



# KOORI BUSH TUCKER GARDEN



This information is only a guide on bush tucker foods, Greening Australia does not recommend trying these foods unless you are accompanied by someone who is well trained in this field. Plants on this website can be currently found or will be planted in the Greening Australia Capital Region, koori bush tucker garden.

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*Photos by Bindi Vanzella, Graham Fifield, Greg Steenbeke and Jennie Widdowson*

## **Lomandra longifolia**

### **Basket grass or Spiny-head Mat-rush**

The **white starchy bases** of the Lomandra were chewed by Aboriginal people. They supplied an energy boost on long walks.

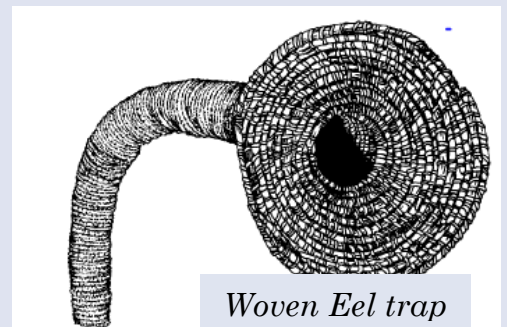


*Lomandra seed*

The **seed** was pounded and made into flour or eaten whole and mixed with native honey.

The **strappy leaves** were used to weave baskets for carrying food as well as making eel traps and nets.

**Roots** of the Lomandra were also used as a medicine for insect bites.



*Woven Eel trap*



*Lomandra whole plant with seed*

## **Dianella revoluta**

### **Blueberry Lily**

Dianella has **sweet purple berries**, Aboriginal people consumed these during the summer months.



*Flowers which turn into fruit that holds the seed*

The **plant** was also used as a snake whistle. It could be blown into the hollow ends to create vibrations and sound to lure snakes out of hiding which then were hunted for food.



*Whole plant*

The **strappy leaves** were also suitable for weaving for the production of nets, bags and other materials.



*Snake whistle*

## **Rubus parvifolius**

### **Small leaved raspberry or native raspberry**

Known as native raspberry this widespread plant was used by Aboriginal people for its **sweet berries** that it produces in the summer months.



*Edible fruits*

The berries contain high amounts of antioxidants, so it was not only a delectable but healthy treat for the traditional people of this region.

The **leaves** of the plant were used for treating stomach complaints. Leaves are mixed with water and drunk like tea.



*Plant with flowers*

## Microseris lanceolata

### Yam daisy

Microseris or Yam daisies were an important food source for Aboriginal people.

The **tubers** of the plant were dug up and eaten raw or roasted on the fire. The tuber is kind of like a potato and is of similar make up.

The meal contained good starches and carbohydrates which aided the traditional people immensely.



*Tubers*

The **flowers** of the Yam daisy come up in spring then die back to just a tuber in the summer.



The flowers of the Yam Daisy are similar to introduced daisy; a way to identify them is the drooping flower bud on the Yam daisy before the flower opens.

## Indigofera australis

### Austral Indigo

This plant was used by Aboriginal people for fishing.

The **leaves and roots** were crushed and thrown into rock pools or fish traps.



Fish were stunned by the plant's active chemicals which de-oxygenated the water, and made them very easy to catch.

Once enough were taken to feed their family, the remaining fish or immature fish could be put through running water currents.

This brought them out of their temporary coma and the fish were released back into the river.

**Flowers** of the plant were documented as being used by European settlers in the early 1900's as a dye for clothing. It was documented these flowers made one of the strongest and longest lasting dyes in the world at that time.

It is unknown whether Aboriginal people used the flowers for this same practice or had another use for them.



## **Bulbine bulbosa**

### **Bulbine Lily or Wild Onion**

This lovely little grass-land forb was utilised for its **nutritious tuber** by the Aboriginal people. It was dug up around mid-spring to early summer while the plant was in flower and then roasted. This provided a meal rich in calcium and iron.



*Tubers*

The process of harvesting by Aboriginal women with digging sticks, prepared the site for the germination of seeds for next season's crop.

This soil disturbance also prepared the site for the germination of associated plants such as the Yam Daisy.



*Bulbine\_lily in flower*



## **Hardenbergia violacea**

### **Purple coral pea**

This vine had quite a few uses by Aboriginal people.

The **leaves and flowers** were used to treat mouth ulcers and brewed as a hot drink to treat chest infections and complaints.

**Flowers** were also eaten for the purpose of detox and cleansing.



*Leaves and flowers*

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The **flowers** were used as a seasonal indicator. It indicated that certain fish in the river were now fat and ready to be caught and eaten.

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The **vine** itself was used as a rope and woven together to make nets and traps.



*Hardenbergia vine climbing up tree*

## **Tasmannia lanceolata**

### **Mountain Pepper**

Aboriginal people used the **dried leaves** from the mountain pepper plant as a seasoning for their meat. It has a nice peppery taste with quite a pungent spicy after taste.



*Leaves*



*Berries*

The **berries** were also consumed and are very high in anti-oxidants. They have a sweeter taste to the leaves, with the same spicy after taste

European settlers also documented using this plant as a substitute for pepper. Today the plant is widely used in bush chutneys and other foods and is a popular spice.

