

# Wild Foraging East Coast Australia



Vibrational Wizard



## **The universal edibility test**

Consuming even small amounts of toxic plants can result in sickness, gastrointestinal problems and possibly fatal consequences.

Australian native seeds, nuts and roots can often contain toxic or ant-nutritional compounds which can sometimes be nullified by heat or steaming.

This test or similar ones have been used by survivalists to determine if a plant is safe to eat.

Follow these steps before consuming any plants as food that you are unsure of.

This test is recommended to be only used in emergencies when one is unable to positively identify any safe plants to consume in a survival situation.

1. Separate the plant into its various parts—roots, stems, leaves, buds, and flowers. Focus on only one piece of the plant at a time.
2. Smell it. A strong, unpleasant odour is a bad sign.
3. Test for contact poisoning by placing a piece of the plant on your inner elbow or wrist for a few minutes. If your skin burns, itches, feels numb, or breaks out in a rash, don't eat the plant.
4. If the plant passes the skin test, prepare a small portion the way you plan to eat it (boiling is always a good bet).
5. Before taking a bite, touch the plant to your lips to test for burning or itching. If there's no reaction after 15 minutes, take

a small bite, chew it, and hold it in your mouth for 15 minutes. If the plant tastes very bitter or soapy, spit it out.

6. If there's no reaction in your mouth, swallow the bite and wait several hours. If there's no ill effect, you can assume this part of the plant is edible. Repeat the test for other parts of the plant. Be aware that many plants can have both edible and inedible parts.

## **Blue Lotus**

The fragrant scent of the blue lotus is so powerful and intoxicating. This amazing blue flower grows in lakes and flowers from Spring to Summer.



Most all of the plant can be eaten including the flowers, seeds, tubers and stems. Dried flowers can also be used to make a calming transcendental tea.

Throughout the world the sacred blue lotus is considered a most sacred essential oil used both in ceremony and for enjoyment of its rich and seductive essence.

The aromatherapy benefits from inhaling and smelling blue lotus are many including calming and relaxing the nervous system, assisting in sleep cycles and pineal gland or third eye awaking and decalcification. Blue lotus scent, tea and oil rubbed on the skin also had uses in assisting with fertility and ovulation cycles in women who want to fall pregnant.



One day I was called to visit and walk the Gympie pyramid with protector and Sunshine Coast Kabi elder Wit-booka who's name means dog star Sirius. As we passed a small dam next to the ancient Australian pyramid site we noticed blue lotus flowers growing and I said "When I wild harvest and dry these Aussie blue lotus flowers I find them more powerful than the imported Egyptian flowers." Without the skip of a beat Wit-booka replies "Where do you think they got them from!"

Later on I found that the blue lotus cannot grow very well naturally in the current conditions of the Nile river in Egypt, but flourishes here in Australia because of how our climate and how our soil erosion systems and flood seasons operate.

There are many stories told and hidden accounts and also Egyptian artefacts found that suggest the ancient Egyptians once came here and could have returned home with the Aussie blue lotus.

In Egypt the blue lotus is the only known flower to have a God represent it. The ancient Egyptian God Nefertem is said to have emerged from primeval waters as a blue lotus flower.

And if you think about it much of Egyptian culture depicts the blue lotus in head dresses, architecture, and art including the colours of purple, blue, and gold that are also representative of this magical east coast Australian foraged flower.

## Coconut Palm

The coconut palm is one of our most easily recognisable and iconic island plants and it has so many fabulous uses. Found growing as far south along our coast as Coffs Harbour, but thriving more in the tropical regions of north Queensland, coconut flesh and waters always as very special foraged treat.



Some small coastal trees up north Queensland even have low hanging coconuts that can easily be reached and opened with an axe or machete. Other larger trees must be climbed or often up north Queensland seaside towns you can find dropped ripe coconuts on the ground.



Coconut water is filled with electrolytes including sodium, potassium, and manganese to quench the thirst quick. Also very high in antioxidants and nutrients and also is known to help lower blood sugar levels.

