IPHA Newsletter #23

Summer 2023 edition

www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com

IPHA Presidents Report for AGM 4/12/23

President Jen Stroh

Dear Members

Nara or 'hello' in Badtjala language (Fraser Coast region, QLD)

I am honoured to have represented our Association from early this year after Kerrie Oakes' few months stint in this capacity. Over the past year we have continued to promote the knowledge and benefits of Australian indigenous plants for health and well-being.

Membership:

We welcome new and renewing members who share our passion for exploring the healing properties of indigenous plants. We currently have 93 members comprising 74% in NSW, 22% in QLD, one person in each of VIC, TAS & WA.

Educational Initiatives:

Our Association continues its commitment to education through Field days, quarterly IPHA Newsletter articles, sale and distribution of our 72 pack of well informed, beautifully illustrated (by member Kat) Plant Knowledge Cards, Website resources, social media involvement and informal sharing amongst members. We've printed another batch of 1000 Plant cards which continue to sell well. We are considering creating another pack as there are so many Plants to honour.

Anyone can access our past informative fascinating Newsletters via www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com.

We have re-visioned our Brochure thanks to members Kate and Mel and the Committee's astute, patient and technical expertise. A banner for use at Events is in progress.

Collaborations and Partnerships:

In a busy year indeed, we continued to forge valuable collaborations with local Indigenous Elders and communities where we held our Field Days at Foxbar Falls, Amiens QLD, Woodford 'TreeHuggers' QLD (in conjunction with the QLD Bushfoods Association), Hunter Botanical gardens NSW and Somersby NSW. Our Yandina QLD Field day was cancelled due to low numbers. IPHA with Andrew had a stand at the Stanthorpe EcoExpo on the Granite Belt, QLD which garnered a lot of interest.

All these events take a lot of time and energy to prepare and run. So a shout out to the incredible organising by Committee members Andrew, Pat, Reesa and others.

A big thankyou to all our hosts for sharing your space and wisdom and to all the wonderful presenters from local Plant Nursery folk to Regenerative farming educators to professional Botanists and Bee keepers, Bush crafters and Weavers. We love all the interaction with attendees and the opportunity for outdoor campfires and wild space exploration.

We invite members to share our resources and help connect us with other interested folk.

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Indigenous Plants for Health Association, Inc.

Indigenous Plants for Health (IPHA) is a not-for-profit incorporated association, formed with the objectives of raising awareness, researching Australian health-promoting plants and supporting protection of their habitats.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island Peoples are the Traditional Owners of this country, and they retain their relationship and connection to the land, sea, and community .

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President's report (cont.)

Research and Development:

IPHA actively supports research exploring the therapeutic potential of indigenous plants. We aim to contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the efficacy of traditional plant-based medicine. Our support continues for Jiale Zhang, a PhD student studying the fruit of various *Persoonia* (geebung) species. This has been the second year of a 3-year project at Queensland University.

Challenges and Opportunities:

While celebrating our achievements, we acknowledge the challenges ahead. It is crucial to remain vigilant in promoting ethical practices, cultural sensitivity and environmental stewardship. Opportunities exist for members to actively support us with ideas, Field day preparation, Expos, Newsletter articles (be it a book review or relevant news item), plant monograph research and advertising the value of your Association. As with any non-for-profit organisation, we are as 'fruitful and lush' as our volunteer base.

The Committee invites you all to participate in whatever way you can to ensure a vibrant, relevant, supportive environment for people, plants and the planet. See www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com for our Objectives.

In conclusion:

I welcome and thank you all for your contributions in shaping these important moments. Especially I extend my gratitude to the dedication of the Executive and other Committee members without whom this process would not exist. I note that between us all we have decades of experience in education and training, research, professional clinical practice, books written, workshops and lecturing in theoretical and practical subjects relevant to the IPHA plus a lot of life experience. Join in, it's actually great fun!

