

Bush Food Plants

of the South East

The Aboriginal people of the South East were true hunters and gathers. While they had many choices of food including meat from animals, plants also made up a proportion of their food requirements. This poster describes some of those plants.



Native Pigface

Carpobrotus rossii
KEENG-A (BOANDIK) NGANINGI (NGARRINDJERI)
PUUYUUPKIL (GUNDITJIMARA)
Fleshy fruits where eaten raw when ripe (pinkish red colour). Green leaves also eaten raw or cooked and eaten with meat. Leaves often have a salty flavour. Skin peeled off before eating.



Muntries

Kunzea pomifera
MUNTER, NGURP (BOANDIK)
Berries eaten fresh or pounded together to make a paste which was dried and eaten later. Ripe fruits have a dry apple, peach taste.



Sweet Apple-berry

Billardiera cymosa ssp. *Cymosa*
KUNDUWI (BOANDIK)
Ripe fruit regarded as one of the tastiest bush fruits with an aniseed flavour.



Black Wattle

Acacia mearnsii
KARRA (BOANDIK)
Important source of gum, which was chewed. Balls of gum were kept and carried about, eaten or dissolved in water with flower nectar to make sweet drinks.



Golden Wattle

Carpobrotus rossii
NAL-A-WORT (BOANDIK)
The gum was eaten, or mixed with water and nectar from flowers to make sweet drinks. When mature, seeds were ground to a flour and mixed with water to make a paste. Seeds offer a high source of carbohydrate, protein and fibre.



Common Reed

Phragmites australis
CHARR-AK, KAERK, TAARK, JOARK
Underground shoots where eaten, they taste like bamboo shoots. The long straight flowering stems were used for spear shafts.



Black-anther Flax-lily

Billardiera cymosa ssp. *Cymosa*
PEEINTUCK (NGARRINDJERI)
Plant has medicinal uses. The juice of the berries were known to fight colds. The underground stems were cleaned and chewed, good for colds also. Some species of *Dianella* have poisonous berries.



Common Vanilla-lily

Arthropodium strictum
BO-AN (BOANDIK) EDIBLE ROOT
Tubers can be dug up once they have developed near the base of the plant. Tubers were eaten raw but usually roasted first. High in carbohydrates and sweet tasting.



Old Man's Beard

Clematis microphylla
YALKURA, YALKARI, TAARUK, TAROOK
Long fibrous roots were dug up and cooked in and over hot coals, then kneaded into a dough. When not cooked the young roots often taste peppery. Very high in starch.



Narrow-leaf Bulrush

Typha domingensis
MIR-NAT (BOANDIK)
YUWATCH (GUNDITJIMARA) MANANGKARI, POORTEETCH
The new shoots and the underground stems were both eaten and have a potato like taste. The roots were usually cooked and roasted, then chewed. The fibre remaining after the root was chewed and the starch was removed were twisted and made into string. The new shoots were eaten raw as a salad. A very important plant.



Milkmaids

Burchardia umbellata
BO-AN (BOANDIK) EDIBLE ROOT
POPOTO (GUNDITJIMARA)
After flowers died off tubers were dug up and cooked before eating. Crisp highly nutritious tubers that look like small carrots.



Kangaroo Apple

Solanum laciniatum
ME-A-KEE (BOANDIK)
MOOKITCH (GUNDITJIMARA)
Collected and fruits eaten only when soft and ripe.



Coast Beard-heath

Leucopogon parviflorus
NGOOR-LE (BOANDIK)
KALATHAMI (NGARRINDJERI)
No cooking required, eaten as a ripe fruit.



