



IPHA Newsletter #29

Spring 2025 edition

www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com

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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 Strait Island Peoples are the Traditional Owners of this country, and they retain their relationship and connection to the land, sea, and community.

From the President Jen Stroh



As the seasons change across this vast amazing land, may hope and renewal infuse your lives and our plant and animal communities.

Latest IPHA news:

* IPHA offers you a great Field Day this November in NSW to connect with local people, plant species and their many riches. See details on p.5

* The Persoonia Project comes to fruition

Here's a little ramble from me:

iNaturalist, a useful (free) App for identification of plants and other organisms

I first became enamoured with this App in 2020, that year the world stood still for several months.

Living in the most locked down region of the world (Victoria), I turned to (as did many folk) more closely observing my local (5 km radius permitted) surroundings. Already with a deep interest in all things plant, this App allowed me to quickly snap a photo using my mobile phone on my numerous walks, upload it to the App and get instant feedback on possible identification. Then I noticed that other knowledgeable folks would help me out, with a more precise and informed suggestion.

Thus began an intimate call-response interactive sharing of finds, unknowns, surprises, collaboration, suggestions, inspiration and education. And what a great way to feel like I'm contributing to the area of 'citizen science', a space to support our planet in small personal ways.

In practical terms, the collective information shared through this App, may serve as an international database to track, discover and hopefully protect our planetary species.

I continue to use iNaturalist several times per week to help me identify plants and animals and feel grounded in my new environs since moving to Queensland late 2022. I get excited when I connect with 'experts' who take the time to give me feedback on honing my ID skills; I feel awed when I realize that I have sighted a *Westringia* or *Grevillea* that is only found within 100kms of my home; I am inspired when I hear about an entirely new species discovered through iNaturalist observations.

iNaturalist (cont.)

Give it a go! There are plenty of people out there to help you out. Anyone can use and contribute to this crowd-sourced biodiversity tool. You don't need to be an expert, just curious and interested.

From Wikipedia: iNaturalist is an American nonprofit network. As of 5 August 2025, iNaturalist users had contributed nearly 300 million observations of plants, animals, fungi and other organisms worldwide, and 400,000 users were active in the previous 30 days. Most of iNaturalist's software is open source. It has contributed to over 4,000 research papers and is widely used by scientists, land managers, and conservationists worldwide. The platform has also been active in the discovery and rediscovery of new and previously assumed to be extinct species.

<https://inaturalist.ala.org.au/>



Left
Dodonaea triquetra
(coastal hop bush)

Right
Calaena major
(large flying duck orchid)



Boronia falcifolia
(Wallum boronia)

Photos by Jen Stroh

IPHA Vacancies

Please dig deep to support us in any way you can. We need helpers for:

Maintenance of our website. Free web management training on offer.

Newsletter (quarterly) editor and contributors

Wanted. 1 or 2 members to help with the IPHA display stand at the **Grassroots Botany for Herbalists** event in Brisbane on 2nd November. **Free entry included.** See flyer below for further info. Contact Andrew at trueunicorn11@gmail.com

IPHA Committee Members

President: Jen Stroh

Vice President: Andrew Pengelly

Treasurer: Patricia Collins

Secretary: Reesa Ryan

General members:

Kat Bennett, Felicity Kerslake, Fred Fetherston, Renata Buziak

Webmaster/mistress: *VACANT*

Newsletter editor: *VACANT*

Highly aromatic Phebaliums (Rutaceae) of the Granite Belt



Phebalium graniticola



Phebalium whitei (vulnerable)



Indigenous Plants for Health Upper Hunter Valley **Field Day**

Saturday, November 22nd, 2025 – 8.45am
Yarrowa Hall, cnr Yarrowa and Ferndale Rd, Denman
NSW

Cost incl. lunch, morning & afternoon teas \$85 pp
IPHA Members \$70—children under 5 free—school age ½
price

Registrations—www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com—Events

Programme

- 8.15am Registration
- 8.45am Welcoming & Smoking ceremony—Wonnorua Country, with local woman Tash Kellett
- 9.30am Introduction and information on IPHA and Yarrowa Hall— gifted to Pat Collins by Bev Hicks to establish it as a teaching venue. Tour the hall with its antique furniture and interesting nick knacks. Getting to know the group and sharing information.
- 10.30am – **Morning tea** with native and other teas and coffee with snacks.
- 11.00am – **Reviving Indigenous Survival Practices with Tash Kellett**
Talk and demonstration of various techniques
- 12.30pm – **Lunch** Wraps with native meats and/or bean/chickpea rissoles, salad with tasty herbs and weeds, tabouli, hummus etc.
- 1.30pm — **Local native plants with Paul Melehan**, Local Landcare co-ordinator who has a nursery at Muswellbrook. He will talk about the natives growing at Yarrowa Hall and the plants going into the rockery. You will learn how to grow and look after natives as well as their many uses.
- 2.30pm — **Planting native rockery** at Yarrowa Hall. Be part of establishing a native garden for future classes and field days.
- 4.00pm — **Afternoon tea**— Trialling some jams Pat made from local natives and our weedy friends.
- 4.30pm — **Everyone gets a native seedling to take home to start/expand your own garden.**
- Time to share before departing.