On a personal note, this year has provided internal and external expansion for me and my partner through our huge relocation from over 40 years in the hills (Corhanwarrabul on Wurundjeri country – Dandenong Ranges) east of Naarm (Melbourne) to Badtjala country on the Fraser Coast, QLD. Like moving to another country, we are slowly adapting to the new climate, culture, plants, critters and peoples. The joy and challenge of reorienting my relationship with often 'unknown' local endemic plant species has helped me connect to place and ground myself in this beautiful country. We are privileged to assist as custodians for a brief flicker of time. Let's do what we can. Jen.

IPHA News

Recently the IPHA donated some Australian Medicinal and Edible Plants Knowledge Cards to the Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School in Coffs Harbour which were gratefully received. This school is the first independent Aboriginal bilingual school in NSW. It started in 2022 with Kindy to Year 2. In 2023, Years 3 & 4 were added. Its vision is "Empowering our kids to be Gumbaynggirr Daari!" (Daari means strong). It includes Wajarr (country); Guunu-warluuny (culture); Miindalay-gam (wisdom).

A large part of the curriculum is cultural with the children thriving as they learn language, ceremony, dances, songs, stories, custodianship & bush tucker & medicine. The Knowledge Cards will become a teaching tool, with the teachers using the cards to illustrate the plant names. To find out more about this school visit their website: www.giinganaschool.org.au

Meet our new committee members

Fred Fetherston

Fred Fetherston lives at Wootton on Worimi land on the NSW mid north coast with inherited interest and curiosity for medicinal plants from his pharmacist father. Fred and Sue both grew up bushwalking and growing native plants with their families and friends and continue to enjoy learning and sharing these passions. They received funding to assist with planting and growing 12ha of forest, that includes plants and fungi to provide future resources for people whilst improving water quality, erosion, habitat and biodiversity.

Felicity Kerslake

Felicity Kerslake, proud Wiradjuri woman, naturopath, nutritionist and permaculturalist with over 20 years of experience and a lifetime passion for supporting health naturally using native foods and plants as medicine in a sustainable and accessible way. Felicity is the leading naturopath at the Australian Bushfood Education Centre.

Contact details: : learn@bushfoodeducation.com.au or visit www.bushfoodeducation.com.au for upcoming courses and education.

Rain threatens, but holds off

Eva and Will talking bushfoods and medicine

Botanical printmaking workshop

Storytelling about Aunty Beve Spiers, with local Elder Nina

INDIGENOUS PLANTS FOR HEALTH FIELD DAY REPORT

By Pat Collins

IPHA held a Field Day in the hinterland of the Central Coast NSW at 972 Wisemans Ferry Rd, Somersby on Saturday November 4th, 2023

It was run on a 22.7ha sustainable education hub, which has many garden spaces—bush tucker, orchards and a developing market garden. The group focus is on sustainable food production practices, food security and environmental topics.

The forecast was rain all weekend so lots of shelter was created on the site and we were blessed with the rain keeping away until evening. The day ran smoothly with all speakers coming on time and everyone enjoyed the wonderful meals made by the organisers. 30 adults and 10 children attended the day along with two committee members Reesa and Pat plus her husband Bryant.

Acknowledgement of Country was conducted by Clay Hungerford (Deep Resonance Collective) and followed by Eva Angophora and Will Bettison's Wild Being presentation. Their Wild Being Foundation teaches various ancestral skills and bushcraft, providing experimental learning and connecting with the natural world. They brought along examples of native and local plants such as Mat rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), Geebung (*Persoonia levis*), Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), Warrigal greens (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*), Sandpaper fig (*Ficus coronata*), Pepperbushes (*Tasmania spp.*), Grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea spp.*) and native Raspberry (*Rubus spp.*) They explained their edible, medicinal and bush craft uses.

Wild Beings then taught us how to start a fire using two sticks, the local way, as well as using a bow as other First Nations people do. Will and Eva got their fires started quickly but the rest of us soon learnt how hard it was to make a fire and fully appreciate those that have the skills to do so. www.wildbeings.org

Our next presentation after a delicious lunch was Ben Davis-Alexander (The Wild Pollinator). He took us over to the garden to talk to us about the behaviour, conservation and habitat of our native bees and other native pollinators. Ben is passionate about his native bees and even showed us a nearby hive of native stingless bees, which he had built some years ago. He works in bush regeneration, habitat restoration and revegetation with his beloved bees. Afterwards the kids and adults used recycled products to create homes for native pollinators.

