*)
- Woolly Grevillea** (*Grevillea lanigera*)
- Common Boobialla** (*Myoporum insulare*)
- Nardoo** (*Marsilea drummondii*)
- Lilly Pilly** (*Acmena smithii/Syzygium smithii*)
- Paperbark/Flax Leaf Paperbark** (*Melaleuca linariifolia*)
- Black Kurrajong** (*Brachychiton populneus*)
- Blackwood** (*Acacia melanoxylon*)
- River Red Gum** (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)

\*Plant labels included in the Indigenous community garden plant list



## Rush (*General*)

Many types of rush have edible tubers and seeds. Leaves are often used as part of traditional weaving practices for making cultural items such as string, necklaces, baskets and mats but also important technologies such as nets, traps and spears. Some hollow rushes are used as straws to filter out sand and dirt when water is obtained from deep in river banks. They are also used to breathe under water as part of hunting techniques. The Gunnaikurnai peoples of Gippsland use the sharpened end of reed stems as a knife-like instrument to skin animals.

## Marsh Club-rush (*Bolboschoenus medianus*)

Marsh Club-rush is a riparian plant that prefers damp soil along the river margins and banks. Widespread throughout Victoria and across south-eastern Australia, Marsh Club-rush has edible root tubers that Aboriginal people roast and then pound between stones before baking into starchy cakes. The root tubers are about the size of walnuts, with a very hard outer cover. Club-rush is a valuable food source but also helps prevent erosion of riverbanks, as well as providing important habitat for small animals.

## Knobby Club-rush (*Ficinia nodosa*)

Knobby Club-rush is widely used by Aboriginal people across south-eastern Australia in the manufacture of cultural items such as baskets. The seeds are edible and the grass itself can be used to add flavour to fish and meats through smoking techniques, giving a flavour similar to green tea. Knobby Club-rush provides essential habitat for animals such as birds, lizards and snakes.

## Hollow Rush (*Juncus amabilis*)

Hollow Rush grows in damp areas but also tolerates dryer summer months. It provides excellent habitat for small birds, lizards and frogs. Its seeds are edible and it is used in traditional Aboriginal string, body adornment and basket making by many groups. Hollow Rush can also be used as a straw, as the small fibres within its centre act as a filter, especially useful when water is being sourced from digging deep into riverbeds. Many different types of river reed are also used for hunting, both as spears and to act as a snorkel when underwater (e.g. for sneaking up on ducks).

## Rush (*Juncus flavidus*)

Rush prefers moist to wet conditions and thrives in depressions and drains, tolerating drier conditions throughout the summer months, providing excellent habitat for a range of small animals such as frogs, birds and lizards. Rush has erect dull yellow-green to blue-green stems and has straw-coloured flowers that appear from November through to May. Like many types of juncus, this rush is used in traditional Aboriginal string and basket making by diverse Aboriginal groups across the south-east of Australia.



## **Green Rush (*Juncus gregiflorus*)**

Green Rush has bright green stems with straw-coloured flowers present from November to March. Native to Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales, Green Rush prefers moist to wet soils in forests by watercourses, drains and around dams. It provides excellent habitat for small animals such as frogs and birds. Like many types of juncus, Green Rush is used in traditional Aboriginal string and basket making by diverse Aboriginal groups across the south-east of Australia.

## **Broom Rush (*Juncus sarophorus*)**

Broom Rush is a riparian plant that prefers wet growing conditions along river margins and banks. Growing up to one metre in height, broom rush has green/blue stems and displays a pale brown to white flower from November to March. The seed of some *Juncus* species is a food source used by Aboriginal people, and the stems were used as fibre for string and basket-making. Native to Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia, Broom Rush provides excellent habitat for small animals such as birds and frogs.

## **Fen Sedge (*Carex gaudichaudiana*)**

Fen Sedge is native to eastern Australia and is adaptable to most soils, but prefers to be close to the edges of waterways. Growing to approximately one metre wide and high, it flowers from around September through to February with dark, almost black flowers. Fen sedge, like many plants that border water, provides vital habitat for small animals such as frogs, birds and swamp rats and is also an important food plant for caterpillars. Many sedges are used by diverse Aboriginal groups to make cultural items such as baskets of varying sizes, bags and mats as well as for technologies such as spears and traps.

## **White Correa (*Correa alba*)**

White Correa is common right across Victoria and is seen in every state in Australia except for the Northern Territory. When dried, its leaves make a delicious tea, which is similar in taste to English breakfast tea and was popular with Victorian colonists as supplies from their home countries were often precarious. White Correa is climate tolerant, being immune to both frost and drought as well as being salt tolerant. It has a fuchsia-like white flower which can be seen in autumn and winter, attracting nectar-eating birds and insects.

## **Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)**

Spiny-headed Mat-rush is a large tussocky plant that is common throughout south-eastern Australia and is found across most of Victoria. The Wurundjeri people particularly favour this plant for weaving cultural items such as necklaces, headbands, girdles, baskets, mats and bags for carrying foods, as well as for making technologies such as eel traps and hunting nets. Its seeds, high in protein, can be collected and pounded into a bread mix, with the core of the plant and the base of the leaves eaten as a vegetable. Aboriginal peoples use the roots to treat bites and stings. *Lomandra* is a food plant for the caterpillars of several butterflies.