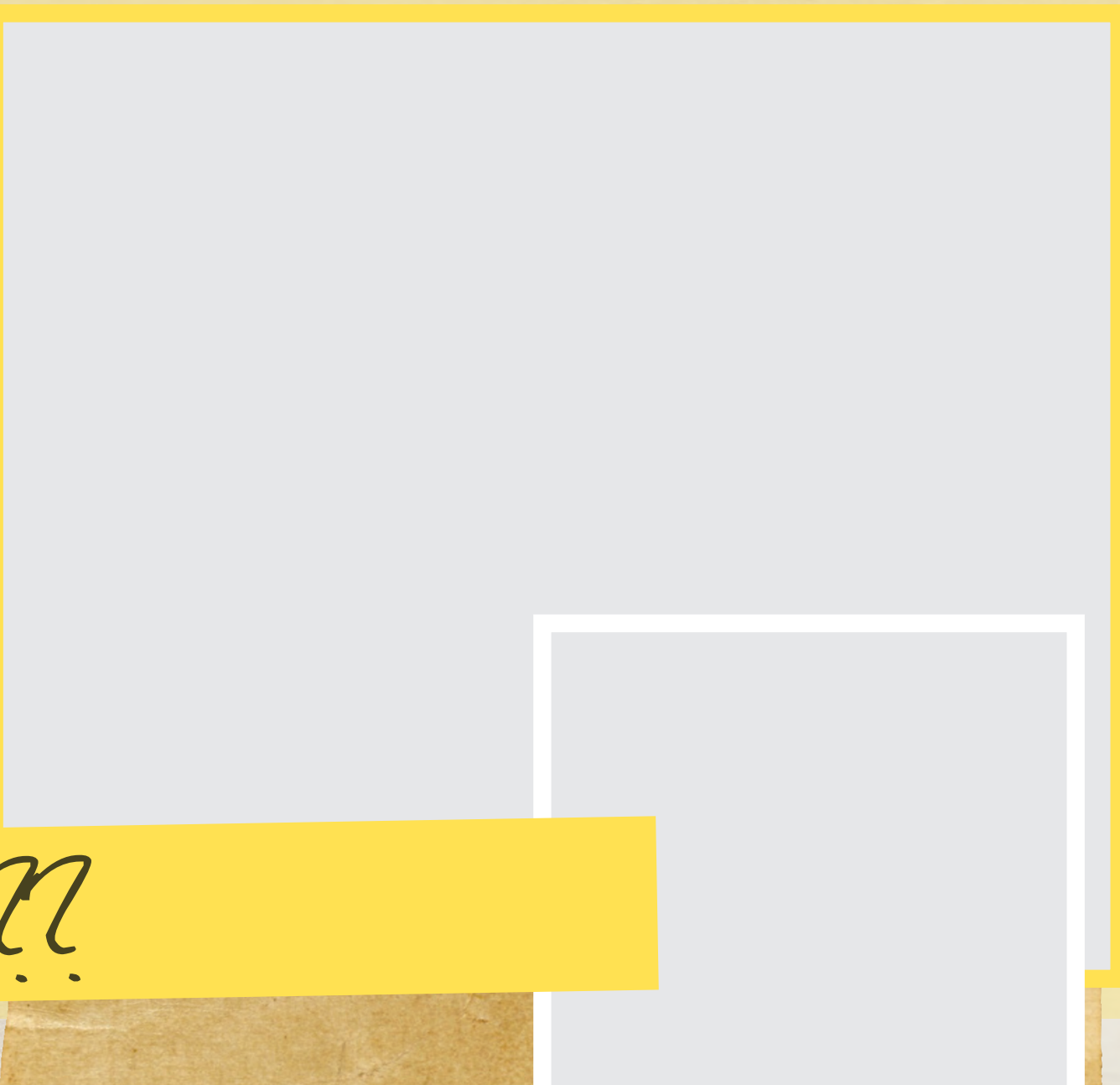
Silver Banksia

Banksia marginata
WROIT (BOANDIK)
LAKARI (NGARRINDJERI)
Flower spikes soaked in water to release plant nectar. This sweet drink sometimes mixed with the gum from Golden Wattle and Black Wattle.



Yam-daisy

Microseris lanceolata
MURNONG (GENERAL)
MUURANG, KEERANG (GUNDITJIMARA)
Tubers dug up and usually cooked in baskets in earth ovens, allowed to cook slowly. Very common plant before European settlement.



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Caution: Do not eat bush food plants without being shown by an experienced person. Some plants are poisonous and extreme care must be taken.

Natural Resources South East would like to acknowledge the traditional land owners of the area. Neville Bonney for his contribution and assistance in compiling this publication. Images courtesy of Neville Bonney, Kathy Bell, Bryan Haywood, Elizabeth Mapletto, Tina Fowler.

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