Coconut water also can assist healthy heart function and operation of the kidneys and has been used to help remove kidney stones. Coconut meat is rich in fibre and can also assist in heart health and maintaining healthy weight levels and can be eaten raw or dried to store and consume later.

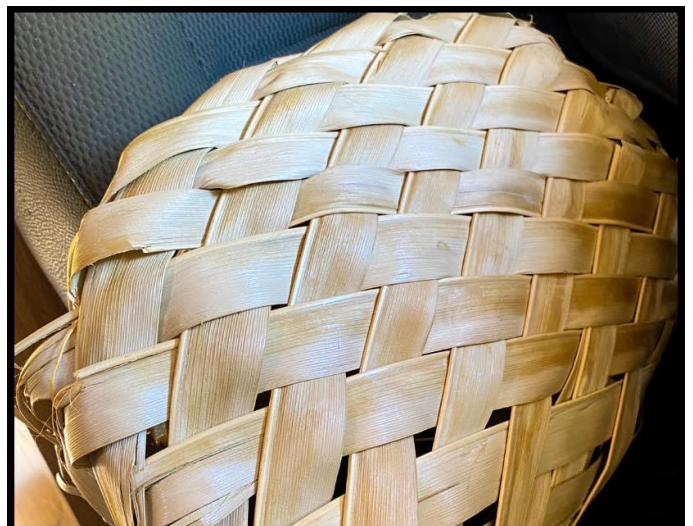
Cream can be made by scooping the thick top layer of cold coconut water. Coconut cream and milk can also be made by blending up fresh or soaked dried coconut flesh and can be used in both sweet deserts and savoury dished like curries.

A wonderful high temperature healthy oil can be also produced from coconut meat. Coconut oil is made by cooking coconut cream down on a medium heat occasionally stirring until the oil is produced. Coconut water can also be fermented to make vinegar.

Whist running workshops up north Queensland I had the opportunity to sit in on a workshop to weave a small basket from coconut palm prongs. The prongs are very large, strong and versatile leaves for use in weaving and many other useful products and applications including making plates, packaging, brooms, hats, baskets, floor mats, partition walls, and roof thatching.

Palm roots can be used to make tooth brushes and the coconut shells can make awesome bowls, utensils, and used in creative projects.

Palm trunks can be used in building applications, making containers, drums and furniture and are regularly used by many island nations to build canoes.



## **Pandanus**

The coastal Pandanus tree grows in abundance from Southern New South Wales right up the Queensland coast and across the coastal top end of Australia and around to the top part of Western Australia. Pandanus fruit when in season are large orange seedpods that group together.



The Pandanus fruit should be roasted in fire ash or boiled well first to remove the toxins which can cause diarrhoea, sore swollen lips and blistered tongue if eaten raw. After roasting the pods can be split with an axe or large knife to remove the seeds and pulp.

In traditional medicine pandanus was used for pain relief including arthritis and joint pain, to treat constipation, and also for headaches and earaches

Pandanus seeds are high in fat and protein and the fruit pulp is high in vitamin C, calcium, protein, phosphorus, iron, thiamin, and beta-carotene.

Another interesting quite interesting fact about the Pandanus is the tree can actually slowly walk with its leg-like root system up to many metres per year. So if a pandanus is not where you saw it last it may have gone walkabout.



## Mat Rush

Mat Rush grows all along east coast of Australia particularly next to waterways. Many dislike this plant as they do not understand the benefits to our waterways. It has strong deep intertwining root systems that hold together creek and river banks and guard them against erosion.



The bases of the long grassy leaves when pulled or cut away from the plant have a short white section where pulled away that is edible. The edible white section can be cut away and used in salads and the remaining leaves can be used for weaving.

Careful when using fingers to pull away the long grassy leaves as they can easily give sharp paper cuts.

The yellow flowers that grow from the spikes in the centre of the plant produce a sweet nectar that can be mixed with water to make a sugary drink, or carefully licked for a sweet sugary treat on the go.

The seeds that form on the spikes can be ground up and used for baking and making breads.



## Blue Quandong

The Blue Quandong of Queensland and New South Wales is the blue fruit of the *Elaeocarpus* family of trees, one of the tallest trees found in the rainforest reaching heights of over 30 meters.