## Tussock Grass (*Poa poiformis*)

Tussock Grass is a tough grass used by many diverse Aboriginal groups to make string for nets and bags, baskets and mats. Native to Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales, it is common along coastlines, on marshes, flats, sand dunes and sea-cliffs. Victoria has around 25 species of native tussock grasses and this type is distinguished by its blueish colouration. Tussock Grass is a caterpillar food source, habitat for small animals such as lizards, is bird and butterfly attracting, and is taken by birds for nesting materials. It is also excellent for stabilising soils and combating erosion.

## Tall Sedge (*Carex appressa*)

Tall Sedge prefers wet soils near water. Flowering between August and January, it provides nectar for butterflies as well as protection and habitat for birds who hide within it and use its leaves in their nests. Tall sedge provides habitat for frogs, birds, fish and crustaceans and is useful in trapping impurities and silt in streams and in stabilising creek banks by preventing erosion. It also provides benefit by reducing evaporation, limiting wind passing across the water. Diverse groups utilise the leaves of several sedge species in making traditional cultural items such as baskets and mats.

## Paroo Lily/Flax Lily (*Dianella caerulea*)

In spring and summer the Paroo Lily is covered in starry blue flowers featuring striking yellow stamens, which form bright purple-blue berries in late summer and autumn. Berries are used to make dye, with the seeds inside the berries sometimes dried to be added into bread mixes. The roots are also sometimes pounded to make bread. Diverse groups of Aboriginal people plait the leaves into cords useful as ties, and the leaves are also used to make cultural items such as baskets. The leaves can be used to make a high-pitched whistle, imitating the call of a wren that attracts snakes, which are then killed for food.

## Pale Flax-lily (*Dianella longifolia*)

Pale Flax-lily is very similar to Paroo Lily in appearance with its pale to dark blue flowers (August to January), which form round blue-purple berries. Pale Flax-lily grows all over Victoria and is found in all states of Australia; its leaves are used by many diverse Aboriginal groups for basket-making with the berries often used as a dye. Providing great habitat for small animals and attracting birds that eat its berries, it also attracts native butterflies and bees.

## Wattle Mat-rush (*Lomandra filiformis*)

Wattle Mat-rush gets its name from its flowers that look much like wattle buds and range from cream to yellow in colour. With some variation depending on its location, this plant flowers from around October to November. Native to Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales, Wattle Mat-rush is an important food source for caterpillars including Phigalia Skipper, Phigalioides Skipper, Praxedes Skipper, Eilena Skipper and Rare White Spot Skipper. It is frost and drought resistant and grows to approximately 0.25-m high and 0.2-m wide.



## Sticky Everlasting Daisy (*Xerochrysum viscosum*)

The Sticky Everlasting Daisy is native to Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, Tasmania and Queensland. It is an opportunistic plant that often grows in disturbed areas, for example roadsides and the Victorian goldfields. This daisy has papery yellow flowerheads that are long lasting, flowering in spring through summer and sometimes into autumn. The Sticky Everlasting Daisy is both drought and frost tolerant as is a food source for native butterflies and larvae.

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## Wallaby Grass (*general*)

There are around 30 types of Wallaby Grass in Australia. Native grasslands were once the most extensive habitat of Victoria's plains but are now the most endangered plant community. Grasslands provide food and habitat for birds and animals such as the Peregrine Falcon, Australian Hobby, Whistling Kite, Australian Kestrels, Stubble Quail, Legless Lizard, Little Whip Snake, Fat-tailed Dunnart and Yellow-winged Grasshopper. Wallaby Grass seeds make an excellent bread, with the leaves and stem used to make cultural items such as nets. It has a high frost, heat and drought tolerance and requires no fertilisers, little water, and makes an excellent lawn, controlling erosion and weeds.

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## Hop Wattle (*Acacia stricta*)

Hop Wattle is visited by many native birds, which feed on insects attracted to it and also eat the seeds. Wattle plants are very important to many diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples and almost all parts of wattle (*Acacia*) are used in some way. The gum from *Acacia* species is used by diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples as a medicine for dysentery and also applied to wounds. Green seed pods are sometimes cooked and eaten, with dry seeds ground into flour to make bread. Aboriginal peoples also use the bark as a decoction to treat venereal disease and boils and also cast into water to stun fish to make them easy to catch. The inner bark is useful for making string.

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## Gold Dust Wattle (*Acacia acinacea*)

Gold Dust Wattle has bright yellow flowers that can be seen in spring and attract many insects, birds and bees. Native to South Australia, New South Wales and much of Victoria, with the exception of areas of eastern and southern Victoria. All parts of *Acacia* species are used for nutritional (for example seeds used to make flour), medicinal (bark used to treat e.g. venereal diseases) and technological (bark used to stun fish for hunting) purposes by diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples. Wattle seeds are high in protein, carbohydrate, fibre, magnesium, iron, and zinc.

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## Lightwood/ Hickory Wattle (*Acacia implexa*)

Lightwood is an adaptive plant that tolerates both wet and dry conditions. Native to all states except Western Australia, Lightwood can grow up to 15-m high and its flowers are small-scented cream balls, which can be seen from December to March. Like all *Acacias*, Lightwood is widely used by many Aboriginal groups in a multitude of ways including as a dye (phyllodes), bark for tanning, as well as bark fibres to manufacture string for technologies such as nets.



