



IPHA Newsletter #31

Autumn 2026 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



LILLY PILLY and Metabolic Musings

My neighbour and her 8-year-old daughter dropped in and asked for a glass of water. I proffered a freshly made batch of infused lilly pilly (*Syzygium* species) leaves added to our spritzed rain water ('sky wine'). I like to trim off the young leaves from our back garden hedge then dry them. I also use freshly cut leaves. Then I make a hot water infusion (tea) of either.

"Wow, I didn't know that", they exclaim! It tastes so good and satisfying with notes of citrus and hibiscus. Well, guess what, 'I didn't know that' either until about a year ago. I had been contemplating the medicinal virtues of the lilly pilly fruits (found all over eastern Australia and all edible). I had in fact made lilly pilly jelly and cordial from the fruits, but not the leaves.

I love to find uses for leaves of plants as these are mostly abundant and available all year round as distinct from the associated fruits. Lo and behold, a quick pubmed search alerted me to some recent studies on the potential novel antioxidant and anti-diabetic activity of the leaves of *S. australe*.

"The presence of quercetin and cinnamic acid in the methanolic fraction suggests that the extract can inhibit key enzymes such as α -amylase, lipase, and α -glucosidase. These findings provide compelling evidence that its leaves are rich in phenolic compounds and serve as a potent natural antidiabetic agent. These results emphasize the therapeutic potential of *S. australe* and pave the way for further pharmaceutical investigations".

Youssef, S.A., Elosaily, A.H., Farag, N.F. *et al.* (2025). *Syzygium australe* extracts exhibit significant antioxidant and antidiabetic properties: a comprehensive analysis of the phytoconstituents. *Futur J Pharm Sci* **11**, 55. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43094-025-00806-6>

See our Australian and Medicinal Plant Knowledge Cards on our website for more info on uses, propagation and description of *S. luehmannii* (Riberry or Small Leaf lilly pilly) and *S. australe* (brush cherry).

For me, the joy of novelty and discovery mixed with a little understanding and value adding for young and old makes it worth my while supporting this little organisation we call IPHA. I invite you to continue to be curious and in awe and spread the word about our offerings.

As I roll toward the end of my 4th year as President, I'll pass on the glorious goblet to another to infuse their soul as they immerse in this passion project for a while. So please let us know if you'd like to give it a go – great Committee back up, mentor time available, ready to start Jan 2027.



Syzygium australe

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

IPHA Committee Members

President: Jen Stroh

Vice President: Andrew Pengelly

Treasurer: Patricia Collins

Secretary: Reesa Ryan

General members:

Felicity Kerslake, Fred Fetherston, Renata Buziak, Denise Harslett

Webmaster/mistress: *VACANT*

Newsletter editor: *VACANT*

REPORTS

Bushfood Yarning & Tasting at the Seven Valleys Wild Food Festival 2026. By Felicity Kerslake

The Inaugural Seven Valleys Wild Food Festival in Lithgow NSW brought community and visitors together to celebrate the wild foods of our region; the local producers who grow them, the unique flavours they share, connection to Country, and the creativity they inspire.

A highlight of the weekend was the Australian Bushfood Education Centre's Bushfood Yarning and Tasting workshops where more than 100 people registered across three sessions to explore the power, beauty, and deep cultural significance of native bushfoods and plant medicines under the guidance of Wiradjuri woman and Naturopath, Felicity Kerslake.



@bushfoodeducation

These sessions invited participants to slow down, yarn, taste, and reconnect with the plants that have supported health and wellbeing of Country and First Nations Peoples for thousands of years. Alongside flavour, guests learned how many native foods, from antioxidant-rich fruits to aromatic medicinal leaves, have long been used to strengthen the body, soothe the mind, and support everyday wellness.

By sharing stories, knowledge, and hands-on experiences, the sessions highlighted how bushfoods are not only delicious but also powerful natural medicines with significant cultural importance that continue to play an important role in community health today.

Seven Valleys Wild Food Festival (cont.)

Thank you to everyone who joined us. Your curiosity, respect, and enthusiasm made these yarning sessions truly special. We look forward to welcoming you to more of our workshops as we continue celebrating the wild flavours, cultural knowledge, and community spirit that make Bushfoods and medicines so special.