These tall growing forest trees hold special keys. Keys to health and vitality, life force energy, immunity and protection. Protection of heart and protection of malefic or spiritual attack.

The round blue fruit is usually 2-3cm in diameter and on the outside there is only a thin layer of flesh covering the seeds. This can be consumed fresh, or scraped away from the seed then crushed and mixed with water to create an edible paste and our tradition custodians kept this paste wrapped in bark for when needed for food or medicinal purposes.

The sherbet tasting blue fruit that finely covers the large seeds is very high in vitamin c and antioxidants. When eating the fallen ripe blue fruits look out for holes in the flesh as a white grub likes to burrow in and eat them too.

The large seeds can be ground or used as jewellery for protection and healing including in Vedic traditions healing of ailments of the heart.

Quandong flesh has a vitamin C content twice that of oranges and contains many other active ingredients including iron, zinc, magnesium, calcium, complex oils, vitamin E, antioxidants, and protein making them a native Australian superfood.

The seeds are of the Rudraksha type known in India for making sacred jewellery of protection and can be ground to make ancient Vedic medicines for ailments and diseases of the heart.



## Green Quandong



Recently I have been using the green quandong fallen branches timber chopped into short lengths as replacement for Palo Santo. It is a very light soft timber that lights easily, burns slowly and with not too much smoke. It has a wonderful both calming, evoking and protective effect with a fresh scent similar to the burning of pine.

Also known as a variety of Ceylon olive the green quandong can be bottled to preserve in a vinegar brine mixture.

To make just over a litre of vinegar brine mix together approximately 80 grams of salt with 200 ml of vinegar with 800 ml of water. Then fill a jar with pitted green quandongs and pour in the vinegar brine and add and desired herbs for flavour and seal and store.





## Bamboo

Bamboo is such a fast growing resource that can be found along the east coast. Young bamboo shoots are quite a delicacy and are prepared to eat in 5 easy steps

- 1/ Break off the young ground shoots
- 2/ De-husk
- 3/ Cut off and discard green parts
- 4/ Chop up and bottle the white dinner flesh
- 5/ Sit for 1 week to ferment either plain, or with water and lemon juice, or with vinegar adding herbs to taste.

The week long fermentation time is essential to remove arsenic type alkaloids, but once fermented the bamboo shoots are delicious and nutritious and safe to eat.

Adult bamboo is easy to harvest and a very sustainable and versatile building material.



## Sheoak



There are many sub-species of sheoak that grow along coastal areas and also sheoaks that can survive in inland areas of Australia.

With around 50 different types of sheoak in Australia and so many uses for this versatile life-giving, healing and nourishing tree. This is a great plant to know and a personal favourite of mine.

Currently in New South Wales sheoak are protected for reason of their root system's support of river and coastal landscapes. The river

sheoak's root system can grow deep and intertwines in a thick mat to prevent soil and land erosion.

I like to use sheoak end branch tips in making smudge sticks as the cylindrical needles burn a wonderful cleansing, healing and evoking smoke.

Fresh leaves can be chewed on to produce saliva in times of drought and the tiny bulb like buds that form in winter can also be chewed on for sustenance. The seeds are edible and can be roasted and eaten. The sap is also a source of water in an emergency situation.

Where sheoaks are growing can also be an indicator of fresh groundwater tables when trying to locate drinking water. Where borers tunnel into the tree's trunk there is an edible gum produced that can be collected and is highly energising to suck on. This gum was used just like frankincense for burning in ceremonies.

The young green cones can be sucked or chewed to help with toothache as they have both ant-bacterial and anaesthetic properties. The wood pulp of the sheoak tree was also mixed with water and swished around the mouth for toothache.

A tea made from the bark is still commonly used all around the world for toothache, sore throat, coughs, headaches, diarrhoea, beri-beri, infections, tropical ulcers, and bruising. The leaves, bark and stem are also regarded as a contraceptive.

Its wonderful dark hardwood timber was once used for making boomerangs, tool handles, shields, hurdles, shingles, clubs, mauls and bullock yokes.