## **Black Sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*)**

Black Sheoak is native to Queensland, Tasmania, New South Wales and Victoria. Growing up to 8m high and flowering in spring, Sheoaks favour dry conditions and have either male flowers occurring in rusty-brown spikes or red female flowers that develop into cones. Its seeds are an important food source for many native birds including parrots and cockatoos. Sheoaks are used by diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples, with shoots and cones eaten and Sheoak wood highly favoured for fashioning boomerangs, shields, clubs and other cultural implements. In the Wylie Swamp in South Australia, boomerangs made from various types of Sheoak have been dated at 10,000 years old.

## **Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*)**

Coast Banksia has large, nectar-rich yellow flowers that can be seen at any time of the year but mostly occur from autumn through to winter and spring. The flower attracts seed- and nectar-eating birds, bees, butterflies, various insects and mammals. Growing up to 15-m high, Coast Banksia is native to Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria. Many diverse groups of Aboriginal people use the flowers to make a sweet nectar drink (often mixed with wattle gum), with stamens used to make fine paint brushes.

## **Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginate*)**

The most common of all banksias in Victoria, the Silver Banksia has pale yellow-green flower cones that can appear at any time of the year. All banksias produce nectar important for nectar-eating birds, which also act as pollinators. Visiting pollinators that enjoy the nectar and seeds of banksias include the New Holland Honeyeater, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, insects and small mammals such as Eastern Pygmy-possum, Feathertail Glider and Sugar Glider. Banksia flowers can be soaked to make a delicious, sweet drink from the nectar. The dry cones of Silver Banksia are also useful as strainers and fire carriers.

## **Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis acuta*)**

Common Spike-rush prefers damp soil along the river margins and banks and is native to all states. Rush is an important plant for diverse Aboriginal groups of the south-east and has multiple uses. Many types of rush have edible tubers and seeds, and leaves are often used as part of traditional weaving practices for making cultural items such as string, necklaces, baskets and mats but also important technologies such as nets, traps and spears.

## **Common Wheat-grass (*Elymus scabrus*)**

Native grasses are integral to Australia's original grassy ecosystem habitats, which are amongst the most threatened of all habitats in Australia. Wheat-grass has rough, bluish leaves and distinct wheat-like seed heads. Wheat-grass, together with Spear Grass and Wallaby Grass, create sheltered areas for smaller native herbs and lilies and important nesting areas for birds. It is also sought after by many types of butterflies as a food-source. Flowers appear between July and September and are a green spike which become straw coloured. Wheat-grass is native to New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, ACT and Victoria.





## Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*)

With bright yellow flowers that are mainly seen in spring and summer but sometimes occur throughout the year, Hop Goodenia thrives in damp areas, especially those that have been cleared, disturbed or burnt, creating increased levels of light. An important source of food for caterpillars, it also provides food for small insect-eating birds and native mice, and shelter for lizards and snakes. Rosellas also eat its fruit. Aboriginal women gave a carefully prepared infusion of the sticky leaves of the Hop Goodenia to babies to help them sleep. Many diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples also use infusions of the leaves and twigs of Hop Goodenia as an anti-diabetic medicine. Flowers can be used to make yellow pigment.

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## Woolly Grevillea (*Grevillea lanigera*)

Woolly Grevillea is found in New South Wales and Victoria. Growing up to 1.5-m high with flowers of red and pink with hints of white and yellow, which can mainly be seen in winter and spring but are known to sporadically occur at other times in the year. Providing good habitat and nesting sites for small birds, particularly honeyeaters, as well as food for native moths, butterflies and nectar-eating birds. Woolly Grevillea is drought and frost tolerant. Many diverse Aboriginal groups use Grevillea to make sweet drinks and nectar can be sucked directly as a sweet treat also.

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## Common Boobialla (*Myoporum insulare*)

Common Boobialla is also sometimes known as 'blue-berry tree'. It is native to Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales. White flowers are seen from August through to November. Birds are attracted to the purple, fleshy fruit (approximately 6 mm in diameter) which is edible although sometimes unpalatable, as it ranges from sweet and juicy to salty and bitter.

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## Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*)

Nardoo is a type of fern found in all states of Australia. Able to grow in dry ground at the edges of water, it is also aquatic and thrives in areas that are regularly flooded. Fruits are light-brown sporocarps, and usually appear when water recedes. Spores can be gathered and eaten as food by first roasting then grinding them between stones to remove black husks, leaving a powder that is mixed with water (causing expansion) to make a damper cooked in the ashes of a fire. The powder mixed with water can also be eaten uncooked as a gruel.

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## Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*/*Syzygium smithii*)

The fruit of the Lilly Pilly tree usually ripen between April and August and signal the coming of the colder weather. Aboriginal people across many diverse groups consumed Lilly Pilly fruit as a refreshing snack food, most often enjoyed raw. The soft nut inside the fruit can also be eaten and has a spicy flavour. The fruit is known to have been preserved by being dried and then soaked in water prior to being eaten later. Fruit was sometimes crushed and added to the sap of various acacias, becoming a stiff jelly enjoyed by children as a snack while they traversed Country.