Dinner is BYO for BBQ, damper provided with prickly pear jam. Dinner is at Pat and Bryant Collins property 30 minute drive further up the track from the Hall.*

Camping on Friday and Saturday night is available at the Collins property or at Yarrowa Hall. RSVP if you're camping and for one or two nights.

* The Collins property is 3km down an off-road track with small creek crossing. Yarrowa Hall is easy access on good road.

Grassroots Botany for Herbalists, Brisbane 2nd Nov. With Display and Card Sales by IPHA and Renata Buziak



GRASSROOTS Botany for Herbalists

About Grassroots

Grassroots is a unique & interactive event created to provide interesting & inspiring knowledge on practical botanical & herbal use for enthusiasts.

Grassroots will cover plant identification, macroanalysis, quality analysis, making herbal medicines, how to create your own herbarium and much more.

Practical & clinical herbal medicine knowledge & skills

Find out more here - www.holisticstudio.com.au/grassroots

Event Highlights

- Inspiring herbal presenters ◀
- Features herbal experts passionate about practical herbal skills
- Interactive garden tour ◀
- Enjoy an interactive scented medicinal herbal garden tour
- Unique herbal stands ◀
- Explore some great herbalists showcasing creative products, books, art and clinically relevant ideas.
- Lunch included ◀
- Enjoy a healthy, botanical inspired lunch. Included with your ticket.

GRASSROOTS PRESENTERS

Meet our natural medicine experts speaking on their favourite topics. Join them on a practical tour through the herbal garden.

 <p>Annie Meredith Doctrine of Signatures as a language of connection</p>	 <p>Heidi Merika Wild crafting local herbs and key botanical features</p>	 <p>Andrew Pengelly Create your own medicinal herbarium</p>
 <p>Ian Breakspear Taste the Chemistry! Organolepsis, herbal quality and dosage</p>	 <p>Elizabeth Greenwood Colour and scent in macroanalysis specific to phytochemistry</p>	 <p>Katrina Reeve The Grassroots clinical apothecary: medicine making for practitioners</p>

November 2nd, 2025
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Mt Coot-tha Herbarium Auditorium, Brisbane
Practitioners \$149 / Students \$129. CPE applicable
www.holisticstudio.com.au/grassroots



Australian Technology & Agricultural College

"Diversity for Sustainability"

NATIONAL BUSHFOODS CONFERENCE 8th & 9th Nov. 2025

TOPIC: "Bushfoods Production and Usage"

Venue: Australian Technology & Agricultural College. 4808-4822 Mt. Lindesay Highway, North Maclean Q4280

Sponsored by: Logan City Council, Australian Institute of Horticulture, Australian Technology & Agricultural College Enquiries: www.bushfoods@atac.qld.edu.au

Or contact: Dr. Narendra Nand 0432036537 nnand@atac.qld.edu.au

Entheogenesis Australis. 28th November – 1st December 2025.

Garden States: Regeneration: Outdoor Ethnobotanical Conference

A forum for cultivating plants, knowledge, and community

Gembrook, Victoria <https://www.gardenstates.org/>

Quiet Giants: Rough Tree Fern in Art and Story

By Renata Buziak

Exploring the Gondwanan lineage and healing qualities of *Cyathea australis* through biochrome art, cultural knowledge, and exhibitions.

The Rough Tree Fern (*Cyathea australis*) is one of Australia's quiet giants. Reaching up to 15 metres, it is a majestic presence in our forests—rooted not only in the landscape, but also in deep time and cultural knowledge. As a species with a lineage stretching back to Gondwana, it invites us to see plants as time travellers across evolutionary time. Palaeobotanist Dr Ray Carpenter explains, “Spores similar to those of living tree ferns are common fossils and date back to at least 150 million years.” His insight underscores how the fern's lineage connects us to ancient forests and the long continuity of life.

I first encountered the Rough Tree Fern a few years after arriving in Australia, and its presence struck me with awe. My deeper connection came during artist residencies at Bilpin NSW and later at Binna Burra Qld, in the heart of the Gondwanan rainforest. Guided by Dr Carpenter, I learned that tree ferns are not relics of the past, but members of lineages that continue to evolve and thrive today. That knowledge profoundly shaped my art and my way of seeing nature.



Cyathea australis
from IPHA Plant
Knowledge Cards set.

Illustration by K. Dilaj.



Rough Tree Fern (Cyathea Australis) Astringent, 2022.

Textile, 197 x 150cm, ed/3, and archival print on paper, 78 x 56cm, ed/3.

From this inspiration, I created large-scale works that brought the fern into focus. At Binna Burra, I produced a two-metre textile artwork of its fronds, enlarging the plant's details to immerse viewers in its structure, *Rough Tree Fern (Cyathea australis) Astringent*. A much smaller version on paper travelled to the Gold Coast Triennial at HOTA (Home of the Arts), before being acquired by the Department of Justice for Beaudesert Court House—particularly fitting, as the Rough Tree Fern is native to that region. For me, placing such works in public spaces aligns with my mission of reconnecting people with nature and bringing the outdoors indoors. In the Flora of Gondwanan Heritage exhibition of works from Binna Burra at The Centre Beaudesert Gallery, I also included an illuminant, a pendant lampshade that glowed like the rainforest canopy, alongside a 4.5-metre-high work featuring Tree Fern and Crinkle Bush.

