BUSH MEDICINE PLANTS
OF THE ILLAWARRA

TERRY RANKMORE

Supported by a "Protecting Our Places"
Grant from the NSW Environmental Trust

DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY AND
THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE ILLAWARRA.

AUTHOR

Terry Rankmore is the Agricultural Assistant at Lake Illawarra High School, NSW. Terry has had a long term interest in Australian native plants and their uses by the Traditional Owners of the land. He is an active member of Landcare Illawarra and Blackbutt Bushcare and has worked with several schools and Shellharbour City Council to develop Bush Tucker Gardens to celebrate Aboriginal heritage.

Terry previously authored *Murni Dhungang*, Dharawal language for Animal Food, Plant Food, and introduced this book to over 40 schools in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas.

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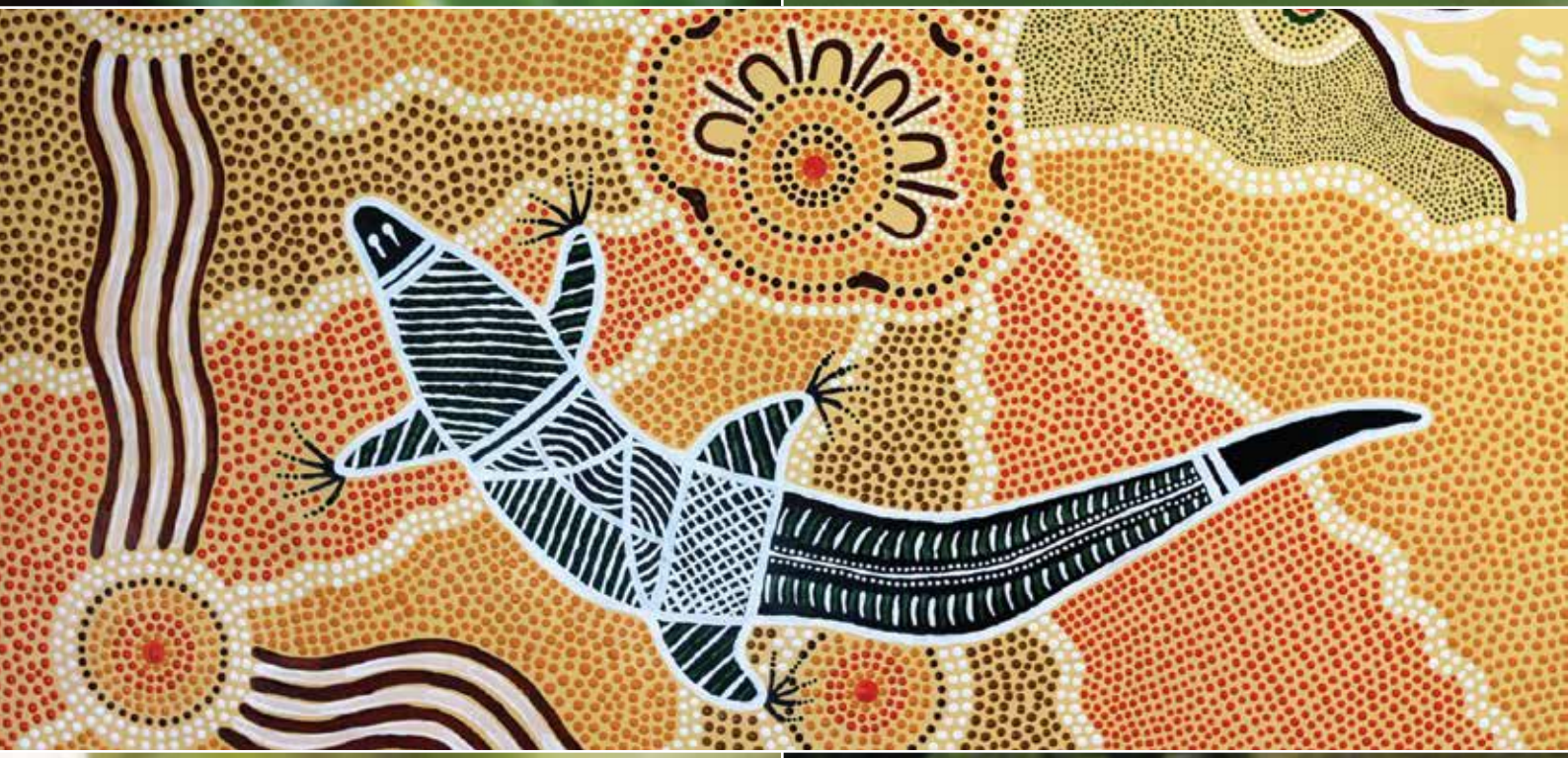

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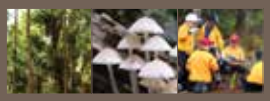
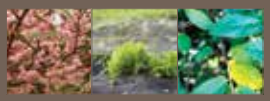
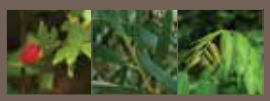
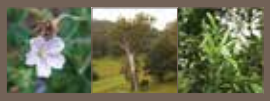
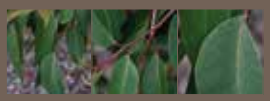
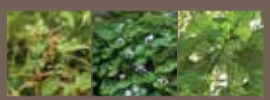


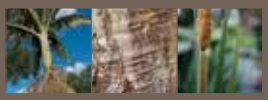


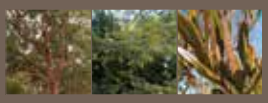


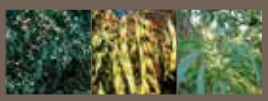


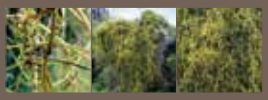


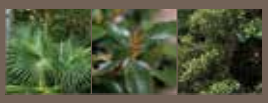












ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and waters of the Illawarra. I would also like to pay my respects to the traditional custodians of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands, and to elders both past and present.

TERRY RANKMORE, AUTHOR.

BUSH MEDICINE TODAY

Sadly, much of the knowledge of traditional bush medicine in southern and eastern Australia has been lost due to the traumas Aboriginal culture has experienced in the past 200 plus years.

There are, however, attempts in north western Australia to record the knowledge of traditional bush medicine that the old people can remember. In recent years researchers from Macquarie University have begun to document this medicinal plant knowledge, as well as examining the chemical and biological properties of these plants.

Bush Medicines of the Illawarra is designed as an appreciation of the medical value plants gave the indigenous people of Australia (and elsewhere), and how plants have been extensively studied for medicinal use in today's world.

It is worth remembering that approximately 25% of all pharmaceutical products worldwide have originated from traditional medical knowledge. In short, the plant science of traditional peoples everywhere has made a significant contribution to our health today.

INTRODUCTION

Over tens of thousands of years the Aboriginal people experimented with plants to discover their medicinal properties. Some plants, they discovered, actually had multiple medicinal properties.

This plant science was passed down through the generations by paintings &/or stories, and this knowledge of the properties of plants reflects the deep spiritual connection that existed between the land and its people.

Aboriginal people had no medical dictionaries or First Aid kits as we have today, but used the plants they had access to locally and seasonally. Their remedies and their use of specific plants for the treatment of particular ailments varied from the geography of one clan's area to another.

The Aboriginal people did not quantify their medicines as we do today, eg, 1000 mg of this or 50 ml of that. Further, most of their medicines were used externally though some were ingested. They enjoyed steam baths and breathed in vapours from aromatic leaves as well as rubbing leaves directly onto the skin.

It needs be remembered that before the coming of the Europeans the Aboriginal people were healthier than they are today. Their diet was better, lifestyle was more active and less stressful and family support was absolute. At that time, Australia was free of such diseases as influenza, tuberculosis and smallpox. The introduction of these diseases killed Aborigines and native peoples everywhere in the tens of thousands, and probably millions.

The arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 introduced significant cultural dislocation to the Aboriginal lifestyle and culture. Some Aboriginal bush medicine knowledge and practices were lost, while some were interwoven with Western medicine. This book examines some of the Aboriginal medical science, which if not lost was certainly dormant.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE ABOUT PLANTS

PLANTS CAN BE HARMFUL:

Some plants can be harmful, even toxic. Reactions may range from an allergy to actual poisoning. The Aboriginal people had thousands of years to study and learn about plants in their environment. **Treat all plants with caution and do not try to be as expert as the Aboriginal people were.**

COLLECTING SEED AND OTHER PLANT PARTS:

Anyone intending to **collect seed** or **any part of a plant** must have a licence if the relevant species, population or ecological community in which it occurs is listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 [NSW].
Additional information can be found at:
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/index.htm.

Anyone intending to collect or grow native plants must have a licence if the relevant species is listed as a Protected Native Plant on Schedule 13 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 [NSW].