@bushfoodeducation

IPHA BUSH FRUIT FIELD DAY May 2026



Mapleton, Queensland on Jinibara Country

Beautiful green hills and valleys surrounded the site of the IPHA recent Bushfruit Field day and Cyanotype Workshop –Sunday 3rd May and Monday 4th May (Labour Day holiday, Qld). The 127-acre property hosts a lovely architect design house and is presently being caretaken by IPHA members Warwick & Mary Grace. The property had been logged, farmed and changed dramatically since colonisation. Warwick is planting red cedars and lovingly caring for country. Paraphrasing Warwick, 'We are all the dots ... no ownership ... like the reptiles and birds, we are all part of creation.

Pat Collins was our first presenter. Pat was here with her sister Sonia and her mother Julia, who was celebrating her 93rd birthday! Pat selected a few choice plants to highlight and discuss their properties and uses. The Bunya (not a nut) produces a seed or fruit that is very good food, rich in carbohydrates, while the leaf extract has medicinal properties. Flax lily, *Dianella longifolia* has edible berries, when ripe. Roots and seeds used in decoction and leaves in infusion. Sandpaper figs are the best of the native figs for eating, while the latex can be used as a bandage.



Above – Pat with attentive audience
Above right – Introducing President Jen



Above – Reesa, Sheryl with bunya and roo rissoles.



Right – lunch on the balcony



In the shed for Renata's biochrome PowerPoint



End of the day – where's Sheryl?

Mapleton Field Day report (cont.)

Geebung, *Persoonia* spp.—featured on the IPHA logo—is valuable for food and medicine. Other edible fruits are derived from lilly pilly (*Syzygium* spp.), plum pine (*Podocarpus elatus*), kangaroo apple, macadamia nut, mistletoe, Tasmanian pepper, pigface, rosella and saltbush. Finger lime (yum!) seedlings will take many years to produce. Grafted plants will give you fruit quicker. Thank you Sheryl Backhouse for the boxes of the Champaign Red finger limes for everyone to take some home.

Warwick is the caretaker of our venue, and creator of a native food forest on his property nearby. He focused on local endemic fruit and other plants like various myrtles and the native turmeric, *Curcuma australasica*. There are three species of the Davidson plum, *Davidsonia pruriens*, *D. jerseyana* and *D. johnsonii*. Warwick grows all three. The native ginger, *Alpinia caerulea*, can be found along pathways the local people used. People actively and passively (eat and toss the fruit) propagated valuable plants widely. Warwick also works with the Florabunda Community Native Nursery, a great local resource for bushcare and local native plants of this area.

Andrew continued the theme of the potential for our native ‘plum’ fruits. These local plants have far more polyphenols, vitamins and minerals than most of the exotic fruits that we eat. The various ‘plum’ species in Australia are not related to the northern hemisphere plum. The strong colour in these fruit comes from chemicals called anthocyanins, a class of water-soluble flavonoid glycosides that puts the red, blue and purple colours to many fruit and vegetables.

The Kakadu plum, *Terminalia ferdinandiana*, a woodland plant from the tropics has higher levels of vitamin C and polyphenols compared to other plants. Green plum, *Buchanania obovata*, is high in protein compared to other bush fruits, and is an excellent source of magnesium.

Ooray is the traditional name, now being popularised for the ‘Davidson Plum.’ The most studied species, *D. pruriens*, is high in polyphenols and is a strong antioxidant. Research studies indicate the plant is beneficial for people with metabolic syndrome, a pre-diabetic condition, by lowering blood sugar and blood pressure and reducing inflammation. Anthocyanins have been proven to reduce symptoms of metabolic syndrome, type 2 *Diabetes mellitus* as well as complications of diabetes such as leg ulcers and retinopathy. Blueberry anthocyanins can help to reverse macular degeneration, however our native plums contain higher levels of anthocyanins. This is colour therapy in action, note other beneficial plant pigments in everyday foods—green for chlorophyll, yellow for flavonoids, orange for lycopenes.

Thank you to Jen who brought some Kakadu plum powder for us all to taste, and to Mary who demonstrated how to make the delicious Ooray cordial, which we all sampled! Her recipe: boil up the ingredients, mash, strain. 1kg Ooray plums, 1 litre or 5 cups water, 1.5 cups sugar.

Our amazing lunch featured Bunya rissoles and kangaroo rissoles, thank you Pat for making them up and John for cooking them up. They were accompanied by a selection of salads and dips. Pat also made a lovely lemon myrtle cheesecake to help us all celebrate her mother Julia’s birthday.