## **Paperbark (*Flax leaf paperbark*) /Snow in Summer (*Melaleuca linariifolia*)**

Aboriginal peoples of many diverse groups used the soft, paper-like bark of many *Melaleucas* as a cloth to wrap babies and sometimes also for blankets, bandages and roofing. Its robust timbers are excellent for making cultural items such as spears, clubs and digging sticks. Several *Melaleuca* species provide a medicine for diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples, particularly for coughs and colds, with leaves being crushed in the hands and sniffed or rubbed directly on the nose. Aboriginal peoples also pour *Melaleuca* infusions over the body to relieve general aches and pains. Some Aboriginal groups are also known to have chewed the leaves of *Melaleucas* to relieve respiratory complaints.

## **Black Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*)**


Aboriginal peoples from many diverse groups favour the fibrous kurrajong bark for making string for fishing lines, nets and bags, as well as body adornments such as headbands. Flowers are followed by fruit in the form of leathery pods. The Kurrajong pods contain yellow seeds that are known to be highly nutritious, containing around 18% protein and 25% fat with high levels of magnesium and zinc. The seeds were eaten after the removal of yellow hairs which surround them, and were consumed raw and sometimes roasted, producing a pleasantly nutty flavour. The young roots of this tree also make an excellent food source and can provide water.

## **Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*)**

Blackwood flowers are usually seen between July and October, attracting many birds and insects both as food and as habitat. Seeds are edible. Blackwood is a beautifully grained and strong wood, which many Aboriginal peoples from diverse groups utilised for fashioning weapons such as spear-throwers, shields and clubs. The bark is rich in tannins that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, used as a medicine by diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples by heating it over a fire and then infusing in water for bathing aching joints. The bark of the Blackwood tree is used to create fishing lines and the leaves can be pounded to create a fish poison to stun fish, making them easy to collect.

## **River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)**

River Red Gums are intimately connected to the cultural worlds of many diverse Aboriginal peoples of Australia. The high quality, hard timber resists rotting and is excellent for making canoes. Many River Red Gums can be seen along waterways with huge scars caused by the removal of bark for canoes, coolamons and shields. The leaves of eucalypts were used medicinally by people of the Kulin Nations (and many further afield). It is documented that William Barak, an important Wurundjeri leader, used the dark red sap from the trunk of a River Red Gum as a medicine for burns.



Plants on display at  
The Living Pavilion.  
Photo by Isabel Kimpton




Participants at the Kokedama workshop led by Bili Nursery at The Living Pavilion. Photo by Isabel Kimpton

## 2. Indigenous community garden plant list

devised by Dean Stewart and Zena Cumpston with Bili Nursery

These plants occupied a small section in crates on the northern side of The Living Pavilion. This section was comprised of plants not only from Victoria but from all over Australia, chosen to reflect the fact that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are far from their homelands live in Melbourne. These plants, although from all over Australia, are known to grow well in the temperate climate of Victoria and are readily available at many nurseries.

- Grey Saltbush** (*Atriplex cinerea*)
- Vanilla Lily** (*Arthropodium milleflorum*)
- Chocolate Lily** (*Arthropodium strictum*)
- Midyim/Midgen Berry** (*Austromyrtus dulcis*)
- Apple Berry** (*Billardiera scandens*)
- Bulbine Lily** (*Bulbine bulbosa*)
- Coastal Pig Face** (*Carpobrotus rossii*)
- Ruby Saltbush** (*Enchylaena tomentosa*)
- Murnong (Wurundjeri) / Yam Daisy** (*Microseris lanceolata*)
- Kangaroo Grass** (*Themeda triandra*)
- Nodding Saltbush** (*Einadia nutans*)
- River Mint** (*Mentha australis*)
- Native Thyme** (*Prostanthera incisa*)
- Coast Beard-heath** (*Leucopogon parviflorus*)
- Slender Mint** (*Mentha diemenica*)
- Bower Spinach** (*Tetragonia implexicoma*)
- New Zealand Spinach/ Warrigal Greens** (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*)
- Native flax** (*Linum marginale*)
- Weeping Grass** (*Microlaena stipoides*)
- Old Man's Weed** (*Centipeda cunninghamii*)
- Island Celery** (*Apium insulare*)



## Grey Saltbush (*Atriplex cinerea*)

Saltbush attracts native butterflies and is a caterpillar food plant. Salty tasting, its leaves can be eaten and are high in protein. Saltbush leaves work well added to stir fries or used to stuff lamb or chicken and can also be roasted in the oven and used as a crunchy garnish. Saltbush can also be used as a salt substitute. European colonists called this plant 'sea sage' and blanched leaves, which were eaten as a vegetable. The leaves can also be burnt to create soap. Many diverse Aboriginal groups use Saltbush to flavour food and Saltbush seeds are also ground to make damper.

## Vanilla Lily (*Arthropodium milleflorum*)

Vanilla Lily, which gets its name from pale purple flowers with a vanilla scent, is one of the most productive native tubers. Each plant produces around 10 tubers the size of a small carrot. Vanilla Lily is nutrient-rich and its delicious water roots (tubers) can be eaten raw or cooked. Compared to blueberries, which are often referred to as a 'super food' and used as a nutritional marker, Vanilla Lily tubers have 11x the iron, 4x the copper, 3x the magnesium. Vanilla Lily is found in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia.