Additional information at can be found at:
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/CommercialUseOfNativePlants.htm
Anyone intending to collect native plants must first have the landowner's approval, including if the landholder is a Council or is National Parks or State Forests.

Seed collection can have a negative impact on natural areas and should be undertaken in compliance of the national FloraBank Guidelines, in order to minimise the impact on source area.

Additional information can be found at:
www.florabank.org.au.

RE-VEGETATING DEGRADED AREAS

As part of the grant for the Bush Medicines of the Illawarra project, the grantees agreed to plant 1000 native species in 2011 and 1,500 in 2012.

The planting site is a degraded area at Stony Range, Oak Flats. Shellharbour City Council Bush Regeneration staff weeded and mulched the areas before planting occurred. Council and volunteers undertook regular follow up weeding for the duration of project, to ensure no weeds set seed.

All weed treatment and planting were supervised by Bush Regeneration staff from Shellharbour City Council, who have approved qualifications and experience.

Shellharbour City Council has a 132 Licence, which allows staff and supervised volunteers to plant and weed in the habitat of any threatened species, population or ecological community, listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 [NSW].

OTHER PLANTING BY THE GRANTEES:

On National Tree Days, from 2007 to 2010, the grantees and other volunteers worked with Shellharbour City Council, Bunnings Warehouse, Green Jobs Corps, Greenacres Disability Service and 13 schools (some of them two or three times) to plant 5,180 native species at Blackbutt Forest Reserve. In 2011 we worked with 6 schools to plant 1000 native species at Stony Range, Oak Flats - a degraded area. In 2012 a further 1,500 were planted at the Stony Range site, with assistance from 7 local schools.

BUSH CHEMISTRY

Over the millions of years that plants have evolved they have branched and branched again into different species and have developed a range of chemicals as defence against predators such as insects and bacteria.

Once the plants had these chemicals, the indigenous people could, with careful study, learn how to use them.

The major chemical groups were:

- tannins, which can be used to cover a wound to prevent bacterial infection
- alkaloids
- aromatic oils.

and to a lesser extent,

- latex
- mucilage.

TANNINS:

Tannins are complex, water soluble products which plants used to discourage predation by insects. Tannins are found in the:

- leaves
- bud roots
- stem tissues, and
- inner bark.

They are found in all the growth areas of a plant and it seems they also play a role in the regulation of growth.

Tannins were used to treat:

- diarrhoea
- burns and abrasions
- coughs and colds.

The black-reddish gum that we see from the wounds on eucalypts is called kino. It active ingredient is tannin.

ALKALOIDS:

Alkaloids did not play a big part in traditional medicine. Alkaloids can be very toxic as they affect the central nervous system of the body. A well known alkaloid is strychnine, while others are morphine, cocaine and nicotine. None of these alkaloids can be derived from Australian native plants.

AROMATIC OILS:

Aromatic oils are made up of complex hydro-carbons. They can be used to discourage the growth of fungi and bacteria, relax muscles, relieve rheumatic pain and as a carminative, ie, to relieve flatulence.

LATEX:

Latex is a white fluid found in some plants, such as figs. This chemical is corrosive and can cause irritation. Latex is used for the removal of warts, and the protective covering of wounds and ulcers.

MUCILAGE:

Mucilage is used as a soothing medication. It is a sugary gel which has a mild laxative affect, and can reduce irritation to a broken skin wound.

METHODS OF APPLICATION

INHALATION:
This is the breathing of vapours into the lungs. The Aboriginal people crushed the leaves of the eucalypts and breathed in the vapours to relieve nasal congestion.

STEAMING:
Steaming is the method of creating vapours in steam that are inhaled through the nose, deep into the lungs.

DECOTION:
This is the method of obtaining a substance in water by boiling it to obtain the product that will be released into the water.

INFUSION:
You can extract a drug from a plant by soaking it in water, so the drug is released. Making tea from a tea bag, or tea leaves, is an everyday example of infusion.

POULTICE:
The word comes from the Latin "pultes", which means porridge. A poultice is a moist, soft, porridge-looking mass that can cover a medicated wound. Aboriginal people used make a thick paste of vegetable matter, eg, plantain, that would be used as a poultice.

The poultice was used to draw out puss from a wound. In addition, the warm poultice would relax the muscles and increase the blood flow at the site. A poultice would be used to help the healing of:

- bruises and sprains
- carbuncles, boils, ulcers and cysts
- minor burns
- tumors
- splinters in the skin.

Usually, poultices were left on the skin from 1 to 24 hours.

"Aboriginal people used make a thick paste of vegetable matter, eg, plantain, that would be used as a poultice."

STINGS, BITES, REPELLANTS

COASTAL TEA TREE
CRINUM
CUNJEVOI
MAT RUSH
PIG FACE
BRACKEN FERN

CUNJEVOI / SPOON LILY

Aboriginal name: Cunjibay (Bandjalang, north east NSW).

Botanical name: *Alocasia macrorrhizos.*

Family: ARACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A broad leafed perennial.

Leaves: Leaf blades 90 cm long, light green with strong lateral veins.

Flowers: Greenish / yellow spathe, December to March.

Fruit: Egg-shaped berry.

Habitat: Rainforests.

Distribution: Macquarie Pass to north coast and through to Queensland.

MEDICINAL USE

The juice of the leaves is used to relieve the pain from leaves of the stinging tree. Cunjevoi usually grows near stinging trees. The roots were also pounded and then applied to insect bites.

PIG FACE

Aboriginal name: Kupburril (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Carpobrotus glaucescens.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Carobrotus karpus - fruit

brota - edible things.

glaucescens: bluey/green bloom that covers the leaves.

Family: AIZOACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Prostrate spreading plant.

Leaves: Fleshy, thick, three angled leaves.

Flowers: Purple strap-like flower, most of the year

Fruit: Berry like - red/purple in colour, fleshy. Tastes like salty fruit salad.

Habitat: Coastal sand dunes or rocky areas near the sea.

Distribution: Common along the coast.

MEDICINAL USE

The juice of the leaves was applied to an insect bite, eg, a sandfly bite. The juice was also used to relieve the pain from burns and scalds. It was also used as a gargle for sore throats, while another use was to treat dysentery.

"The juice of the leaves was applied to an insect bite, eg, a sandfly bite. The juice was also used to relieve the pain from burns and scalds."

CRINUM / SWAMP LILY

Botanical name: *Crinum pendunculatum.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Crinum or krinon - lily.

Latin:

pendunculatum - long white stalks.

Family name: AMARYLLIDACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Leaves: Broad robust leaves, 70cm tall.

Flower: White, with 6 narrow segments, November - December.

Fruit: A capsule with many large seeds.

Habitat: Swampy areas.

Distribution: Coastal zones.

MEDICINAL USE

The leaves contain the alkaloid lycorine, which dulls the pain of insect stings as well bluebottle stings. The leaves are crushed and applied to the area of the sting.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Lycorine, a toxic crystalline alkaloid, is found in many plant species, eg, clivias, daffodils. Lycorine inhibits protein synthesis. If ingested symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea or convulsions may occur.

"The leaves contain the alkaloid lycorine, which dulls the pain of insect stings as well bluebottle stings."

SPINY-HEADED MAT-RUSH

Aboriginal name: Gurgi (Gadigal, Sydney).

Botanical name: *Lomandra longifolia.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Loma - edge, boarder,

Aner - man, male bearded-anthers of some species.

Latin:

longi - long,

folia - leaf.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tuffed plant.

Leaves: Strap-like, 40-80cm in length.

Flowers: Large inflorescence flower stalk with spiny bracts, almost cylindrical, creamy in colour, August to December.

Habitat: Sand dunes, edges of creek beds, open forests and open rainforest.

Distribution: Widespread from the coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The roots of the mat rush were crushed to relieve the pain of bites from hairy grubs and ants. The strappy leaves were wrapped tightly around the injured limb to ease the pain.

"The roots of the mat rush were crushed to relieve the pain of bites from hairy grubs and ants."

COASTAL TEA TREE

Aboriginal name: Ban - ban (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Leptospermum laevigatum.*

Meaning of the name:
Greek:
leptos - thin,
sperma - a seed, has small seeds,
laevigatum - smooth appearance.

Family name: MYRTACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tall shrub.

Leaves: Ovate in shape, grey/green in colour.

Flowers: White in colour with a reddish ring at the base of the stamens, July to October.