To this day sheoak remains a highly desirable timber for wood turning as it produces what is referred to as a birds-eye timber finish which is the unique design on the polished grain of the timber that looks similar to many little eyes.

The timber is also great for firewood burning as it is known to burn at much higher temperatures than most other timbers and leaving very little ash, sheoak branches will also burn green pulled straight from the tree.

Sheoak ash can be used used to make soap and ash produced from burning the leaves and mature brown cones was used for the extraction of salt. The ash can also be used as an ingredient in spice mixes, and sheoak sawdust is still used and sold for smoking purposes.

Most importantly our threatened Glossy black cockatoo and many parrots and native birds thrive off our remaining 143 million hectares of sheoak forests here in Australia. Let us respect her and work with the spirit of the wonderful sheoak tree.



## **Bracken fern**

Use the young fiddle head soft shoots for bites and stings and great bush tucker when cooked up.



The high amounts of aluminium sulphate contained in the young tips seem to sooth stings and pains very efficiently when crushed and rubbed into the affected area.

One lady in our off grid group boils them up and strains, and if her dogs get a tick bite she gives them a teaspoon every 15-30 minutes until she is sure there's no reaction.

Young curls should only be consumed after cooking and are high in protein but consider the rest of the plant including the mature leaves toxic.

When cooked the young fiddle heads have flavours of almond, asparagus and kale combined so it is no surprise they are still considered a delicacy in many countries including the Japan, U.S, and Korea.

Cooked bracken fern fiddle heads have omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids, are high in protein, have vitamins A and carotenes, iron, manganese, potassium, and copper.

Bracken fern leaves can also be used to line fruit baskets or as animal bedding, and were also used as a brown clothing dye.



## **Bunya Nuts**

Bunya trees are native to South East Queensland up as far as Bundaberg. Bunya nuts are similar in size and taste to chestnuts.



They are also quite filling and starchy containing carbohydrates, protein, fats, potassium and magnesium.

Bunya nuts were traditionally roasted in the ashes of an open fire but can also be consumed raw, or boiled for 20-30 minutes. When roasted in fire ash the shell will open more easily and if boiling or eating raw a knife is required to cut into the shell.

Bunyas can also be ground to be used as a gluten free flour for baking purposes.

The cones containing bunya nuts are huge and weigh as much as 10kg when they drop to the ground so be careful standing or parking your vehicle under a bunya tree in season.

Bunya trees take around 100 years till they begin producing nuts and yield nuts only once every 2-3 years after it has reached maturity.

Bunya shoots are also edible and the bark of the bunya tree can be used as kindling for fires.





## Macadamia

Native to Central and South east Queensland and North eastern New South Wales the macadamia tree is an icon of Australia producing the creamy and most tasty and healthy nut.



Inside the green pod is a very hard round shell that is around 5 times tougher than a hazelnut shell. This shell requires a heavy stone, hammer or a hardy nut cracker to break open and free the nut for consuming.

Containing high levels fibre, minerals, vitamins and healthy fats, but also being low in sugar content Macadamia nuts are a very tasty treat for the health nut (excuse the pun).

Macadamia nuts are also very high in manganese which is an essential mineral for maintaining healthy bones, tissue, blood and hormone function.

Macadamia nuts can be eaten raw, roasted, used in pesto, or to make creamy plant based cheese or milk. Ground macadamia nut flour can be used to bake delicious gluten free bread, muffins, cakes and biscuits.



## Lilly Pilly

There are many species (around 60) of Lilly pilly in Australia that range in size from small bushes to large trees growing as tall as 30 meters in natural rainforest locations. The fruits of all of them are edible, however some taste sweeter and some quite tart or bland.



You will often find these brightly coloured small fruits of varying shades of pink to purple to red whilst creek exploring, and they can make a wonderful fresh energy burst of a snack.

Lilly pilly fruit can be eaten raw or used to make, sauces, jams and even a cordial drink. The fruits also have anti-bacterial and anti-

inflammatory properties as well as vitamin E, magnesium and potassium.

The pulp of the Lilly pilly fruit can also be used to treat ear infections and is also great for hair, scalp and skin treatments.