## Chocolate Lily (*Arthropodium strictum*)

Chocolate Lily gets its name from its purple flowers (appearing in spring), which on sunny days emit a smell of chocolate and sometimes also smell much like vanilla and caramel. Chocolate Lily has grass-like leaves with edible root tubers, which are white inside and are roasted before being eaten. With mauve flowers which grow up to 40 cm high, Chocolate Lily can be found growing in grasslands and grassy woodlands across much of south-eastern Australia.

## Midyim/Midgen Berry (*Austromyrtus dulcis*)

Midyim is a small shrub that grows up to 2 m. Native to a small coastal area of Queensland and New South Wales, its white flowers are followed by speckled white, soft, sweet berries that ripen in summer and autumn. Known as one of Australia's tastiest wild fruits, Midyim is a highly favoured fruit for several coastal Aboriginal groups. As well as being delicious, Midyim berries are high in minerals.

## Apple Berry (*Billardiera scandens*)

Apple Berry is a small climber with yellow-green bell-shaped flowers that appear in spring, followed by oval, fuzzy fruits 1-2.5-cm long, which develop and ripen in summer. The fruit is green, with a red tinge and when soft enough to eat it falls from branches. Found across Australia except for the NT and WA, Apple Berry is a sweet, delicious and sought-after fruit. It is eaten by diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples who eat the fruit not only when it is ripe but also roast it when it is unripe. The fruit is aromatic and is similar in taste to kiwi fruit.



## **Bulbine Lily (*Bulbine bulbosa*)**

Bulbine Lily dies back to a dormant bulb in summer and re-shoots in late autumn, displaying yellow flowers in spring. It can be found in all states except Western Australia. It is considered the sweetest tasting of all edible root plants and is available year-round. A plump, round cream-coloured corm is found under the stalk of the Bulbine Lily and is eaten after being roasted. Bulbine Lily is also nutritious, being a good source of calcium and iron. Bulbine Lily is found growing wild in tandem with Milkmaids and Chocolate Lilies in the few areas of undisturbed remnant vegetation still existing in Victoria.

## **Coastal Pig Face (*Carpobrotus rossii*)**

Coastal Pig Face is commonly found on sand dunes and cliffs along the Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian coastlines, also favouring sandy soils around coastal lakes and marshes and occasionally found slightly inland. Coastal Pig Face is one of many edible succulents. In late summer it bears sweet fruit and when the petals have dropped from it the pulp and seeds can be sucked out, tasting a bit like salty apple. The leaves are also edible as a vegetable and Aboriginal peoples use them as a salty accompaniment to various cooked meats. The juice from the leaves can also be used to relieve insect bites.

## **Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentose*)**

Ruby Saltbush fruits in spring and summer, with crisp salty-sweet berries which range in colour from yellow to red which can be seen from September through to April. The berries can be eaten raw or soaked in water to make a sweet tea. The leaves are high in oxalates and therefore must be cooked before eating. The berries and leaves are eaten by many diverse Aboriginal groups and the leaves are known to be high in Vitamin C. Early colonists also took advantage of the nutritional value of this plant by eating the leaves as a green vegetable. It provides excellent habitat for small animals and attracts birds and insects - which feed on its berries.

## **Murnong (Wurundjeri)/Yam Daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*)**

Murnong is a small dandelion-like herb that produces nodding yellow flowers in spring. Murnong is often referred to as 'yam daisy' and was one of the most important staple foods for Aboriginal people in south-eastern Australia. It is the plant most frequently mentioned in early accounts of Victorian Koorie diet, becoming relatively scarce due to grazing by sheep, cattle and rabbits. The radish-like tuber can be eaten raw but was most often cooked in earth ovens, producing a delicious sweet juice. Dormant in summer, with the onset of autumn rains it sprouts a rosette of leaves.

## **Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*)**

Prior to European invasion Kangaroo Grass was an important food for Indigenous Australians, with its seeds made into a porridge or ground to make flour for bread. Kangaroo Grass was skilfully cultivated, harvested and stored and once formed a large part of the landscape of the low-lying plains of Victoria. In New South Wales, grinding stones with Kangaroo Grass seed residue show Aboriginal bread-making using this plant occurred at least 36,000 years ago, proving Aboriginal people as the first to harness technologies to make bread. Kangaroo Grass is also used by several Aboriginal groups in the manufacture of nets for hunting.



## **Nodding Saltbush** (*Einadia nutans*)

Nodding Saltbush occurs throughout almost all of Victoria and persists in disturbed sites where other native flora has been eliminated. It flowers from summer through to autumn and produces small berries that are edible and red and soft when ripe, with a slightly salty taste. People of the Kulin Nations both eat the berries and use them for face paint and as a dye. This plant is a natural fire retardant and a hardy groundcover, thriving especially when planted in large numbers.

## **River Mint** (*Mentha australis*)

River Mint is one of four species of mint that is native to Victoria. It is found right across south-eastern Australia, most often close to waterways and in forests. Diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples crush and inhale the plant as a remedy for coughs, colds and headaches. River Mint also adds flavour to cooked foods, with its leaves used in earth ovens. A small herb with aromatic leaves, River Mint is high in antioxidants and is antimicrobial, and is used by Indigenous peoples to benefit the stomach. It is delicious infused as a tea, added to cold drinks and dressings. Aboriginal peoples also rub it on the skin as an insect repellent.