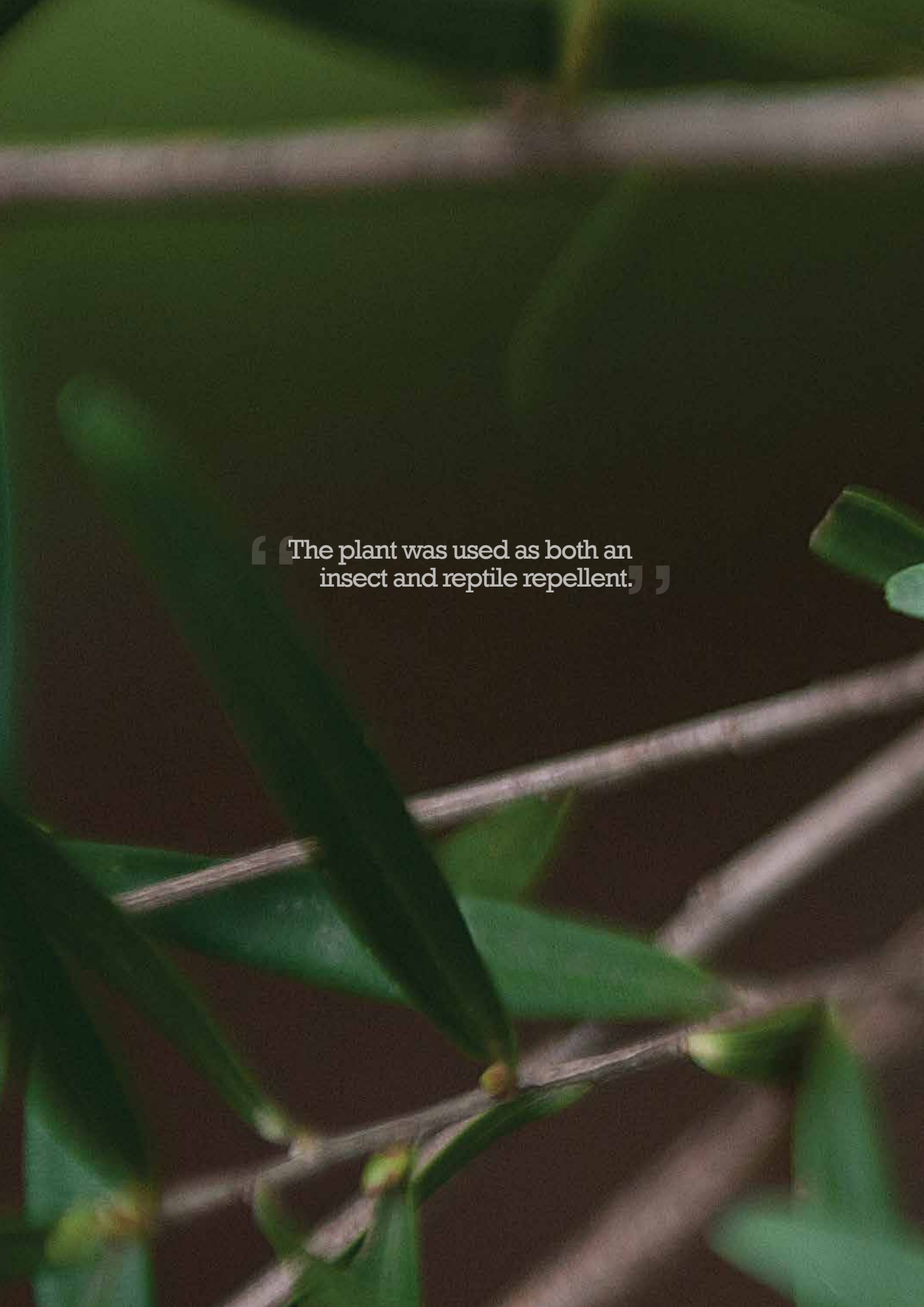
Fruit: Held in a woody capsule.

Habitat: Behind dunes near the sea, as well on sands and coastal headlands.

Distribution: Found along the coast.

MEDICINAL USE

The plant was used as both an insect and reptile repellent.


“The plant was used as both an insect and reptile repellent.”

BRACKEN FERN

Aboriginal name: Gunggai (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Pteridium esculentum.*

Meaning of the name:

Swedish:

bracken means fern.

Greek:

Pteridium - little wing.

Latin:

esculentum - edible.

Family Name: DENNSTAEDTIACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Fronds leathery, dark green on top, whitish looking beneath.

Habitat: Dry open forests, grassy clearings, creeks, banks, neglected pastures.

Distribution: All states.

MEDICINAL USE

The juice from the young fronds was crushed and applied to the area of the itch made by an insect or tick. The young shoots had multiple uses:

- *Diuretic* - increase the rate of urinating.
- *Refrigerant* - cool a wound.
- *Febrifuge* - reduce fever.
- *Poultice* - treat sores.
- *Eaten* - for worms in the stomach and as treatment for cancer. (Eating too many can cause cancer, ie, it's carcinogenic.)
- In steam baths for pains, eg, arthritis.
- As a decoction for introduced tuberculosis.

A tea was made from the roots for the treatment of stomach aches, cramps, chest pains, diarrhoea, colds and to expel worms. The root is an emetic and alleviated nausea and vomiting as well as being antiseptic and a tonic.

A tea was made from the roots for the treatment of stomach aches, cramps, chest pains, diarrhoea, colds and to expel worms.

SEA ULCERS, BOILS, WARTS

BLUEBERRY ASH
DIANELLA
SANDPAPER FIG
SEA LETTUCE

SEA ULCERS

Sea ulcers are formed due to small bacteria found in salty water. They affect the area of the skin that has been broken due to an abrasion, laceration or puncture.

If the area is untreated it can become infected resulting in a sea ulcer. Treatment of sea ulcers is simple - keep the area dry and sterilised.

BOILS

Boils are the result of certain bacteria infecting hair follicles. The area becomes inflamed and as a result localised puss and dead tissue occur.

WARTS

Warts are found on hands, feet, and other areas of the body. They are small, rough tumors, the result of a viral infection.








BLUEBERRY ASH

Aboriginal name: Tdjeunen (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Elaeocarpus reticulatus.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

elaia - olive,

karpus - fruit,

reticulatus - net like, refers to the leaf venations.

Family: ELAEOCARPACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Small tree.

Leaves: Strongly veined, lance shaped, finely toothed, grey underside, and alternate along the stem.

Flowers: Pendulous white or pink, October to December.

Fruit: Clusters of blue to black berries.

Habitat: Sheltered rainforest margins on sandy soils.

Distribution: Widespread along the coast, inland to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The purple juice from the ripe berries was used to treat sea ulcers and boils.








SPREADING FLAX LILY / DIANELLA

Aboriginal name: Pokulbi (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Dianella caerulea.*

Meaning of the name:

Latin:

diana - Roman goddess of the hunt,
ella - small,
caerulea - blue

Family: HEMEROCALLIDACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Erect, grassy like.

Leaves: Green, roll downwards to the mid-rib.

Flowers: Blue / mauve or yellow, thickened stamens, October to January.

Fruit: Blue berry.

Habitat: Open forests.

Distribution: Coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The fruit was used to treat those suffering from sea ulcers.
The juice of the Dianella was placed on the sea ulcer as an antiseptic.

"The fruit was used to treat those suffering from sea ulcers. The juice of the Dianella was placed on the sea ulcer as an antiseptic."

WHITE SEA WEED / SEA LETTUCE

Aboriginal name: Darminin (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Ulva spp.*

Family name: ULVACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Edible green algae. High in protein and soluble dietary fibre as well as a variety of vitamins and minerals, especially iron.

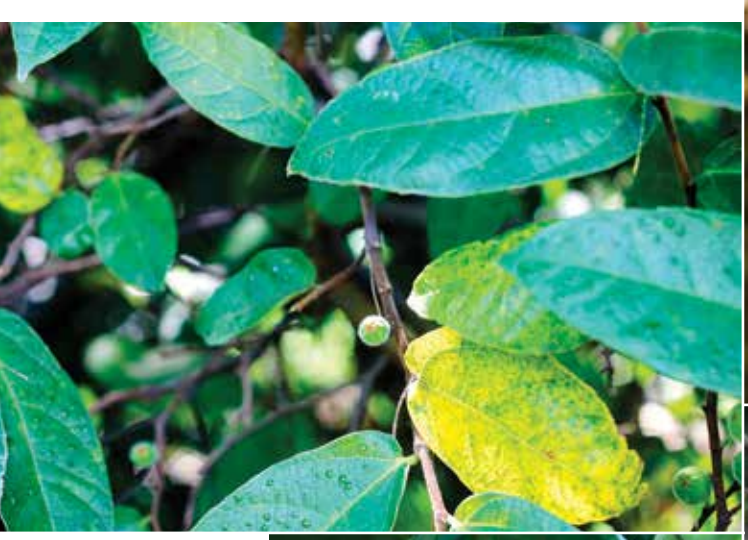
Leaves: In sheltered areas leaves may grow to 40cm in length.

Habitat: Found in inter-tidal marine areas.

MEDICINAL USE

This plant was used to help heal burns, blisters and boils by placing leaves on the infected area.