Back to our camping area to meet our next presenter Liz McCarthy of Space Whale art therapy. She is a nature-based, masters qualified art therapist and member of ANZACATA. Space Whale seeks to support wellbeing, build community and weave a new world. She had some fun projects waiting for us to do. She had bags for each participant with a piece of material impregnated with iron. Onto that everyone put leaves that had been soaked and flowers. Next it was rolled up onto a provided stick and tied up in string. This was boiled for an hour. The end patterns were most impressive. Then anyone who needed to vent their frustrations put flowers onto paper and bashed it with a hammer. The finished product was varied but everyone enjoyed the process. www.spacewhale.com.au

Our last presenter for the day was Nina Angelo OAM who is a storyteller, author and artist. Nina carries the stories and spirit of some amazing local knowledge from Aunty Beve Spiers—the last initiated custodian of these lands.

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Field day report cont.

We sat in a circle around the fire and listened as Nina wove her spell over us. She finished by reading what Aunty Beve had written in 2013 just before she died. Just as she read the last words down came the rain. Aunty Beve was making sure we listened to her words.

I'd like to thank all the wonderful presenters, organisers, cooks, the owner of the land, Jill—and Reesa, our hard-working secretary and all the people that attended. We did have a waiting list of ten people and when a few people couldn't come, we quickly filled the spot. We hope to arrange another field day at this central location with different speakers next autumn. It was easily accessible to the Sydney area as well as the greater Central Coast and Hunter Valley. It will be advertised on our webpage, in our newsletter and on Facebook.

P.S. Once again the indefatigable Pat Collins was organizer in chief for a wonderful field day with the support of Bryant. We also appreciate Pat's breadth of knowledge and willingness to share with all of us. Reesa

Indigenous Business Profile

By Felicity Kerslake

Yield LOT 7 is a mixed Agribusiness operating a few kilometers out of Wagga Wagga on the Hume Highway. Offering culturally safe education and native bush botanicals direct to your door. Via our online shop @ Yield-lot7.com.au We also can be found at a few local farmers markets from November to March.

Our list of products ranges from fresh, frozen and packaged native foods. We also have native plant sales for your garden. Please feel free to find us listed on the Supply Nation here

Be warned!! You will want to work slowly down our list of products, so you don't miss any!

Within a few years of operating previously as a business-to-business enterprise. Yield LOT 7 has now moved into the retail space our goal is to give you the customer direct access to fresh native produce. That was once only available to the top restaurants and food outlets. We understand that food is medicine. Our people have been using these products successfully for thousands of years. Not only to sustain them, but as a bush medicine cabinet. At Yield LOT 7 we are dedicated to giving back to our country by respectfully harvesting our heritage.

At Yield LOT 7 we understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and heritage needs to be respected and understood by all who wish to be truly transformed by the taste and holistic benefits to Australian diet.

Whats new for 2024, we are totally over the moon that we will be joining forces with the Wade Institute and Dream Ventour Team in 2024. Bringing our "Relax with a Cherax" products from a dream into a reality. Our new product will be ready to eat, gourmet, sweet crayfish lovingly paired with Australian Native Botanicals. These products take advantage of by-products that would normally go to waste in the commercial Cherax Destructor production industry.

Thanks so much for your support and we will keep you posted on our upcoming market dates.

Don't be a stranger reach out at Jackie Price and make a connection to holistic native foods and cultural education.

IPHA COMING EVENTS

Next IPHA Field Day - April 13th, 2024.

Held at the old Barrington Guest house site, Salisbury (near Dungog, NSW) among 7ha of wet forests in the upper Williams River valley, surrounded by the World Heritage-listed Gondwana rainforests of Barrington Tops National Park

Saturday is the main speakers day with an option for people to sleepover for a campfire dinner/ startalk/music and maybe something artistic on Sunday and/or visit Burraga Swamp to see the sphagnum.