## **Native Thyme** (*Prostanthera incisa*)

Native Thyme is actually a type of native mint and has many medicinal and culinary uses. Displaying more complexity than other native mints, it has tones of pepper and earthiness, making it an excellent accompaniment for many meat dishes. It also makes a delicious herbal tea. Both the stems and the leaf can be used, and it is at its most pungent when fresh but can be dried for later use. It makes a wonderful plant for the garden as it attracts many birds and insects, is quick growing and even thrives in pots.

## **Coast Beard-heath** (*Leucopogon parviflorus*)

This coastal shrub is native to Victoria and is also sometimes known as native currant. It occurs all along the Victorian coastline and in all Australian states and is found on cliffs and sand dunes. The name 'beard-heath' comes from its tiny white flowers which display a dense beard of hairs inside. The flowers are present from winter to spring and form sweet white, crisp berries, which are ripe and good eating in summer months. Its fruit is dispersed by birds.

## **Slender Mint** (*Mentha diemenica*)

Slender Mint is a native of South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. Its bright pink to violet-coloured flowers are most spectacular from November to April but are present for most of the year. Slender mint is similar to river mint in its culinary uses and makes an excellent aromatic ground cover when planted in moist areas. It is prepared and used by Aboriginal people as a treatment for menstrual disorders and stomach cramps.



## **Bower Spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*)**

Bower Spinach contains high levels of vitamin C and is an important plant food for Aboriginal people, with edible young shoots and leaves. It is native to Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania. Growing in coastal areas, it is a climbing plant with small yellow daisy-like flowers from August to February. Flowers form edible, sweet fruit, which are orange-red berries ripening to near black. The berries are also used as a dye for ceremonial purposes.

## **New Zealand Spinach/Warrigal Greens (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*)**

Warrigal Greens are found growing in coastal areas. Aboriginal people eat this highly nutritious herb and sometimes crush its leaves to apply as a remedy for sores. Known for its strengths in warding off scurvy, it was taken to Europe and America for cultivation. Warrigal Greens has become a popular food amongst the wider Australian population and can be used in the same way as chard, silverbeet or bok choy. The heavy oxalate content in the leaves means it is best blanched or cooked before eating. The small yellow flowers, which are present from spring to summer, are also edible.

## **Native Flax (*Linum marginale*)**

Native Flax can be found all over Australia except for the Northern Territory. Native Flax is found in open forests, woodlands and grassland habitats. It is an important plant for many Aboriginal peoples, Wurundjeri people strip the stems and beat them to free the fibre to make string for cord and fish nets. The oily, yellowish seeds are edible and can be collected in summer and autumn; they are similar to linseed with a nutty flavour. The Native Flax has blue flowers for most of the year, most prominent from September to May. Native Flax is both drought- and frost-resistant.

## **Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*)**

Weeping Grass can be found in all states of Australia, and gets its name from its slender, nodding seed heads that appear in summer months. Flowering from September to November, Weeping Grass is an important macropod food and is also a caterpillar food plant for the Ringed Xenica, Common Brown and White Grassdart. It is drought-tolerant and can be used as a native lawn.

## **Old Man's Weed (*Centipeda cunninghamii*)**

One of the best-known Aboriginal medicinal plants, Old Man's Weed is found growing predominantly in south-eastern Australia in moist soil near rivers and around wetlands and billabongs. Sometimes also referred to as 'sneeze weed', diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples prepare a tonic to treat colds, chest complaints (including tuberculosis) and as a general restorative. Big bunches of the plant are gathered and boiled. It is sometimes also used by Aboriginal peoples by rubbing it on the skin to treat skin complaints such as cuts, eczema and acne and can also be prepared as a treatment for infected eyes and gastrointestinal problems.



## Island Celery (*Apium insulare*)

Island Celery is a rare species, confined in Victoria to Wilsons Promontory and nearby islands, where it is most often found growing amongst granite boulders near the coast. It can also be observed at Tea Tree Point near Mallacoota where it grows in swampy shrubland. Island Celery looks and tastes much like celery, and it is good in stews and soups. Flowering from October to February, with seeds, stems and leaves all being edible.



Indigenous plants  
on display at  
The Living Pavilion.  
Photo by Sarah Fisher



Indigenous plants  
on display at  
The Living Pavilion.  
Photo by Sarah Fisher

# Useful Resources

## The Living Pavilion

**The Living Pavilion webpage (including original plant signage used on site)**

<https://nespurban.edu.au/platforms/living-pavilion/>

**The Living Pavilion Research Report**

<https://nespurban.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Living-Pavilion-Report.pdf>

**Zena's interview on Gardening Australia**

<https://www.facebook.com/gardeningaustralia/videos/the-living-pavilion/331670720874461/>

## General resources for making an indigenous garden

**Ngunnawal Plant Use: a traditional Aboriginal plant use guide for the ACT region**

<https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/ngunnawal-plant-use-book>

This book is an excellent resource for understanding Aboriginal plant use. It includes useful information about the propagation and growing needs of many indigenous plants.