“This plant was used to help heal burns, blisters and boils by placing leaves on the infected area.”



SANDPAPER FIG

Aboriginal name: Ulowang (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Ficus coronata.*

Meaning of the name:

Latin:

Ficus - fig,
coronata - refers to the crown of bristles on top of the fruit.

Family: MORACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A small bushy tree.

Leaves: Elliptic in shape. The top of the leaves has a sand papery feel.

Flowers: Found in the inner wall of what we refer to as the fruit.

Fruit: Oval in shape, densely covered with rough hairs. Ripens from January to June.

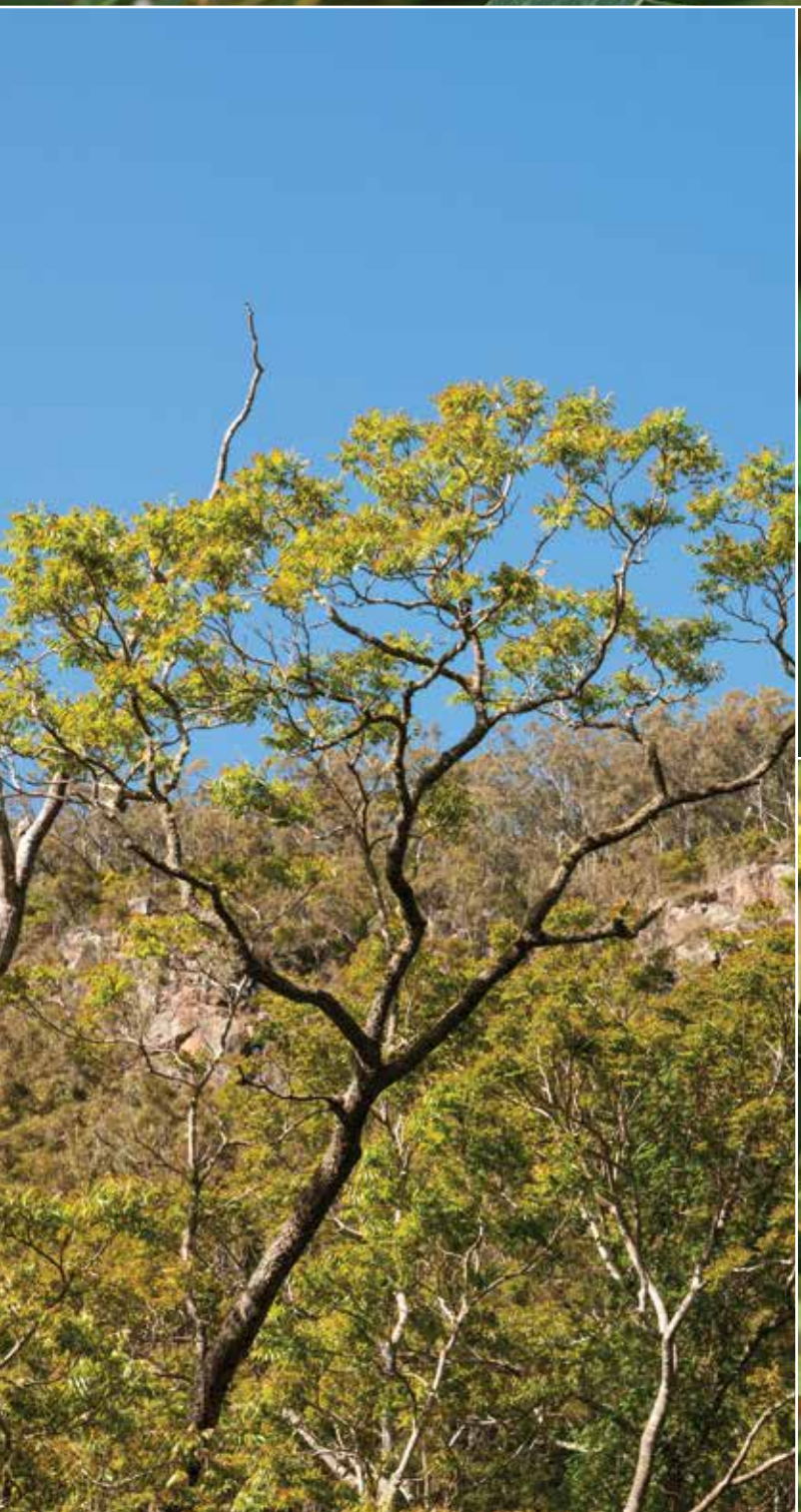
Habitat: Found in watercourses in or near rainforests.

Distribution: Widespread from coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The corrosive properties of the milky latex was placed on the warts to remove them. The latex was also spread over weeping wounds as a "bandage" to cover the wound and prevent infection. The sand papery leaves were rubbed into sores, such as ringworms, and the latex, which is proteolytic, was placed on top of the wound to help heal the broken skin.

"The corrosive properties of the milky latex was placed on the warts to remove them. The latex was also spread over weeping wounds as a ''bandage'' to cover the wound and prevent infection."



WOMEN'S MEDICINE

FOREST BRAMBLE
RED CEDAR
SYDNEY GOLDEN WATTLE

SYDNEY GOLDEN WATTLE

Botanical name: *Acacia longifolia.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Acacia - to sharpen, refers to the prickly nature of the first species discovered,
longi - long,
folia - leaf.

Alternate meaning:

Egyptian: *Akakia* - which is a species of acacia that produces gum Arabic.

Family: FABACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Shrub/tree 2-4 m tall.

Leaves: Phyllodes with several parallel veins 8-16 cm long. Pointed apex.

Flowers: Masses of flower spikes, yellow, June to November.

Fruit: Pod.

Habitat: Forest, woodlands.

Distribution: Coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

Crushing the leaves and infusing in water made a sedative tea. This was given to a woman to relieve the pain of labour contractions.

The leaves contained saponins, which are a glycoside. When rubbed vigorously with water a soap results.

Warning: Saponins dissolve red blood cells and must not come in contact with broken skin.





FOREST BRAMBLE / ROSE-LEAVED BRAMBLE

Botanical name: *Rubus rosifolius.*

Meaning of the name:
Latin:
Rubus - name for blackberry, from *ruber* - red fruit,
rosifolius - rose-leaved.

Family name: ROSACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Shrub.

Leaves: Green on both sides, with toothed margins.

Flowers: 5 lobed petals, white, most of the year.

Fruit: Edible red raspberry.

Habitat: Eucalypt forests and rainforest margins.

Distribution: Widespread from the coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The leaves of this forest scrambler were made into a tea (infusion) and drunk to relieve menstrual pain, morning sickness and labour pains.

“The leaves of this forest scrambler were made into a tea (infusion) and drunk to relieve menstrual pain, morning sickness and labour pains.”

RED CEDAR

Aboriginal Name: Polai (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Toona ciliata.*

Meaning of the name:

Toona - derived from the word Toon which is an Indian name for a tree in this genus.

Latin:

ciliata - means fringed

Family Name: MELIACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tall deciduous tree.

Leaves: Compound 4 - 8 pairs of leaflets. New shoots are pink.

Flowers: The flowers are small white / pinkish in colour. October to November.

Fruit: Held in a capsule.

Habitat: Rainforest gullies, especially near streams.

Distribution: Illawarra, through to Queensland and Papua New Guinea.

MEDICINAL USE

Leaves were crushed and made into a tea to drink. This helped moderate menstrual flow. It also was drunk for bilious fevers.

"Leaves were crushed and made into a tea to drink.
This helped moderate menstrual flow.
It also was drunk for bilious fevers."

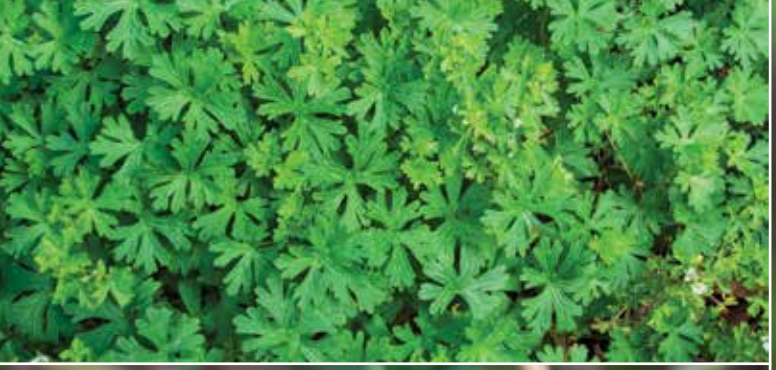
DIARRHOEA, DYSENTERY, GASTRIC COMPLAINTS

BLACKBUTT
CRANESBILL
ILLAWARRA PLUM PINE
NATIVE RASPBERRY
ROUGH BARKED APPLE

DIARRHOEA AND DYSENTERY

This occurred because meat that was eaten may have been rancid,or parasites or even a virus which may cause an infection in the digestive tract. Diarrhoea is due to an inflammation of the intestine with excessive production of watery mucus.