The fern's healing properties deepened my appreciation even further. According to the IPHA Knowledge Card, roasted stalks of young fronds were used as a restorative tonic after illness, roots applied as a wash to treat burns and blisters, and fiddleheads eaten after boiling. The card makes this traditional knowledge accessible to gardeners, healers, and plant-lovers alike, reminding us of the fern's generous role in human well-being.

Ecologically, the Rough Tree Fern is equally vital. Its fibrous trunk and frond bases provide habitat for mosses, orchids, invertebrates, and insects. Importantly, reed bees (*Exoneura* spp.) are known to nest in the pithy stems of dead fern fronds. As pollinators of many native plants, these small bees extend the fern's ecological influence, making it an indirect supporter of wider forest life.

For me, the Rough Tree Fern embodies resilience and generosity. It is a healer, a time traveller, and a teacher. One of my Tree Fern artworks is currently exhibited at Whale Tail Gallery on Minjerribah / North Stradbroke Island, where a similar species, *Cyathea cooperi*, also grows. As recorded in *The Flora of North Stradbroke Island* (Stephens & Sharp, with Minjerribah-Moorgumpin Elders in Council, 2008), its young growth was once roasted for food, while its large leaves were used for matting. This knowledge strengthens the sense of continuity between plant, place, and culture.

Next time you pause beneath the arching fronds of a tree fern, remember - you are standing with a descendant of Gondwanan lineages, a living healer of people and places, and a reminder of nature's power to reconnect us across time and space.

To view my Tree Fern artworks, please visit my current exhibition on Minjerribah (until 19 Oct), my studio, or explore further at <https://renatabuziak.com>



Floras of Gondwanan Heritage exhibition,
The Centre Beaudesert featuring
Gondwanan Rainforest with Tree Fern and
Crinkle Bush, 2024.

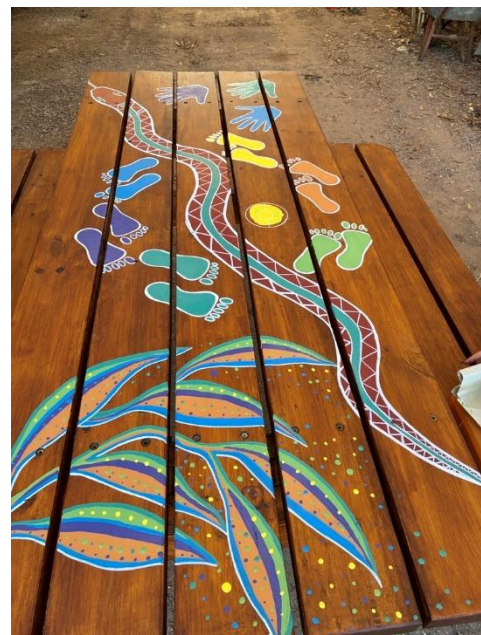
Textile, 430 x 150cm. Print on Chiffon
Deluxe.



Yarning Garden Project- August Update

Term 3 of the Youth Yarning Garden Project has seen the completion of the garden's picnic tables, including the addition of Indigenous artwork, created by the young people with the help of Rebecca Hird Fletcher - Yiliyapinya's board member and artist.

As discussed, we have experienced multiple challenges during the past six weeks, including staff turnover and moving properties, therefore impacting program delivery for the outdoor components of the program. Our priority, at the moment, is finding a space to house our program, where we can house our storage container and program resources safely. Once this is established, we can continue our Youth Yarning Garden project, including the planting of our garden beds and bush tucker education.



Show your support to stop the sale of weeds in Australia

https://invasives.org.au/how-to-help/take-action/show-your-support-to-stop-the-sale-of-weeds-in-australia/?mc_cid=840cd98d86&mc_eid=118b480fc0

Girraween National Park, Granite Belt, SE Qld.

Opening of New visitors Centre. August 2025



Park Head Ranger Greg Keith addresses the audience of dignitaries, community leaders and representatives.

Kambuwal Elder, Artist and IPHA member Selena Griffen-Brown displays one of her paintings



Section of the interpretive displays



Wattle workshop at Amiens, Qld. August 2025



Opening address by Southern Downs Mayor and wildflower enthusiast **Melissa Hamilton**

Below: Andrew demonstrating the different categories of Acacias for identification, with specimens



Acacia decora – showy wattle

Indigenous Plants for Health Association Inc.**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

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

There is a free membership option for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as for pensioners or anyone with low income.

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

- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Bank Transfer (Important flag your name with payment)
- ☐ Paypal, via website www.indigenousplantsforhealth.com
- ☐ Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (fee optional)
- ☐ Identify as low income (fee 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 IPHA.Secretary@hotmail.com

Bank Details for Payments: BSB 637000

Account 722660722

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Tel: Home _____ Mobile _____

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 _____