## Smooth flax lily

Part of the Dianella family please note it could be confused with *Dianella tasmanica* (a larger plant with larger berries commonly found in Melbourne council areas), *Dianella intermedia* and *Dianella ensifolia* and *Dianella Tasmanica* are all said to be toxic and should not be consumed.



Edible varieties are said to include *Dianella caerulea*, *Dianella Longifolia* and *Dianella Revoluta*.

Flowering spring through to summer the small berries when turned blue are good to eat raw and taste delicious. Colonial people were said to have used the berries as a permanent blue dye possibly for clothing and linen.

The roots were also pounded, roasted and eaten. Flax lily root and leaf tea is ancient medicine for colds and headaches.



## **Bulrush**

Bulrush is an aquatic plant that grows throughout Australia and is rich in starch and an important source of fibre and protein by Australian original peoples.



Young bulrush shoots can be eaten raw or cooked and used in a salad. The young shoots are much likened to asparagus.

The immature unopened green flowering buds can be boiled and eaten but be aware there is a stem in the centre of them that needs to be eaten around and then discarded.

When the male flowers have opened they have a yellow pollen that has very high protein content which can be used in breads and baking.

The underground stems of the plant are known as rhizomes. This part is high in starch content and carbohydrates and can be cooked by steaming or roasting them. Once steamed you can chew on the rhizomes to extract the starch content. The remaining fibres left after consuming the starch can also be used to make string.

Bulrush has also been used over the ages by native peoples for cushioning as the mature female flowers become like cotton, and can also be used for insulation and building purposes.





## **Finger Lime**

Finger limes grow well along the east coast of New South Wales and Queensland in shady heavy rainfall areas. Trees grow up to 6 meters. The fruit is small growing only up to around 10cm long and 2-3cm wide, but are very tasty with a caviar like appearance when cut open and squeezed out.



The colours of finger limes fruit may vary from pink to yellow, to dark brown and black, and they have a shelf life of 4-5 weeks, but can also be frozen and thawed without significant loss of flavour or texture.

The fruits are ripe when they easily break away from the tree with a quick twist or tug. They are an excellent source of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, potassium and folate.

They can be consumed raw or sprinkled over a salad to add zest. Finger limes can also be used as in jams, marmalades, chutneys and sauces.



## **Farmer's friends aka Cobblers pegs**

You may know this plant by its pronged needle like seeds that get attached to your clothing when walking through the bush.



A great way to utilise these seeds is to run a shirt or some type of clothing through to pick up many of the seeds then wash the shirt in a river with the seeds attached. Hang the shirt up to dry and this will result in sprouting and the sprouted seeds can then be picked off of the clothing and eaten.

The yellow flowers are also edible and the young plants, leaves shoots and tips can also be cooked up.

## Jackfruit

Growing in the tropical areas of north Queensland is the most wonderful and satisfying, healthy and nutritious meal that can be both sweet and savoury.



Young jack fruit can be made into an awesome substitute for pork cooked or braised with some simple herbs and spices.

A favourite quick dish of mine is young jackfruit flesh panfried with chilli and some sesame oil. Break the jackfruit up to a tuna type consistency with a fork whilst cooking in some sesame oil with

cayenne pepper, and accompanied with rice it has the most wonderful plant based chilli tuna flavour and texture.

More mature jackfruit which has a strong scent unopened is a very sweet delicious fruit reminiscent of mango mixed with pineapple flavours and is a true delicacy and one of my favourite fruits.

When cutting into a jackfruit they have a liquid latex inside that seeps out and sticks like a rubbery glue to everything including your hands and the knife. The best way I have found to cleanly cut open jackfruit is to do it in a flowing stream or under tap and coat the knife blade first with olive oil to prevent this white natural latex glue from sticking. This latex glue could also have many wildcrafting applications also as a form of natural rubber and or glue.

The jackfruit is the largest tree grown fruit with fruit weighing up to 45kg in Queensland!



## **Grass tree**

Grass trees are found throughout Australia particularly on both the east and west coast, however please note the grass tree is classified as protected throughout Queensland.



The hard gum beads on the stalk below the flowers pictured can be sucked on and dissolves in the mouth for sustenance. The nectar on the flowers is sweet and can be licked off or dipped in water to make a sweet drink.