Dysentery is a gastro intestinal disease caused by bacteria or a parasite that infects the lower intestine of a person. As a result,pain,severe diarroea as well the passing of blood and mucus occurs. One way of getting dysentery is not cooking food properly or evenly.



CRANESBILL

Botanical name: *Geraneum homeanum.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Geraneum - classical,

geranos - a crane's bill, alluding to the shape of the fruit.

homeanum - similar.

Family: GERANIACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Small herbaceous plant.

Leaves: Deeply lobed.

Flowers: Pairs, pink or white in colour, November to February.

Root: Fleshy tap root.

MEDICINAL USE

The tap root was eaten raw to treat diarrhoea.

"The tap root was eaten raw to treat diarrhoea."

ROUGH-BARKED APPLE

Aboriginal name: Boonah (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Angophora floribunda.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Angophora - vessel or goblet, to bear or carry,
floribunda - abundant flowers.

Family: MYRTACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tree, medium to large.

Bark: Short fibrous barked trunk.

Leaves: Grey/green in colour, 5-12 cm long. Adult leaf is lanceolate to ovate, acutely pointed.

Flowers: Small, white, October to December.

Fruit: Thin papery fruits, prominently ribbed.

Habitat: Deep alluvial flats, along watercourses in open forests and woodland.

Distribution: Coast to mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The brown kino was scraped from the tree, soaked in cold water and used to bathe a wound. The mixture was also drunk to relieve symptoms of diarrhoea and dysentery.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT

Tannins

BLACKBUTT

Aboriginal name: Yarr-warrah (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Eucalyptus pilularis.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

eu - well,

kalyptus - veiled or covered.

Latin:

pilularis - a small pill, refers to the fruit.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Medium to tall tree.

Trunk: Lower trunk – grey / brown and fibrous at the base. Upper trunk and branches - smooth, whitish colour.

Leaves: Lanceolate in shape.

Flower: Flowers September to March.

Fruit: Hemispherical in shape.

Habitat: Open forests.

Distribution: Coast to the foot hills.

MEDICINAL USE

High in tannins. An infusion was made and drunk to alleviate upset stomach. Also used as an astringent to reduce bleeding from abrasions.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Tannins, Ellogic acid, Gallic acid, Leucodelphinidin.

NATIVE RASPBERRY / SMALL-LEAF BRAMBLE

Botanical name: *Rubus parvifolius.*

Meaning of the name:

Latin:

Rubus - name for blackberry, from ruber or red,
parvifolius - small-leaved.

Family Name: ROSACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A scrambling shrub.

Leaves: Green on top, white and hairy undersides.

Flowers: Pink, October to December

Fruit: Cluster of raspberry fruits.

Habitat: Shady forests, damp creek beds.

Distribution: Widespread from coast to the mountains

MEDICINAL USE

A tea (infusion) was made from the leaves and was drunk to relieve the symptoms of diarrhoea.

NOTE: *Diarrhoea was relatively common because the effective preservation of meat, given the climate and nomadic lifestyle, was difficult.*

"A tea (infusion) was made from the leaves and was drunk to relieve the symptoms of diarrhoea"

ILLAWARRA PLUM PINE / BROWN PINE

Botanical name: *Podocarpus elatus.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

podus - foot,

karpos - fruit.

Latin:

elatus - tall.

Family: PODOCARPACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tall tree.

Leaves: Linear and rectangle in shape, light yellow/green in colour.

Flowers: Male and female flowers are on separate trees (dioceous).

Fruit: Blue-black in colour. At maturity the fruit is glaucous (grey in colour). Seeds on outside of the fruit. The blue 'fruit' is actually a swollen stem.

Habitat: Coastal rainforests, eg, Bass Point, Minnamurra Spit.

Distribution: From the Illawarra to north east Queensland.

MEDICINAL USE

The unripe fruit of these trees was eaten to combat gastric complaints.

"The unripe fruit of these trees was eaten to combat gastric complaints."

EUCALYPTS IN GENERAL

The leaves, bark and gum from a range of eucalyptus trees had a number of uses.

LEAVES

- Steamed to give off healing vapours.
- Alternately, leaves were crushed and inhaled.
- Infused into a tea to treat complaints such as coughs or diarrhoea.
- Poulticed to be placed on sores, abrasions and boils.

BARK

The bark of eucalypts is high in tannins.

- An infusion would be made to treat such ailments as diarrhoea and arthritis.
- Wounds and bruises, sore eyes, and inflamed eyes were treated with medicines from the bark.
- Ingedients are Cineol, Geranyl, Acetate and Citronella.

GUM

- Eucalypt gum was placed in the dental cavity to alleviate toothache pain.

There are approximately 30 eucalypt species in the Illawarra.

HEADACHE

HEADACHE VINE / CLEMATIS
SAND FLY ZIERRA

SANDFLY ZIERIA

Botanical name: *Zieria smithii.*

Meaning of the name:
Zieria - named after the Polish botanist, Jan Zier,
smithii - named after James E. Smith, who named the genus after his friend, Jan Zier.

Family name: RUTACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Shrub, 2 metres tall with glandular stems.

Leaves: Ovate in shape, 3-5cm in length.

Flowers: Mostly white but can be pale pink. August to October.

Habitat: Sheltered positions in forests.

Distribution: From the coast to the mountains, but not generally seen in sandstone country.

MEDICINAL USE

Leaves crushed and then inhaled to relieve the symptoms of headache. However excessive use can actually aggravate the headache.

HEADACHE VINE / CLEMATIS

Botanical name: *Clematis glycinoides.*

Meaning of the name:
Greek:
klematis - a twig, the plant has twiggy branches,
glycinoides - like glycine (genus name for soybean).

Family: RANUNCULACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A climber.

Leaves: Compound leaflets.

Flowers: Showy white conspicuous flowers, August to October.

Fruit: Fluffy-like clusters.

Habitat: Forests and sheltered areas.

Distribution: Common and widespread from the coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The leaves were tied around the forehead to relieve the symptoms of headache. Leaves would also be crushed and inhaled to relieve headaches.

“The leaves were tied around the forehead to relieve the symptoms of headache. Leaves would also be crushed and inhaled to relieve headaches.”

ARTHRITIS, RHEUMATISM

IVY LEAVED VIOLET
STINGING NETTLE
STINGING TREE

ATHRITIS

Arthritis is a joint disorder of the body that involves the inflammation of one or more joints. Pain is associated with this and this may be due to disease,daily wear and tear, muscle tear or fatigue.

RHUEMATISM

Rhuematism is a problem that also affects the joints but also the connective tissue of a persons body.





STINGING NETTLE / SCRUB NETTLE

Botanical name: *Urtica incisa.*

Meaning of the name:

Latin:

Urtica - from *uro*, I sting.

incisa - cut, refers loosely to the coarsely toothed leaves.

Family name: URTICACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Perennial native herb.

Leaves: The leaves of the stinging nettle are opposite and leaf shape is lanceolate.

Stems: The stems are covered with stinging hairs, which inject formic acid and other stinging chemicals.

Flowers: Flowers are green and small in size, found on slender spikes, July to January.

Habitat: Found in rainforest areas that have been disturbed, and in wetter forest creek beds.

Distribution: Coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The stinging hairs were placed onto areas that were affected by joint pain, ie, arthritis and rhuematism. The stinging of the chemicals would stimulate blood around the area that was affected by the arthritis and pain would be eased.

"The stinging of the chemicals would stimulate blood around the area that was affected by the arthritis and pain would be eased."

IVY-LEAVED VIOLET

Aboriginal name: Warrabira (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Viola hederacea.*

Meaning of the name:

Latin:

Viola - the latin name for the violet,
hederaceae - ivy like

Family name: VIOLACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A small, groundcover herb.

Leaves: Kidney or oval shaped in appearance.

Flowers: Blue to violet in colour and larger than the leaves, September to December

Habitat: Found in moist shaded positions, either in forests or woodlands.

Distribution: Coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The leaves and flower were eaten, untreated, as a preventative against arthritis.


“The leaves and flower were eaten, untreated,
as a preventative against arthritis.”

STINGING TREE

Aboriginal name: Goo mao ma (Dharawal).

Botanical name: *Dendrocnide excelsa.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Dendrocnide - tree nettle.

Latin:

excelsa - lofty, high.

Family name: URTICACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tall tree.

Leaves: Large heart shaped leaves, light green in colour. The leaves are smooth on top and downy underneath. The hairs on the leaves are hollow and silica tipped.

Flowers: The male and female flowers are on different trees and are yellow / white in colour, December to April.

Habitat: Found in gullies and creek beds of rainforests, on fertile soil.