## **Linum marginale**

### **Native Flax or Wide Flax**

The **stems** can be made into strings which Aboriginal people used as fishing line and in the production of fishing nets.



*Stem and flowers of Linum*



*Linum flowers close up*

The **flat brown seeds** can be collected in summer and autumn and can be eaten fresh or used like Sesame seeds. The **stem** can also be eaten. **Oil from the seed** also has medicinal properties and could be used to treat wounds.



*Seeds*

## **Banksia marginata**

### **Silver Banksia**

This banksia had many uses by Aboriginal people.



*Fresh and dry flowers and leaves*

The **flower** was soaked in water to make a sweet energy boosting drink. It can also be pulled apart to make a paint brush for ceremony and rock art.

The **dried flower** was also used as a container to carry embers from one camp site to another so that the camp fire could be easily lit again.

The **branches** which were curved made good boomerangs.

## Xanthorrhoea species

### Grass Trees

The grass tree provided many uses for Aboriginal people.

The **flower stalk** was used as a light spear for fishing, and when rubbed with hard wood it could be used to start fire. It also provided nectar that was eaten. **The new flowers** indicated that native bee hives were in the area.

The **flower heads and bark** could be thrown into the fire and inhaled to cure cold like symptoms.



*Small grass tree with flower stalks*

The **serrated leaves** have sharp edges which were used as temporary knives. It was also woven by the women to make baskets. **Leaf bases** and **new shoots** were also eaten.

**Resin** from the trunk was mixed with white ash in the fire to create glue for binding weapons and tools. It was also used for skin rashes and irritations.

The plant only grows 1-2cm a year so is very slow growing.

## **Burchardia umbellate** **Milkmaids or Star-Of-Bethlehem**

Burchardia was used by Aboriginal people for its **tasty roots or tubers**. They were dug up and cooked before they were eaten. The roots were a food source all year round.



*Flowers of Burchardia*



*Dried seed heads*

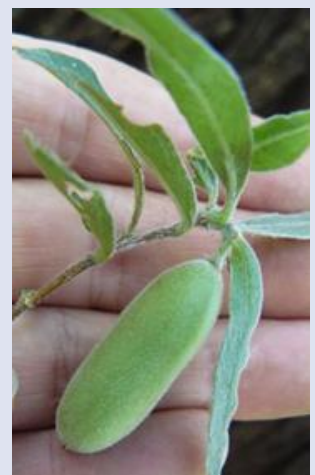
Aboriginal people could find these tubers, even without the flower or stem present, which demonstrates their great understanding of the land.

## **Billardiera scandens** **Apple Berry or Apple Dumpling**

Aboriginal people ate the **fruits** of this climber. They are best eaten as they ripen and fall from the vine.



*Whole bush*



*Unripe fruit*

## **Dodonea viscosa sp.**

### **Hop Bush**

Aboriginal people chewed the **leaves which helped** aid tooth aches. The roots were boiled and then, when cooled, ingested to aid in ear aches. They also helped to cure cuts and insect stings.



*Leaves and seed pods*

**Wood** from the larger hop bush was good for making digging sticks, bundhi's (killing sticks) and other tools.

The common name is hop bush as early European settlers used the plant to brew beer.



## Dichopogon fimbriatus

### Chocolate Lily

Aboriginal people ate the **tubers** from the nodding chocolate lily. The tubers were best eaten after they had been roasted on the fire but could be eaten raw.



*Flower*

The **flowers** were digested and helped to cleanse the blood.



*Tubers*

Flowers give of a chocolate scent when they are fully opened on a warm sunny day. This is why the plant is commonly known as chocolate lily.

## Ajuga australis

### Austral Bugle

Aboriginal people traditionally used this plant's healing qualities to bathe sores, skin conditions and wounds.

The **leaves** were made into a concoction using hot water and then applied to the affected areas.



*Leaves and flowers* 15



## **Geranium solanderi**

### **Austral Crane's-bill or Hairy Geranium**



The roots of this plant were a staple food for Aboriginal people, and were also ingested to aid diarrhoea

The **stalk** could also be eaten and is likened to the taste of celery.

The **leaves** were crushed and used to treat minor burns.

*Leaves and flowers*

## **Solanum linearifolia**

### **Kangaroo Apple or Bush Tomato**

The Kangaroo apple or bush tomato was a staple food in summer for Aboriginal people.

The **fruit** is about the size of a cherry tomato and is yellow in colour.

Fruit is picked once it has turned from green to yellow, is best when falling of the branch or on the ground, as it can be quite bitter and toxic if not completely ripe. Fruit is high in vitamin C.



*Whole plant*

## **Glycine clandestine**

### **Twining Glycine or Love Creeper**



*Flowers*

**Roots** of the glycine pea are chewed by Aboriginal people as a sweet treat. They have a liquorice type flavour.

## **Callistemon sp.**

### **Bottlebrushes**

**Flowers** of the Callistemon were utilised by Aboriginal people for its sweet nectar. It was obtained either by licking straight of the flower or mixing in cold water to make a sweet drink.

**Wood** from the larger bushes could be used to make weapons.



*Whole plant*