The long stem that grows out of the top middle of a grass tree produces a sweet nectar when in flower that attracts bees and insects. This nectar can also be licked straight off and will give you a wonderful energy boost. This sweet nectar can also be mixed in water for a refreshing drink.

The stalk is perfect for starting a fire in the traditional rubbing method, and the sap from the base of the tree is a powerful glue and was also used for waterproofing canoes boats and huts.



In emergency situations the heart of the plant has a package of starch which is also edible but this will take the life of the plant, large quantities consumed may cause stomach upset.

To consume this starchy white flesh without doing too much harm to the tree pull a leaf out from the main trunk of an older more mature tree. This white meat on the end has a flavour like fresh coconut meat.

## **Fringed violet or Fringed lily**

The breathtakingly beautiful fringed violet grows in high rainfall areas of south eastern Australia and south eastern coastal areas of Victoria.



Fringed violet essence is also used to repair and protect the auric field. The flower seems to shapeshift as the wind hits its purple feather style petals and the sunlight dances on its surface. Each magnificent flower bloom only lasts for just one day.

The crisp tasting underground tubers are edible and also has a symbiotic fungus around them that glows like an Aura.



## Pig Face

Pigface is commonly found on sand dunes by the beach and its salty thick leaves can be eaten raw or pickled and preserved or cooked, and the sweet red fruit it produces can also be eaten raw.



The flesh tends to have a slightly gelatinous texture similar to that of a kiwi fruit, strawberry or even a fig with a salty twist. It is also great in a pickle, chutney or jam. Every part of this plant is edible, eaten raw or cooked.

You can consume the leaves, the flowers and the fruits. Pig face is a great Aussie addition to salads and stir fries. Pig face leaves are also perfect to pickle. To make a pickled jar of pig face leaves simply cut away some the thick leaves and put them in a jar with equal parts vinegar and water.

Pig face leaf juice can be used as a mild astringent, and applied to the skin, it is a popular emergency treatment for jellyfish and similar stings.

When mixed with water it can be used to treat diarrhoea and stomach cramps. Pigface juice can also be used as a gargle for sore throat, laryngitis, and mild bacterial infections of the mouth. The juice can also be used externally, much like aloe vera, for wounds, mosquito bites and sunburn, and is also used to treat skin conditions.

I like to fry up pigface succulent leaves with other foraged much thinner leafy vegetables like vigna marina with sesame oil and tamari for a healthy foraged meal



## **Purslane**

City folk often see purslane as a weed, however the exact opposite is true as Purslane is one of the more nutritious leafy green vegetables on earth. It is loaded with antioxidants, minerals, omega-3 fatty acids and many beneficial plant compounds.



The leaves, stems, flowers, and seeds of the purslane plant are all edible. They have a slightly sour taste but purslane is terrific as part of a salad.

Its uses as a purgative, cardiac tonic, emollient, muscle relaxant, and anti-inflammatory and diuretic treatment makes it very useful

in herbal medicine. Purslane has also been used in the treatment of osteoporosis and psoriasis.

Purslane is also a remedy for insomnia, is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, can help prevent headaches and migraines, and help build strong, healthy bones.



## **Aussie Black bean also known as Moreton Bay Chestnut**

The Moreton bay chestnut tree is found along coastal Queensland by creeks and in rainforest locations. The beans takes some preparation time and soaking to remove the alkaloids but they are quite substantial and many pods come off a mature tree with between 3-5 beans per pod.