Expect to see edible and medicinal native plants including lilli-pillies (*Syzygium* spp.), pepper-bush (*Tasmannia insipida*), rainforest spinach (*Elatostema reticulatum*), along with sphagnum moss and rainforest fungi.

Camping available Friday and Saturday nights. More details in our next newsletter

The old Barrington Guest House, which burned down in 2006

Yes, you can find IPHA at the Woodford Folk Festival 2023/24. Andrew will be running guided bushfood walks, and giving a bushfoods workshop. Our Plant Knowledge Cards will be on sale at the Festival Shop.

The full Festival Programme Is Live Now!

Learn more on how you can join Andrew for a bush-foods wander or workshop:

https://woodfordfolkfestival.com

The Food-Medicine Interface of Indigenous Medicine and Regulation

By Felicity Kerslake

Recently, Southern Cross University organised a forum in Ballina, NSW, dedicated to exploring the future of natural products. This forum aimed to bring together thought leaders and key stakeholders in a roundtable format to discuss current and emerging challenges, opportunities, and focus areas for the production, practice, and policy surrounding natural health products. One significant aspect of this event was an Indigenous-led panel discussion focused on the interface between food and medicine within Indigenous traditional medicines and foods in Australia and New Zealand.

The panel consisted of esteemed individuals, including Dr Alana Gall, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center for Naturopathic Medicine at Southern Cross University; Emma Rawson Te-Patu, the president-elect of the World Federation of Public Health Associations; Luke Williams, an Indigenous pre-doctoral research fellow and chancellor; and Dr Michael Smith, an adjunct professor at the National Centre for Natural Product Research at the University of Mississippi. Together, they shed light on the intricate relationship between cultural practices, regulatory issues, access, and the protection of indigenous uses of foods and medicines.

Australian Indigenous medicine offers a unique perspective on the intricate relationship between food and medicine. By recognising the healing properties of traditional foods, Indigenous Australians have developed a holistic approach to well-being that balances physical, mental, and spiritual health.

However, with Indigenous medicines an export priority, creating a workable and ethical solution to regulate Indigenous foods-medicines presents challenges and opportunities. One of the main challenges is the need for more standardised documentation and scientific evidence for traditional healing practices. Traditional knowledge is typically passed down through generations orally, making it challenging to meet the documentation requirements of regulatory bodies. Oral recollections are not accepted by any regulatory body across the world. There are also variations around what constitutes a food and what constitutes a complementary medicine, a grey area currently serving as a protective measure for indigenous communities by allowing them to continue to access and use foods as medicines in traditional cultural ways.

This challenge also presents an opportunity to bridge the gap between traditional healing practices, modern scientific research, and regulatory bodies such as the TGA. Collaborations between Indigenous communities, researchers, regulators, and healthcare professionals can help document and validate traditional healing methods. By combining traditional knowledge with scientific evidence from various science disciplines, Indigenous medicine can gain greater recognition and acceptance within mainstream healthcare systems.

Another challenge is the potential for cultural appropriation and misuse of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous medicine is deeply rooted in cultural traditions and should be respected. Safeguarding Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights and ensuring that traditional healers are appropriately recognised and compensated is essential for maintaining the integrity of Indigenous medicine.

As we navigate the regulatory landscape and work towards greater recognition and respect for Indigenous medicine, it is crucial to honour and value the traditional knowledge and practices of Indigenous Australians. By doing so, we can preserve an invaluable cultural heritage and tap into the vast potential of Australian Indigenous medicine for the benefit of all.

Restoring ecosystem and the medicinal plant *Acacia implexa* under threat due to African olive invasion

A new study examined Australian shrublands invaded by African olive trees (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*). These disrupt partnerships between native *Acacia implexa* trees and underground rhizobia bacteria. *Acacia implexa* gets nutrients from rhizobia housed in root nodules while providing the bacteria with sugars.

But in soils damaged by invasive olives, populations of these useful rhizobia plunged. Acacia seedlings in those soils formed fewer nutrient-providing nodules than the seedlings grown in healthy soils. Reintroducing the right rhizobia strains originally present could restart successful teamwork between the trees and bacteria. The paper states that analysing interaction networks between species can pinpoint the most valuable microbes to replenish. Generalist bacteria and fungi that partner with many native plants may be especially useful. They can give restored ecosystems a jumpstart in recovering diverse, functional plant communities.

