



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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Table of Contents

Lomandra longifolia – Basket grass or Spiny-head Mat-rush.....	2
Dianella revoluta – Blueberry Lily.....	3
Rubus parvifolius – Small leaved raspberry	4
Microseris lanceolata – Yam daisy	5
Indigofera australis – Austral Indigo.....	6
Bulbine bulbosa – Bulbine Lily or Wild Onion	7
Hardenbergia violacea – Purple coral pea	8
Tasmannia lanceolata - Mountain Pepper	9
Linum marginale – Native Flax or Wide Flax.....	10
Banksia marginate – Silver Banksia	11
Xanthorrhoea species – Grass Trees	12
Burchardia umbellata – Milkmaids or Star-Of-Bethlehem.....	13
Billardiera scandens – Apple Berry or Apple Dumpling	13
Dodonea viscosa sp. – Hop Bush	14
Dichopogon fimbriatus – Chocolate Lily	15
Ajuga australis – Austral Bugle.....	15
Geranium solanderi – Austral Crane’s-bill or Hairy Geranium.....	16
Solanum linearfolia – Kangaroo Apple or Bush Tomato	16
Glycine clandestina – Twining Glycine or Love Creeper.....	17
Callistemon sp. - Bottlebrushes	17

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.

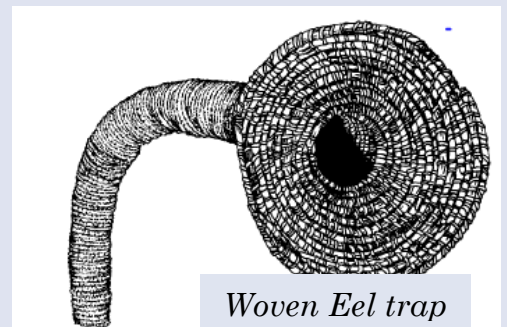


Lomandra seed

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.



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

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.

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