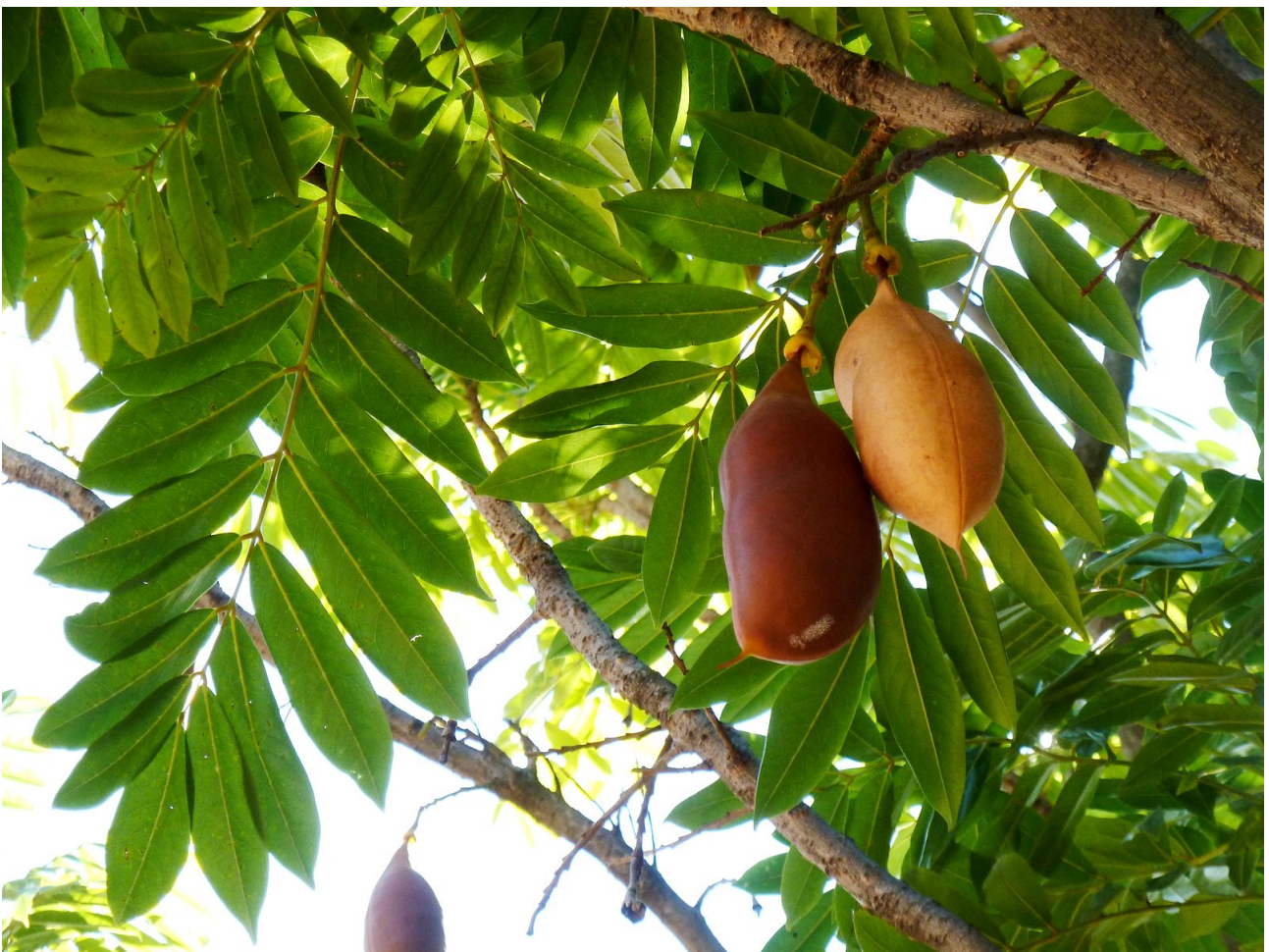
For medicinal use the seed yields compounds called castanospermine that are under review as HIV inhibitors and may be useful in the treatment of AIDS and other immunity issues.

The fresh raw seed contains high levels of saponins and can be harmful. The cooked seed tastes like a sweet chestnut.

Common practice was to finely slice the seeds and soak them in running water for 10 days before cooking them to eat or roasting them and grinding them into a powder. This powder could be stored for later use. The seeds are about 3 - 4.5cm wide and are carried in pods 10 - 25cm long and containing 3 - 5 seeds.

Because of the high saponin content the seeds could also be used as a soap substitute.

The timber of the tree is very durable and polishes well, it also has a high resistance to the passage of electrical currents and has been used in construction, cabinet making, and carving.