**As outlined at the beginning of this booklet, you should try to use plants from your specific local area. Most of the council resources and websites listed here are specific to Victoria, but many councils across Australia have detailed information on their websites about local indigenous plants and their benefits.**

**La Trobe University, Indigenous Plant Nursery, Plant List**

<https://www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife/indigenous-plant-nursery/plant-list2>

**Sustainable Living Guide website with resources for growing an indigenous garden**

<https://www.sustainablelivingguide.com.au/grow-an-indigenous-garden>

**CRISP Nursery Maroondah website with resources for growing an indigenous garden**

[https://www.crispnursery.org.au/IndigenousGardens\\_booklet\\_websiteVersion.pdf](https://www.crispnursery.org.au/IndigenousGardens_booklet_websiteVersion.pdf)

**Melbourne Walking Tours website with resources for growing an indigenous garden**

<http://melbournewalks.com.au/growing-an-indigenous-wild-food-garden/>

**Sustainable Gardening Australia website with resources for growing indigenous plants**

<https://www.sgaonline.org.au/indigenous-plants/>

**Gardening Australia website with resources for growing indigenous gardens**

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/an-indigenous-garden/9426632>

**SBS bush tucker resources**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/shows/costa/tab-listings/detail/i/1/article/6292/Pimp-my-Plants-Bush-Tucker-at-Indigenous-School>

**Birds in Backyards website tips for growing indigenous gardens**

<https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/General-Tips-Growing-Native-Garden>

**Crisfield Landscape website tips for maintaining an indigenous garden**

<https://www.crisfieldlandscape.com.au/maintaining-the-indigenous-garden/>

**CSIRO website tips for making your garden bee friendly**

<https://blog.csiro.au/how-to-make-your-garden-native-bee-friendly/>

**Moreland Council Victoria site with resources for indigenous gardens**

<https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/environment-bins/gardening-and-food/gardening-indigenous-plants/>

**Nillumbuk Council site with resources for indigenous gardens**

<https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Environment/Natural-environment/Native-flora-and-fauna>

**Whitehorse Council resources for indigenous gardens**

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/sites/whitehorse.vic.gov.au/files/assets/documents/Indigenous-Gardening-in-Whitehorse.pdf>

**Frankston Council resources for growing indigenous gardens**

[https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment\\_and\\_Waste/Environment/Biodiversity/Native\\_Flora](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment_and_Waste/Environment/Biodiversity/Native_Flora)

**Bayside Council resources for growing indigenous gardens**

<https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/creating-indigenous-garden>

**Casey Council resources for growing indigenous gardens**

<https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/species-information>

**Ballarat Council resources for growing indigenous gardens**

<https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/city/parks-and-outdoors/indigenous-plants>

**City of Monash resources for growing indigenous gardens**

<https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/our-services/environment/sustainability-projects/monash-indigenous-plants.pdf>

**Moyne Shire resources for growing indigenous gardens**

<http://www.moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/Environment/Indigenous-Plants-of-Moyne-Shire>

## Educational resources

It should be noted that many of these links and suggestions relate specifically to **The Living Pavilion project** and therefore contain examples of **Victorian Aboriginal cultural groups and practices**. You should try to find some examples and resources closer to home if you are in another state.

The following resources will help teachers explore many aspects of Indigenous ecological knowledge with students. They also provide some insight into problematic past perceptions, such as the narrow idea of the hunter-gatherer that has allowed perceptions of the breadth and depth of Aboriginal ecological knowledge and land management to be hidden, misunderstood and under-appreciated.

### Exploring Indigenous ecological knowledge in the classroom

#### **Young Dark Emu: A Truer History**

<https://www.magabala.com/products/young-dark-emu>

Pages 16 to 33 of Young Dark Emu are of particular interest in exploring Aboriginal ecological knowledges, but this entire book focuses on this topic and is extremely worthwhile exploring with students.

#### **Dark Emu in the Classroom: Teacher Resources for High School Geography**

<https://www.magabala.com/products/dark-emu-in-the-classroom>

Following on from Young Dark Emu, this resource contains a very relevant introductory activity 'Were Aboriginal Australians hunter gatherers?' (see page 13).

#### **Resources in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures for teachers**

<https://indigenousknowledge.research.unimelb.edu.au>

<https://indigenousknowledge.unimelb.edu.au/curriculum/resources/navigating-our-way-through-country>

Another helpful classroom activity which demonstrates multiple aspects of Indigenous ecological knowledge comes from Resources in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures for teachers, developed by the University of Melbourne Indigenous Studies Unit. This resource has three main themes, Water, Fire and Astronomy; perhaps

most pertinent to exploring Indigenous ecological knowledge can be found in the 'Water' section and is titled 'Navigating our way through Country' titled 'Navigating our way through country' (second link).

**Beneath modern Melbourne, a window opens into its ancient history (news article)**

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/dec/26/beneath-modern-melbourne-a-window-opens-into-its-ancient-history>

This article may help students to understand that Aboriginal people continue to use science to help them understand past practices and to continue to fulfil their role as custodians of Country.

**New law finally gives voice to the Yarra River's traditional owners (news article)**

<https://theconversation.com/new-law-finally-gives-voice-to-the-yarra-rivers-traditional-owners-83307>

This article also shows how Wurundjeri people (one of the Traditional Owner groups of Melbourne) continue to fulfil their role as custodians today.

**Wurundjeri Elders address Legislative Assembly (video)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySxoOvxZ8wY&t=29s>

This video shows the legislation being introduced in Parliament in Woi Wurrung language by Wurundjeri Elders.