Distribution: East coast, Queensland to Bega, NSW.

MEDICINAL USE

Aboriginal people boiled the leaves and bark then rubbed the softened mixture into the area affected by the rheumatism.

COUGHS AND COLDS

BROAD-LEAVED PAPER BARK
EUCALYPTS
MINT BUSH

The aboriginal people used many aromatic plants(oils) to releive the symptoms of coughs and colds. Theses oils when inhaled would go deep into the lungs of the personcausing the lungs to produce mucus which would dilodge phlem and hence ease congestion.

BROAD-LEAVED PAPER BARK

Botanical name: *Melaleuca quinquenervia.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Melaeuca - melano - black,

leucos - white, refers to the black from fires on the white bark.

Latin:

quinquenervia or *qunique* - five.

nervia or *nervos* - the pattern of veins on the leaves.

Family: MYRTACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Note: Does not occur naturally within the Illawarra; this species is growing naturally north of Sydney.

Habit: Tall tree.

Leaves: 7 cm long with 5 cm longitudinal veins.

Flowers: White, February to May.

Habitat: Coastal swamps and brackish lagoons.

Distribution: Widespread from Sydney to Papua New Guinea.

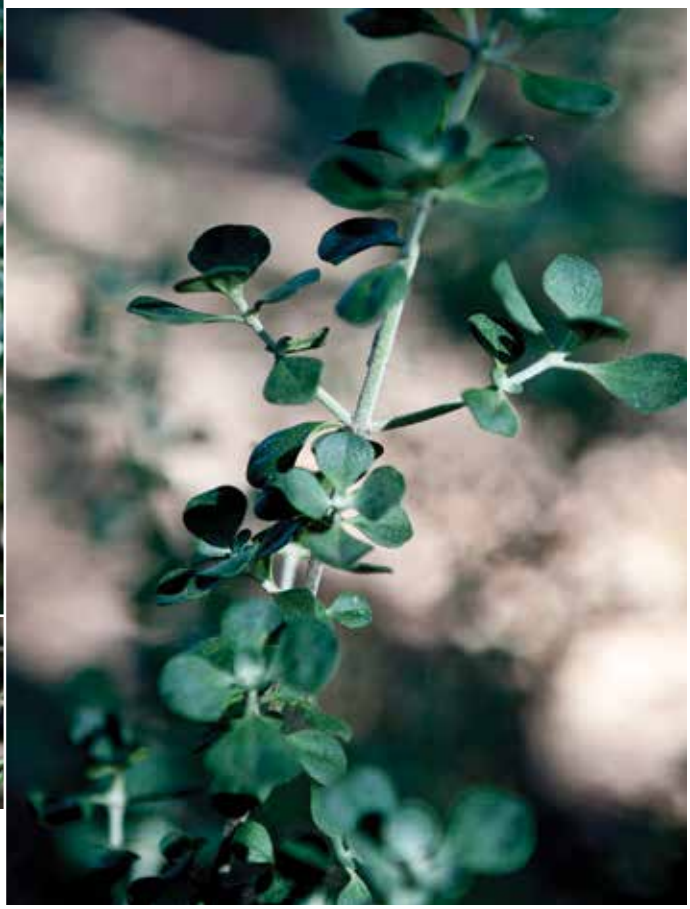
MEDICINAL USE

Leaves of the paperbark were crushed and inhaled to relieve the symptoms of a cold. Other medicinal uses were to treat rheumatism, intestinal worms and neuralgia.

MEDICINAL USE - TODAY

Melaleuca oils are claimed to eliminate warts and are used as an antiseptic in the treatment of minor burns.

"Leaves of the paperbark were crushed and inhaled to relieve the symptoms of a cold. Other medicinal uses were to treat rheumatism, intestinal worms and neuralgia."



MINT BUSH

Botanical name: *Prostanthera spp.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Postanthera prastheke - an appendix,
Anthera - an anther, which is an appendage of the stamens.

Family: LAMIACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Shrub, strongly scented.

Leaves: Opposite.

Flowers: Mauve, white and purple in colour, September to January.

Habitat: Sheltered gullies in rich volcanic soils.

Distribution: Along the coast and inland to the lower parts of the Blue Mountains.

MEDICINE

The leaves were crushed and inhaled to relieve the symptoms of a cold. They were also crushed and rubbed onto the skin as an insect repellent and to minimise the effects of ringworm.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Cineole and the phenolic compounds – thymol and cavacrol.

"The leaves were crushed and inhaled to relieve the symptoms of a cold. They were also crushed and rubbed onto the skin as an insect repellent and to minimise the effects of ringworm."

SPLINTS, BANDAGES, WOUND

BANGALOW PALM
BROAD-LEAVED PAPER BARK
BULRUSH

BROAD-LEAF CUMBUNGI / BULRUSH

Botanical name: *Typha orientalis.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Typha - the ancient name of this plant,

bulrush - originates from pole-rush meaning pool rush.

Latin:

orientalis - Latin eastern.

Family name: TYPHACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A perennial, tall reed.

Leaves: Erect stems, 2 - 3 meters tall, with green and flat leaves.

Flowers: Brown chestnut spikes. Females produce masses of fluffy seeds December to February.

Habitat: Freshwater - lagoons, creeks and dams.

Distribution: Widespread through out the Illawarra and NSW.

MEDICINAL USE

The sap from this plant was used to protect a person from leeches while the brown and white downy fluff was used as a wound dressing because of its antiseptic properties.

When burnt the ash was used an insect repellent.

"When burnt the ash was used an insect repellent."

BROAD-LEAVED PAPER BARK

Botanical name: *Melaleuca quinquenervia*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Melaeuca - melas - black,

leucos - white, refers to the black from fires on the white bark.

Latin:

Quinquenervia or *qunique* - five,

nervia or *nervos* - the pattern of veins on the leaves.

Family name: MYRTACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Note: Does not occur naturally within the Illawarra; this species is growing naturally north of Sydney.

Habit: Tall tree.

Leaves: 7 cm long with 5 cm longitudinal veins.

Flowers: White, February to May.

Habitat: Coastal swamps and brackish lagoons.

Distribution: Widespread from Sydney to Papua New Guinea.

MEDICINAL USE

The leaves were chewed to dull the pain of a toothache. They were also crushed and the vapours inhaled to relieve headaches.

The bark was used to bandage wounds.


The bark was used to bandage wounds.

BANGALOW PALM / PICCABEEN PALM

Aboriginal name: Bangalay (Dharawal).
Bangalow - a word for "water". Carrying baskets (coolamons) were made from crown shafts.

Botanical name: *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana.*

Meaning of the name:
Greek:
Archontophoenix, Archon - chief,
phoenix - palm.
Cunninghammiana - named after the botanist Allan Cunningham.

Family name: ARECACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: A medium to tall tree, 20 metres in height.

Leaves: Compound on a single stalk, long and evenly divided either side of the stalk.

Flowers: A pale lilac colour, December to February.

Fruit: Globular is shape, fleshy and red.

Habitat: Rainforest, on fertile soils.

Distribution: Coastal zone, as far south as Mount Durras.

MEDICINAL USE

The shafts of the leaves were used as splints, while the leaves were used as a makeshift umbrella for the sun and rain.

"The shafts of the leaves were used as splints, while the leaves were used as a makeshift umbrella for the sun and rain."

GRAZES, BURNS, AND BLISTERS

ROCK ORCHID
ROUGH TREE FERN
SOFT TREE FERN

Tannins found in the bark of eucalypts and acacias was used to treat these symptoms. The parts of the body was washed or bathed in a solution that comntained tannin. A tannin which is an astringent bonds the protein of the damaged cells .causing atight protective layer to form allowing healing to take place.

ROCK ORCHID / KING ORCHID

Botanical name: Previously *Dendrobium speciosum,* but now called *Thelychiton speciosus.*

Meaning of the name:
Dendrobium - tree living, which refers to epiphytic habit of this species.
Speciosus - beautiful, has showy creamy flowers.

Family name: ORCHIDACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Epiphytic orchid.

Leaves: Stout, tough with shallow grooves.

Flowers: Racemes of white, creamy yellow fragrant flowers, August to September.

Habitat: Sandstone cliffs, sheltered sunny areas, rock ledges.

Distribution: Mainly coastal escarpment.

MEDICINAL USE

The sap from the stems was rubbed onto skin areas that were burnt or blistered.

> The sap from the stems was rubbed onto skin areas that were burnt or blistered.





ROUGH TREE FERN

Aboriginal name: Yarrah-wah (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Cyathea australis.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Cyathea (or kyatheion) - cup, the structure that holds the spores,

australs - southern.

Family Name: CYATHEACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Fromd stem (rachis), rasp-like. The most common tree fern in New South Wales.

Habitat: Gullies and creek banks of rainforests.

Distribution: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania.