## **Bauhinia orchid tree**

These trees can grow quite large and there are some wonderful ones by Brisbane river. One tree has white orchid flowers and the other bauhinia tree there has pink flowers.



The orchid flowers bloom in the middle of winter and are blossoming into spring and are edible with the pink ones tasting of sweet candy. Soon after flowering an abundance of seed pods cover these trees. The pods can be steamed or cooked and the beans inside are delicious. The young leaves and shoots are also edible and can also be cooked like spinach.

All parts of this tree including the leaves, flowers, stems, bark and roots have been found to contain many types of phytochemicals which are so beneficial to the health of the human bodily system.

Bauhinia tree leaves have cancer and diabetes health benefits and also anti-fungal, ant-microbial, and can help maintain blood glucose levels. Bauhinia leaves are also known to stop snails and slugs in the garden.

The flowers can assist with diabetes, diarrhoea, and can lower bad cholesterol whilst maintain good cholesterol levels, and have antioxidant properties.

The bark off of the bauhinia tree has antioxidants, is antimicrobial, has benefits in reducing tumours and healing ulcers. The bark has an immunomodulatory effect which enables the body to adjust the immune system to fight cancer, disease, and infections and also contains substances to properly form blood cells that have healthy amounts of iron, vitamin b12, and folic acid, and can also help prevent liver damage.

The root bark has been used for treating obesity and also has antioxidants. Roots of the bauhinia tree can be used in wound healing, and have anti-inflammatory properties. The roots can also fortify neuronal cells which can have so many benefits on the nervous system functioning correctly, and can prevent mutation of our cells and our DNA.





## Native Ginger

The roots of the plant have a slight ginger flavour and have lots of fibre. The leaves can also be used for wrapping and cooking food in the coals of a fire. The blue berries are also edible and I quite like their taste but it is advisable to spit out the seeds as they can cause slight stomach upset.



This plant has many wonderful uses and I am finding new ones all the time. Recently when pondering good leaves for sustainable toilet paper I realised native ginger is perfect. The large green leaves pull away from the plant with ease and are so soft and work probably better than most toilet papers on your bottom.

## **Bangalow Palm**

The Bangalow palm is another very common native plant to Australia found in forests and woodland areas.

It's new shoots and younger just forming leaves can be eaten both cooked or raw.



In the centre of the long trunk lies it's heart as undifferentiated leaf matter the palm trunk can be cut off from the top area just where the large external leaves grow from down to a few feet from the base, and then by removing the outward layers you will reveal the heart which can be consumed.

Palm hearts are very high in both fibre and protein. Palm hearts said to be beneficial for heart and brain function and repair of tissues.

Once the outer layers have been removed the cylindrical tubes of inner hearts can be sliced and stored in jars filled with water or brine. Brine is salty water for preserving at a mix of approximately 1

tablespoon of salt to every cup off warm water used and mixed then allowed to cool.

Palm hearts can be cooked by a variety of methods including oven baking, frying, grilled, or braised.



## **Vigna Marina**

Also known as yellow beach pea, beach bean, dune bean or field bean and is a member of the legume family and genus of black eyed peas.

Found on coastal areas and beaches of Australia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Brazil, India, Taiwan, China, Sri Lanka, Bahia, Africa, and many other places too.

This plant has been found to be high in zinc, iron and protein.

The leaves I find delicious pan fried with sesame oil but can also be blanched.

When cooked in curries stews and soups the addition of coconut cream will increase the availability and conversion of vitamin A by increasing carotenoid availability.

The green pods can be steamed or cooked with coconut cream and the tuberous roots can be roasted or boiled.

The seeds can be used as food or as a coffee substitute when roasted and then boiled.

Mashed leaves and stalks of the plant can be ground up and used like aloe vera on burns, cuts, boils, ulcers and other skin conditions.



## **Blackberry nightshade**

The leaves and only the ripe black berries are edible and closely resemble tomato in taste. Caution the green berries can be toxic.



The berries grow in bunches not individually as individual berries are a deadly nightshade variety and as the name suggests toxic. Blackberry nightshade ripe black berries can be eaten raw and the leaves can be steamed or cooked like spinach.