Acacia implexa—hickory wattle

From www.botany.one

Edible succulents—Australian Pigface and Pigweed. Part 2

By Attila Kapitany

Carpobrotus

Carpobrotus is a complex genus of variable species with some distinguished only by small or subtle differences. Besides the numerous native *Carpobrotus* that exist, there are now various non-native (introduced) species in our gardens. These non-native species are accidentally spreading into parks and bushland, and are also producing hybrids with our native species, confusing identification issues further.

C. glaucesens on the Queensland coast
Photo by Andrew Pengelly

There are four endemic species: *C. glaucescens* from the east coast, *C. modestus* and *C. rossii* from the south coast and *C. virescens* from the west coast. Even to an expert eye, these four can look similar .

During the growing season from June to November, when *Carpobrotus* receive adequate water, healthy foliage colours are usually green or shades of green. This foliage can however easily turn to purple or red shades for a range of reasons. Healthy plants may have reddish extremities only, but this colour can become increasingly prominent and widespread through much of the foliage after stress from weather extremes, salinity, or when plant roots are inactive for any length of time.

C. modestus has the smallest flowers

Carpobrotus modestus, found in South Australia, has the smallest flowers of the genus, always less than 20 mm in diameter, hence its name 'modestus'. Flowers are often very pale, and noticeably weaker, with irregular petal lengths.

Edibility

Fruit of native *Carpobrotus* can be consumed whole or squeezed until the sweeter interior oozes out of a split in its side wall. Always a very popular fruit of Aborigines, and even when plants were without fruit, the slightly salty leaves were favoured and eaten with meat.

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Disphyma

Australia has only one species in the genus *Disphyma*:

Disphyma crassifolium ssp. *clavellatum*, also called Round Leaf Pigface and Rounded Noon-flower. There are no recorded non-native species of this genus growing naturally in Australia, thereby making identification of the native species easy.

A prostrate, perennial creeper that roots freely at each stem node. The mostly upright leaves, 10-70 mm in length, are round or indistinctly three-sided in cross-section and normally have rounded leaf tips (see page 7) However *D. crassifolium* ssp. *clavellatum* can be quite variable with some plants showing slightly angular leaf margins and pointed tips (notably in Tasmania). These features are stable and maintained in cultivation.

Significant in the Landscape

During peak flowering, *Disphyma* is among the most spectacular of Australian native plants. Along with other members of the *Aizoaceae* (viz. *Carpobrotus* and *Sarcozona*), they comprise the most photographed and obvious wild flowers in South Australia in spring. *Disphyma* is commonly found near roadsides, river embankments, drainage channels, seaside dunes, lakeside margins or disturbed sandy soils and, accordingly, are frequently photographed.

Edibility

The fresh leaves can be eaten raw or cooked, and have a mild salty taste. Aborigines made a drink out of crushed leaves and also used the sap as an antiseptic.

Flowering of Disphyma is followed by the very distinctive fruit, which matures as a hard dry seed capsule that remains very erect on the plant for many months, and sometimes, years

Sarcozona

Sarcozona praecox is a perennial small compact shrub reaching 400 mm in height and 1 m in diameter. Leaves can be smooth or rough, often warty and spotty, appearing as if diseased or in poor health, especially in dry conditions. The long, narrow, green to pale blue-green leaves, are slightly triangular in cross section but may appear more plump and rounded after rain. In some locations, *S. praecox* also has a rounded leaf tip, which can be similar to *Disphyma*, which often grows nearby in its habitat. The leaves do not have the creeping habit of the closely related Carpobrotus.

The flowers are pink, often pale, with size generally ranging from 15-30 mm in diameter across much of its distribution range, but larger flowers, 40-50 mm in diameter are common around Port Augusta, South Australia. Solitary flowers, or sets of up to three, are produced at the ends of stems in late winter to mid-spring. *S. praecox* is an inland species, found mostly in arid, often saline, sandy or clay soils in the bottom half of the continent.