MEDICINAL USE

Roasted stalks of young fronds were used as a tonic or pick-me-up after any kind of disease.

The roots were used as a wash to treat burns and blisters.

SOFT TREE FERN / DICKSONIA

Aboriginal Name: Denn-Nangue (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Dicksonia antartica.*

Meaning of the name:
Dicksonia - named after Scottish nurseryman, James Dickson.
antarctica - southern, from the Antarctic regions.

Family Name: DICKSONIACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Can grow up to 15m in height.

Fronds: Large green rough fronds.

Trunk: Heavy and stout.

Habitat: Areas of high water content in rainforests and moist gullies.

Distribution: Occurs at altitudes of 300 - 400 metres.

MEDICINAL USE

The new fronds were crushed and the sap was placed on blisters to heal them.

The sap of the roots was also used to heal burns and blisters.

TOOTHACHE

EUCALYPTS
RED ASH
SMOOTH-BARKED APPLE
STICKY HOP BUSH

The Aboriginal people did not have tooth decay as we know it, due to the low percentage of sugar in their diet prior to colonisation.

However, toothaches did occur, caused by sand, grit or seeds eroding the enamel and wearing down the teeth. Other causes of tooth problems were fighting and accidents.

STICKY HOP BUSH

Botanical name: *Dodonaea viscosa* subsp. *angustifolia.*

Meaning of the name:

Dodonea - named after Rembert Dodens.

Latin:

viscosa - sticky.

Family name: SAPINDACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Erect shrub, 2 - 3 metres tall.

Leaves: Narrow lanceolate, 6 - 10 cm long, often glossy and slightly waxy.

Flowers: Small, pinky / red, August to October.

Fruit: In a conspicuous capsule, with three vertical wings. Green colour which turns to red then light brown.

Habitat: Open forest, in rocky areas.

Distribution: Illawarra coast to the escarpment.

MEDICINAL USE

Used to treat insect stings, stingray stings, open wounds, toothache, skin rashes and fever. The leaves were crushed and mixed to a paste to treat these ailments.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Diterpenoid acid, some tannins. Slightly cyanogenic (cyanide).

“Used to treat insect stings, stingray stings, open wounds, toothache, skin rashes and fever. The leaves were crushed and mixed to a paste to treat these ailments.”

RED ASH

Aboriginal Name: Murrung (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Alphitonia excelsa.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Alphiton - barked barley meal.

Latin:

excelsa - lofty, high.

Family Name: RHAMNACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tree, 6-10 metres tall.

Leaves: Glossy green top, silvery white undersurface.

Flowers: Numerous, creamy flowers, December to March.

Fruit: Round black berry, 10mm diameter.

Habitat: Rainforest margins.

Distribution: Coast to the mountains.

Local name: Soap tree.

MEDICINAL USE

The young leaf tips were chewed for an upset stomach. Also used as soap, a skin disinfectant, a mouth rinse for toothache and drunk as a tonic. An infusion of bark and wood of the plant was rubbed into the body as liniment.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Alphitonin, Ceanothic acid, Betulnic acid.






SYDNEY RED GUM / SMOOTH-BARKED APPLE

Aboriginal Name: Kajimboura (Sydney)

Botanical Name: *Angophora costata*

Meaning of the Name:

Greek:

Angophora - vessel or gobblet.

Latin:

costata - ribbed, refers to the fruit capsules having ribs.

Family Name: MYRTACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Medium tree

Bark: Pinkish in colour, smooth deciduous bark.

Branches: Gnarled and twisted.

Leaves: Leaves are opposite and have close lateral veins.

Flowers: Cream in colour. October - January.

Habitat: Open forests.

Distribution: Occurs north of Wollongong with a small outlier in the Eurobodalla area. Elsewhere, most of NSW and southern Queensland.

MEDICINAL USE

Small balls of gum were placed in the tooth cavity to ease the pain of the tooth ache.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT

Tannins.

Small balls of gum were placed in the tooth cavity
to ease the pain of the tooth ache.

SKIN AILMENTS

MINT BUSH
SICKLE WATTLE

SICKLE WATTLE

Botanical Name: *Acacia falcata.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Acacia - to sharpen, refers to the prickly nature of the first species discovered.

Alternate meaning:

Egyptian:

Akakia - a species of acacia that produces gum arabic,

falcata - refers to the curved shape of the phyllodes.

Family Name: FABACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tall open shrub.

Phyllodes: 7-12cm long blue/green in colour, with main vein off-centre.

Flowers: Small pale yellow flowers, April to July.

Fruit Pod: 5 - 10cm long.

Habitat: Forest to cleared ground.

Distribution: Wide spread along the coastal zone.

MEDICINAL USE

The bark was used to make a liniment for skin ailments.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT

Tannins.

MINT BUSH

Botanical Name: *Prostanthera* species.

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Prostanthera prastheke - means an appendix,

anthera - an anther which is an appendage of the stamens.

Family: LAMIACEAE

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Shrub: Strongly scented shrub.

Leaves: Opposite.

Flowers: Mauve, white and purple in colour, September to January.

Habitat: Sheltered gullies in rich volcanic soils.

Distribution: Along the coast - lower parts of the Blue Mountains.

MEDICINE

The leaves were crushed and inhaled to relieve the symptoms of a cold. They were also crushed and rubbed onto the skin as an insect repellent and to minimise the effects of ringworm.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Rich in cineole. Phenolic compounds - thymol, cavacrol.

> The leaves were crushed and inhaled to relieve the symptoms of a cold.

FEVER

DEVIL'S TWINE

SLENDER SNOTTY-GOBBLE / DEVILS TWINE

Botanical Name: *Cassytha pubescens.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Cassytha or *Kasytas* - a parasitic plant.

Family Name: LAURACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Parasitic climber.

Leaves: Leafless.

Stems: Hairless and reddish in colour.

Flowers: 6 clustered small, hairless flowers. November – March but may flower in other months.

Fruit: Narrow and egg shaped.

Habitat: Heath and open woodlands.

Distribution: Coast to the mountains.

MEDICINAL USE

The aboriginal people drank an infusion to lower a high body temperature.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT

The alkaline cassythicine.

"The aboriginal people drank an infusion to lower a high body temperature."

SORE THROAT

CABBAGE TREE PALM
WATER VINE
SASSAFRAS







CABBAGE TREE PALM

Aboriginal Name: Dtharowal (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Livistona australis.*

Meaning of the name:

Livistona - was named in the honour of Baron Livingstone who was the founder of the Edinburugh Botanical Gardens in Scotland.

Latin:

australis - southern

Family Name: ARECACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Medium to tall tree.

Leaves: Palmate or fan-like in shape.

Flowers: Numerous small yellow flowers, August – October.

Fruit: Black in colour and globular in shape.

Habitat: Rainforest, sheltered gullies.

Distribution: Coastal zones.

MEDICINAL USE

Chewed the moist pith of the tree, extracted from the trunk, to relieve a sore throat.

"Chewed the moist pith of the tree, extracted from the trunk, to relieve a sore throat."

WATER VINE / NATIVE GRAPE / KANGAROO VINE

Botanical Name: *Cissus antarctica.*

Meaning of the name:

Greek:

Cissus or *kissos* - ivy.

Latin:

antarctica - southern, from the Antarctic regions.

Family Name: VITACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Robust woody vine.

Leaves: Compound leaves with 5 leaflets, waxy and fairly tough, irregularly toothed, ash grey colour on the underside.

Flowers: Small bright yellow flowers, December - February.

Fruit: Blue / black berries.

Habitat: Found in humid areas near the sea and rainforests.

Distribution: NSW coast and ranges.

MEDICINAL USE

The fruit has astringent properties and was used as a gargle for sore throats. The raw tuber was eaten as a source of food but also as a preventative, or curative, to combat internal complaints such as dysentery and diarrhoea.

It was also a source of water - cut two ends of the vine to drain water from the stem.

"The raw tuber was eaten as a source of food but also as a preventative, or curative, to combat internal complaints such as dysentery and diarrhoea."





SASSAFRAS

Aboriginal Name: Caalang (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Doryphora sassafras.*

Meaning of the name:

Ancient Greek:

Doratus - spear,

phoreus - carrier,

sassafras - Similar smell to the Yellow Wood tree in North America

Family Name: ATHEROSPERMATACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Medium to tall tree.

Leaves: Distinctive aromatic smell, opposite, lanceolate, coarsely serrated.

Flowers: Short, found in the leaf axils, white in colour, August to September.

Habitat: Coastal Rainforest and sheltered gullies.

Distribution: Common along the coast.

MEDICINAL USE

A fragrant tea was made from the leaves, which had great tonic properties.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS

Has a mixture of alkaloids - liriodene, doryaframine and doryanine.

"A fragrant tea was made from the leaves, which had great tonic properties."