**Budj Bim: an Aboriginal cultural heritage landscape**

<https://indigenousknowledge.unimelb.edu.au/curriculum/resources/budj-bim-an-aboriginal-cultural-heritage-landscape>

This resource follows on from the previous one and explores the social effects of the use of Aboriginal language.

**Indigenous science goes far beyond boomerangs and spears**

<https://indigenousx.com.au/indigenous-science-goes-far-beyond-boomerangs-and-spears/>

Above is an article written by an Aboriginal scientist which gives great insight into science from an Aboriginal perspective.

### **Aunty Fran Bodkin and Uncle Bruce Pascoe in Conversation (Podcast)**

[https://waraburranura.com/resource/\\_\\_\\_podcast/](https://waraburranura.com/resource/___podcast/)

Podcast with Aunty Frances Bodkin and Uncle Bruce Pascoe. Episode 1 & 2 particularly touch on Indigenous ecological knowledge.

## **Exploring the topic of indigenous plant use in an educational setting**

### **Young Dark Emu: A Truer History**

<https://www.magabala.com/products/young-dark-emu>

The 'Agriculture' chapter (pages 16 to 33) provides much insight into Aboriginal agriculture/plant use.

### **Dark Emu in the Classroom: Teacher Resources for High School Geography**

<https://www.magabala.com/products/dark-emu-in-the-classroom>

Pages 65-71 activity - 'Is revegetation with native species a viable solution to land degradation?' explores the use of indigenous plants in reviving degraded systems.

### **Murnong**

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/3123864/the-murnong-story>

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/2872205/murnong-daisies>

These two links provide video resources which discuss the cultivation and use of murnong by Aboriginal peoples.

### **Koorie plants, Koorie people: traditional Aboriginal food, fibre and healing plants of Victoria (book)**

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/22736054?q&versionId=44604945>

This book is an excellent resource to look at Aboriginal plant use in south-eastern Australia.

### **Aboriginal use of plants of the Greater Melbourne area**

<https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/aboriginal-plant-use-of-the-greater-melbourne-area.pdf>

Information and pictures of plants related to their use by Aboriginal peoples of the Greater Melbourne area.

**Act of rebellion as ‘naughty girl’ Connie Hart wove against oppression  
(video and article)**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-07/act-of-rebellion-as-naughty-girl-wove-against-oppression/9943694>

This link provides videos that explain Gunditjmara weaving practices using plants.

**Aquaculture on Gunditjmara Country**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxMTRpW5qJU>

This video made by Museum Victoria illuminates Gunditjmara woven eel traps.

**Weaving design into local materials**

<https://indigenousknowledge.unimelb.edu.au/curriculum/resources/weaving-design-into-local-materials>

The ‘Weaving design into local materials’ module within the ‘Water’ resources section of the University of Melbourne resource recommended throughout this document also provides several activities that further demonstrate plant use in innovation and sustainable systems.

**The People of Budj Bim: engineers of aquaculture, builders of stone house settlements and warriors defending country (book)**

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/36995609?q&versionId=48046103>

This book, developed by Gunditjmara community has more information about plant use in the manufacture of eels traps (see specifically page 21).

**Museum Victoria Collections: handmade basket**

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/221220>

A Wurundjeri example of basket weaving using plants.

**Kooyang diorama in First Peoples**

<https://museums victoria.com.au/article/kooyang-diorama-in-first-peoples/>

Link to information at Melbourne Museum about Gunditjmara aquaculture.

**Victorian Aboriginal Weaving Collective**

<https://www.craft.org.au/new-page-1>

Catalogue essay from a recent weaving exhibition, which speaks of the cultural importance of the continuation of weaving practice using traditional plants and methods.



### **Aunty Fran Bodkin and Uncle Bruce Pascoe in Conversation (Podcast)**

[https://waraburranura.com/resource/\\_\\_podcast/](https://waraburranura.com/resource/__podcast/)

Podcast with Aunty Frances Bodkin and Uncle Bruce Pascoe. Episodes 5, 6, 7 and 9 particularly speak to Indigenous peoples' relationship to and knowledge of plants.

## **Citizen-Science Activities**

Citizen science opportunities provide illumination of the holistic realm of biodiversity in which indigenous plants play a crucial role. They are a wonderful opportunity for individuals and groups to play an active role in science, in caring for Country and learning more about biodiversity: especially rewarding if you can find a project that is local to your area.

### **Australian Citizen Science website**

<https://citizenscience.org.au/>

### **'The Guardian' article explaining the importance of citizen science**

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/aug/06/the-golden-age-of-citizen-science-and-how-it-is-reshaping-the-world>

### **Urban wildlife app**

<https://nespurban.edu.au/platforms/caul-urban-wildlife-app/>

### **Animal attractiveness survey**

<https://nespurban.edu.au/platforms/public-elicitation-platform/>

### **The Australian Museum citizen science website**

<https://australianmuseum.net.au/get-involved/citizen-science/>

### **Birdlife Australia citizen science resources**

<https://birdlife.org.au/get-involved/citizen-science>

### **Backyard buddies citizen science resources**

<https://www.backyardbuddies.org.au/create-habitats/citizen-science>

### **Citizen science app for platypus sightings**

<https://platypusspot.org/>

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River Mint  
(*Mentha australis*).  
Photo by Alison Fong