Edibility

The fruit is sweet and juicy and so, traditionally, a delicacy.

Cont. p.

Portulaca

P. olearacea purslane

Flowers of *P. olearacea*

P. olearacea inland form

The name Pigweed is used to describe various species of *Portulaca*, in the Family Portulacaceae, primarily *Portulaca oleracea*. These portulacas are well known worldwide under many names. In Europe, *P. oleracea* is best known as purslane. Munyeroo is one of the more well-known Aboriginal names and there are hundreds more names as well.

Portulacas are mostly annual or short-lived perennials growing to 100 mm in height, but mostly prostrate, no higher than 20 mm and reaching over 450 mm in diameter. Stems and leaves are thick and very fleshy; green at first, turning red, purple or brown when old or stressed.

In Australia, there are both native and introduced species often growing together. However pure native populations can still be found in remote, undisturbed soils, often in rocky or stony terrain. *Portulaca oleracea* and the pink/purple flowered form of *P. pilosa* are the only two exotic species that botanists consider were introduced—first into major cities, from which they escaped to grow naturally amongst our native species. While the exotic *P. pilosa* growing here is very consistent in its appearance, *P. oleracea* is not. The latter species is highly variable across its range in Australia. At times, only the yellow flowers clearly define it as *P. oleracea*.

Portulaca oleracea is the most widespread and abundant succulent plant in Australia. Distinguishing the native and the exotic forms of this species is not always easy; however, a few clear contrasting examples are pictured here. The forms of *Portulaca oleracea* found in and around larger coastal towns and surrounding farmland may have been introduced from overseas. However, the inland forms of supposedly the same species are well documented as food in early Aboriginal culture and so are considered to be native. The plants of *Portulaca oleracea* pictured on the upper half of this page are commonly growing as weeds in gardens around Melbourne and Sydney. The picture on the lower half of this page show a

Edibility

An important staple food and water source for Aborigines, especially in the drier inland. All parts of the plant were either eaten raw or cooked. The tiny seeds were harvested and ground into paste and cooked. *P. oleracea* is internationally documented as a useful medicinal and culinary herb with all parts of the plant being used. It was the most widely eaten native vegetable by early European colonists and inland explorers.

Portulaca oleracea can grow rapidly in ideal conditions. When day temperatures reach 30°C or higher, reproductive maturity of seedlings can be reached in a few weeks, at which time they produce copious amounts of seed even without any visible flowering having taken place. Up to 240,000 seeds have been recorded from a single plant.

P. bicolor from Queensland

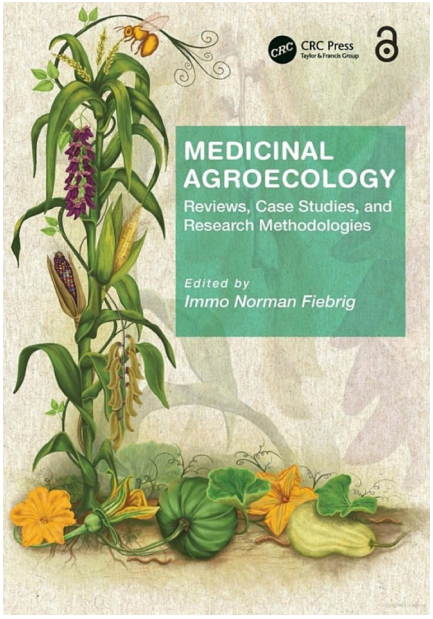
P. intraterranea Alice Springs, NT.

Native Portulaca species

Note: This article derives from a booklet titled *Australian pigface and pigweed*, reproduced in part with the permission of the author, **Attila Kapitany**, available from www.australiansucculents.com

Book review By Andrew Pengelly

Medicinal Agroecology. Reviews, Case Studies and research Methodologies edited by Fiebrig, I.N. (2023) and published by CRC Press.