COMMERCIAL USE TODAY

BLACK BEAN -
MORETON BAY CHESTNUT
KANGAROO APPLE
CORKWOOD
EUCALYPT
TEA TREE

BLACK BEAN / MORETON BAY CHESTNUT

Botanical Name: *Castanospermum australe.*

Meaning of the name:

Latin:

Castonea - chestnut.

spermum - seeded.

australe - refers to southern hemisphere.

Family: FABACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Tall tree, up to 40 metres.

Leaves: Glossy, pinnate.

Flowers: Red / yellow pea shaped flowers. October through November.

Fruit: Large cylindrical brown pods.

Habitat: Rainforest.

Distribution: Coastal from Lismore to Cape York. Grows in the Illawarra at the University of Wollongong campus.

CURRENT MEDICINAL USE

This tree contains chemicals that after extraction and experimentation show properties that are potentially anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and anti-HIV AIDS.

KANGAROO APPLE

Aboriginal Name: Goonigang (Goo-nee-gang) (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Solanum aviculare.*

Meaning of the name:

Note: Leaves are in the shape of a kangaroo paw.

Latin:

Solanum - solamen, to solace or comfort. Reference to the narcotic properties of some species.

aviculare - little bird refers to the wing like leaves

Family: SOLANACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Medium sized shrub.

Distribution: East coast, Victoria to Queensland.

Found in Illawarra: West Kembla Grange, Mt Warrigal, Blackbutt Forest Reserve and Shoalhaven Grotto walk.

Leaves: Dark green, lobed.

Flowers: Clusters of violet flowers, November to January.

Fruit: Oval shape, pale green ripening through yellow to red in late summer. Edible when absolutely ripe, otherwise poisonous.

CURRENT MEDICINAL USE

A major source of steroids. Used in contraceptives and anti-inflammatory products.

"A major source of steroids. Used in contraceptives and anti-inflammatory products."

CORKWOOD

Aboriginal Name: Ngmos (Dharawal).

Botanical Name: *Duboisia myoporoides.*

Meaning of name:
Duboisia - named after Charles Dubois.
myoporoides - resembles the genus myoporum.

Family: SOLANACEAE.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Habit: Shrub to small tree.

Leaves: Ovate to elliptic in shape.

Flowers: Clusters of small white flowers, August to November.

Fruit: Inedible black/purple berries.

Bark: Has thick, cork-like bark.

Habitat: Rainforest margins.

Distribution: High rainfall areas of the east coast

CURRENT MEDICINAL USE

See page 128.

> Used by optometrists and ophthalmologists to dilate (enlarge) the pupils of the eyes so as to more easily view the interior of the eye.

EUCALYPTUS OIL

Traditionally, the indigenous people used eucalyptus oil to treat body pains, sinus congestion and colds, as well as fevers.

John White, a surgeon on the first fleet, realised the significance of this oil as a medicine after observing the Aboriginal people using the oil.

In November 1788, some 10 months after the establishment of the colony, Surgeon General John White sent 1 litre of eucalyptus oil to England. He claimed it to be the first useful natural product produced in Australia.

Later a Melbourne pharmacist, John Basite, investigated the commercial potential of the oil and in 1852, near Dandenong, Victoria, started the first commercial eucalyptus oil industry.

Eucalyptus oil is important because it has properties that are:

- Anti–inflammatory.
- Analgesic, ie, reduces pain.
- Anti-microbial.
- Anti-bacterial.

Today, there are 3 main users of eucalyptus oil:

- Medicine.
- Perfumery.
- Cleaning.

Use in medicine:

- An antiseptic gargle.
- A stimulant for cardiac activity.
- To treat fevers that result from infections.
- Relief of sinusitis and head colds.
- Applied externally it has been shown to ease the pain of rheumatism, arthritis and muscular aches.

Eucalyptus oil is used in many medicines but it is STRONGLY advised to receive medical advice before ingesting this oil. To do so is safe for a koala but NOT for a human.

Use in perfumery:

- Food flavours.
- As a scent.

Use in cleaning:

- Because of its pleasant smell, the oil is incorporated into a range of cleaning products, eg, hand cleaners, car cleaning products and car fresheners.
- Laundry products.
- Industrial degreasing products, dissolving oil, grease and tar.
- Adhesive removal, white board cleaners.
- Removal of paint and grease from clothes.

Other uses:

- Insecticide.
- Furniture polish.

Eucalyptus trees have multiple environmental benefits.

- The oil is a natural and clean product.
- A commercial incentive to restoring natural vegetation.
- A sustainable method of controlling rising ground water and salinity.
- A contribution to carbon sequestration.
- Restoration of natural habitat.

In 1940 Australia was the major supplier of medicinal eucalyptus oil to the world. At its peak, production was 1,000 tonnes per year.

Today the states of New South Wales and Victoria produce 80% of Australia's eucalyptus oil. But for all that, 90% of the eucalyptus oil used in Australia is imported from China, South Africa and Brazil.

The worldwide production of eucalyptus oil is approximately 3,000 tonnes, of which Australia contributes only 3%.

DUBOISIA

It was discovered in the 1870s that *Duboisia myoporoides* contained an atro-pinie alkaloid "duboisine". This alkaloid can be used as a sedative for the management of psychiatric patients.

During World War II the same plant was found to contain the chemicals scopolamine, which can be used in surgical anesthesia and also for the management of sea sickness. A derivative of scopolamine is the drug butylscopolamine, which is a potent antispasmodic.

However, after World War II interest in the chemical properties of Duboisia waned. But in the 1950s a German firm, Boehringer Ingelheim, revived the Duboisia industry. Today, over 90% of the Duboisia trees grown for world-wide use by the pharmaceutical industry are found in the Kingaroy and South Burnett areas of southern Queensland.

Scopolamine:

A derivative of scopolamine is used to relax muscles in the digestive track for such conditions as irritable bowel syndrome and stomach aches.

It is also used as a pre-operative muscle relaxant prior to surgery.

Hyoscyamine:

Used by optometrists and ophthalmologists to dilate (enlarge) the pupils of the eyes so as to more easily view the interior of the eye.

Hyoscyamine is also used to reduce mucous secretions associated with cold, flu, bronchitis and hay fever.

Historically:

Duboisia was used by Aboriginal people in Central Australia for its stimulant, euphoric, antispasmodic and analgesic effects. For example, smoke from the burning leaves was inhaled at ceremonies, such as male initiation rites, including circumcision, because of its anaesthetic properties.

TEA TREE OIL

For over 1,000 years the Bundjalung people of north east NSW have used *Melaleuca alternifolia* as a source of medicine. *Melaleuca* is actually a paperbark and not a tea tree (Leptospermum spp.).

The people would crush the leaves and inhale the vapours to treat such ailments such as coughs and colds, or they would make an infusion to treat skin ailments and sore throats.

The oil was also used to heal wounds by sprinkling leaves on the wound and then applying a poultice.

On his voyage in the South Pacific Captain James Cook and the Botanist, Joseph Banks, discovered many new plant and animal species, one of which was the Tea Tree.

Cook's crew actually made a tea from the *melaleuca* plant and hence the name, "tea tree".

But it was not until 1923, when Dr A R Penfold realised the great potential of this oil as a medicine, that the Tea Tree Oil Industry began.

During WW 11 tea tree oil was used in medical kits for the servicemen. In the 1950s and 60s the production of Tea Tree Oil declined, but a renaissance took place in the 1970s, when people became more interested in using natural products. Commercial plantations were established which today produce high quality oil.

Tea Tree Oil has the following properties:

- Anti-viral.
- Anti-fungal.
- Antiseptic.

NOTE: Tea Tree Oil is toxic when swallowed. It should be kept away from children as well as from pets.

The oil is applied directly to the skin, however if you have sensitive skin you should initially use the oil in dilution.

Uses of Tea Tree Oil include:

- Skin infections, eg, acne.
- Scratches and grazes.
- Warts and verruca.
- Bad breath, inflamed gums and plaque.
- Sore throats and congestion.
- Dandruff and lice.
- Cold sores.
- Shingles and chicken pox.
- Post-surgical care.
- Painful spots on the skin preceding menstruation.
- Strengthen the immune system.
- Catarrh and sinusitis.

Methods of Application:

- Inhalation.
- Bathing.
- Mixed with protective cream.
- Direct application to the skin.

Products containing Tea Tree Oil:

- Lozenges.
- Toothpastes.
- Lotions.
- Creams.

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BUSH MEDICINES OF THE ILLAWARRA is designed as an appreciation of the medical value plants gave the indigenous people of Australia (and elsewhere), and how plants have been extensively studied for medicinal use in today's world.

It is worth remembering that approximately 25% of all pharmaceutical products worldwide have originated from traditional medical knowledge. In short, the plant science of traditional peoples everywhere has made a significant contribution to our health today.

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