While the practice of agroecology (AE) has existed for a century or so, medicinal agroecology (MAE) is a newer concept that recognizes medicinal plants as key components within farm designs. For those not familiar with the term agroecology, it can be defined as the interaction between farm, people and other living species by using the principles of ecology. It has 10 basic elements that are recognized by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) , these are diversity, synergy, recycling, efficiency, resilience, circular economy, co-creation of knowledge, responsible governance, human, social and cultural values, and food systems (FAO, 2023, Bickster, 2023).

The leading authority on AE is the Chilian agronomist Miguel A. Altieri, Altieri laid the foundations of the movement through his publications such as *Agroecology: The Science of Sustainable Agriculture* (Altieri, 1995). Along with providing a scientific base, Altieri strongly advocates for traditional farming methods used throughout the world, particularly in "developing" countries, while providing examples of novel agroecosystem designs that have already been modelled on successful traditional farming systems

Unfortunately for our readers there are no Australian examples of MAE in the book under review. I believe this is partly because agroecology itself hasn't really caught on as a movement in this country in the way it has in many other parts of the world. The most popular progressive farming movement in Australia would appear to be Regenerative Agriculture, tending to focus more on grazing and pasture management than on food and medicine plant crops. The author/sheep farmer Charles Massey in his 2017 book— already a classic—"Call of the Reed Warbler", typifies this home-grown movement.

Although the term may not be in use, I believe there are examples of MAE in action in Australia, however that is out of the scope of this book review. I believe the principles and policies laid down here, along with some of the case studies, provide a framework and models that can inspire our forward thinking farmers and researchers to embrace the concept.

One of the key criteria for MAE is achieving food and medicine sovereignty, recognizing the right for all people to have access to the land, water, animals and plants required to grow and distribute healthy produce sustainably. In the chapter titled "Achieving medicinal sovereignty with medicinal plants on an agroecological farm" J. Sucholas et al. provide detailed pharmacognostic, medicinal and ecological profiles of medicinal plant species occurring on an exemplary agroecological farm design in the Central European floristic region. For this design, 9 zones are identified, and plant groups for each zone are provided:

1. culinary herbs 2. medicinal herbs, 3. green manure species 4. plants of forests, 5. weeds on fallow sites, open sites (meadows)7. riparian buffers, 8. windbreaks, 9. flowering strips.

There is a chapter o n *Mucuna pruriens*, widely known as velvet bean, a native of India and SE Asia. This is a tropical leguminous tree that contains L-dopa (up to 5%), being highly regarded treatment for Parkinson's Disease (PD), also for diabetes. *M. pruriens* is a traditional Ayurvedic herb, one which has undergone controlled human trials for PD. Details of some clinical case studies with PD patients are presented.

In addition numerous agroecological benefits for the herb are listed, including as livestock fodder and feed supplements, for enhancing soil fertility via nitrogen fixation, preventing of soil erosion and helping to suppress weeds. It is widely adopted for these purposes in parts of India, Africa and South America, whilst also contributing to medicinal sovereignty of local populations. *M. pruriens* var. *utilis* is regarded as an introduced weed in far northern Australia, having also found its way as far south as the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. While good quality herbal supplements are widely available to practitioners and the public, the plant itself is classed as an environmental weed in Queensland and WA, and cultivating it would be illegal. Cont. p. 12

Book review (cont)

Arnica Fairtrade Partnerships — Weleda

Another chapter that demonstrates medicinal agroecology in action is about the herb Arnica, well-known to herbalists and to many in the public, as a major herb for treating injuries, bruises and rheumatic pain. This herb doesn't adapt well to cultivation, hence the market is still dependent on wild harvesting, although it is becoming increasingly rare in its' European homeland.

Arnica is a flagship species for oligotrophic (low nutrient) grasslands of central European highlands, which are in decline, due to abandonment of mowing (for hay) and grazing in many regions. In the Apuseni Mountains of Romania, hand- harvesting of Arnica (and other medicinal herbs) is restoring a traditional farming economy, supplying the market through ethical product manufacturers such as Weleda, while helping to protect a disappearing ecosystem .

Other selected chapters that may interest readers include:

"Farmacies" in agroecological systems, restoring animal health on New Zealand farms with exotic and New Zealand native plant species

Tropical trees and shrubs for healthy agroecosystems, examples from Yucatan Peninsula (Mexico)

Ethno-veterinary practices and alternatives to antibiotics in India, with medicinal plant protocols for various veterinary disorders on agroecological farms. Notably for mastitis in cattle, also for external parasites, udder pox, mastitis, fevers

Steam-distillation residues from medicinal plants as natural agricultural agents**.** This chapter focuses on hydrolats obtained as byproducts of stem distillation from Mediterranean/European aromatic herbs such as lavender, thyme and Calendula. Hydrolats provide antimicrobial, nematicidal, antifungal, insecticidal, weed control and post -harvest uses such as stored products protection.

Detection and prevention of toxic wastes in agroecological systems. Effect-directed analysis (EDA) and HPTLC (a form of liquid chromatography) methods for identifying organic pollutants are described in detail. In combination with biological detection modes these procedures can be used to identify the harm such pollutants may cause, and for evaluating the risk of occurrence. Another example of medicinal sovereignty.

In epilogue one of the book, MAE provides a path to overcoming molecular colonialism and the associated circle of poisoning. Brazil is used as a case study, providing alarming statistics on the number of people intoxicated by pesticides, state by state and specifically for children, over a 10-year period

Epilogue 2 is a real surprise. Titled "Tibetan Buddhist Medicine: An ecological perspective ending with Medicine Buddha Wishes," it laments the disappearance of many of their medicinal plants over time, along with the traditional knowledge of how to use those plants, while embracing attempts at biological regeneration and cultural preservation.

I see a number of ways by which IPHA and its' members can support the implementation of MAE design systems for Australia. Some of us are already on the bandwagon, even though we haven't used the specific terminology, or scaled up economically. In my vision, such design systems can incorporate both traditional (ie Indigenous) land management and farming methods, in conjunction with low-impact technological advances and evidence-based management of ecosystems.

This book contains so much more specialized information than I have covered here, several chapters present detailed research findings that underscore the credibility of this exciting new movement. Highly recommended!

Further Inspirations

[2024 Forest Farming Conference: Gather to Grow March 22-24, 2024 Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke VA](#) USA

Dr Lyla June Johnston is a Diné woman, musician, and Indigenous academic with a PhD from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In her work exploring Regenerative Indigenous Food Systems, Dr Johnston discusses how Indigenous Nations have managed vast landscapes for food security. These complex pre-colonial food systems teach us how people can coexist with other species.

In her work exploring Regenerative Indigenous Food Systems, Dr Johnston discusses how Indigenous Nations (in North America) have managed vast landscapes for food security and ecological health for thousands of years. These complex pre-colonial food systems teach us how people can coexist with other species, actively expand biodiverse habitats, and still produce an abundance of healthy food and ecological health for thousands of years.
https://www.foodunfolded.com/article/regenerative-lessons-from-indigenous-food-systems

From Sustain, the Australian Food Network

https://sustain.org.au/articles/food-future-northern-rivers

Indigenous Plants for Health Association (Inc)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Set out below are my membership application details for Indigenous Plants for Health Association Inc.

Enclosed/transferred is the sum of $20 annual membership fee. The amount has been paid by:

Cash Cheque

Paid by Bank Transfer (Important — flag your name with payment)

☐ Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander (fee payment optional)

Post Membership Form and cheque to:

IPHA Treasurer, 196 Bridge St. Muswellbrook, NSW 2333 **or** if paying by transfer you may scan and email the completed and signed form to Patricia Collins (patcollins196@hotmail.com)

Bank Details for Payments: BSB 637000 Account 722660722

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____Postcode_____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

I agree to abide by the Constitution and any policies, rules or regulations established within the association. These are listed on the website www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com

Signed_____

Date _____

IPHA Committee Members

President, Jen Stroh

Vice President, Newsletter editor : Andrew Pengelly

Treasurer: Patricia Collins

Secretary : Reesa Ryan

Webmistress: Kathleen Bennett

General members: Sophie Ader, Rob Santich, Jeff Allen

Felicity Kerslake, Fred Fetherston