After lunch we went for a productive weed and wild plant walk around the property.

Renata gave us an introduction to her Biochrome and cyanotype photographic artistic work: Art and science combined. Renata works with pre-digital, analogue photographic techniques and time—but without using a camera.

Mapleton Field Day report (cont.)

Jen discussed oxymels, the synergy of honey and vinegar. It is known to be used for thousands of years. Great for topical wound treatment. Different vinegars can be used, apple cider vinegar, pomegranate vinegar, etc. Seeds, roots, leaves, all parts of a plant can be used. Tasting samples of all her preparations were shared with the group.

The day was satisfactorily completed with a dinner for those who stayed on. Thank you Renata for the melt in your mouth slow cooked lamb, and Jen for the delightful tofu curry.

By Reesa Ryan



Jen's bushfruit display



Pat finds a billygoat weed

What a fabulous field day in sunny Queensland. I (Pat) usually run the field days in NSW and this time we were trying to get all of the committee to attend a field day together. I finally met our President in person and lovely to see the other members. My mother lives in Mapleton and it was her birthday, so it was well worth the 11 hours of driving to see mum and attend the field day. What a bonus. It was also fabulous to come to such a lovely setting and when I got there was so pleased to see all the dried samples of natives, as well as plums, finger limes, macadamia nuts, books and plants to buy. Renata also had a wonderful display of her botanic art with biochrome. Amazing lampshades, scarves and cards.

Our speakers were very knowledgeable and when I asked my mother what she remembered about the talks she said Davidson plums (Oorays) as this was a focus. I spoke about native bush fruits and brought samples then Warwick talked about his beloved Oorays that he grows commercially and the many other plants he grows on his nearby property at Woombye. Andrew went onto talk about the medicinal benefits of bush foods with emphasis on three native plums (*Davidsonia pruriens*), Illawarra plum (*Podocarpus elatus*) and Burdekin plum (*Pleiogynium timoriense*). As usual Andrew's talk was very

Mapleton Field Day report (cont.) informative and well researched. The morning finished with Warwick and his lovely wife Mary making us a Davidson plum cordial which was delicious.

In the afternoon we all enjoyed a walk to look at natives and weeds, and it was surprising how many we found. A focus was the lemon myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) as there was a beautiful tree at the side of the building and unlike mine which have grown straight up this one had a spreading nature. Renata followed with a slide show on her botanic art with biochrome. This was a very interesting presentation and if you don't know much about this subject she does run workshops. She ran a short one on Monday morning and it was called Cyanotype Botanicals where you created your own unique photographic print without a camera using plants, found objects and sunlight. The day was finished with Jen our President showing some medicinal products she had made from natives mainly in the form of oxymels. We tasted many and I enjoyed the Turmeric oxymel the best.

By Pat Collins



The morning after. Renata's Cyanotype Workshop.



Above: Jen's masterpiece



Warwick with Ooray plums

Geebung: Nourishment, Lineage and Art

Renata Buziak

Exploring *Persoonia* through biochrome art, Gondwanan lineages, cultural knowledge, and exhibitions

The geebung (*Persoonia* species) is a remarkable Australian native plant, and we are fortunate to be learning more about the significant healing properties of some *Persoonia* species through recent research conducted through the University of Queensland and funded by IPHA. Background information about this research is available on the IPHA website.

Many Geebung species are recognised for their yellow flowers and sweet fleshy fruit, providing nourishment for people, birds, and animals, while also holding an important place in cultural knowledge and ecological relationships. Across Australia, *Persoonia* species grow in varied landscapes—from coastal heathlands to open forests—sharing evolutionary lineages connected to Gondwanan flora.

My connection with geebung began during a 2016 residency at BIGCI (Bilpin International Ground for Creative Initiatives) in NSW, where I explored bush tucker plants and was introduced to *Persoonia pinifolia* (pine-leaf geebung). During the residency, I created works inspired by the plant, including lumen prints and Polaroid photographs exploring its delicate structure and presence alongside other native species.

Years later, this interest deepened during an artist residency at Binna Burra Qld, within the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia. There, surrounded by rainforest plants with Gondwanan lineages, I continued exploring Geebung through my biochrome process and conversations with palaeobotanist Dr Ray

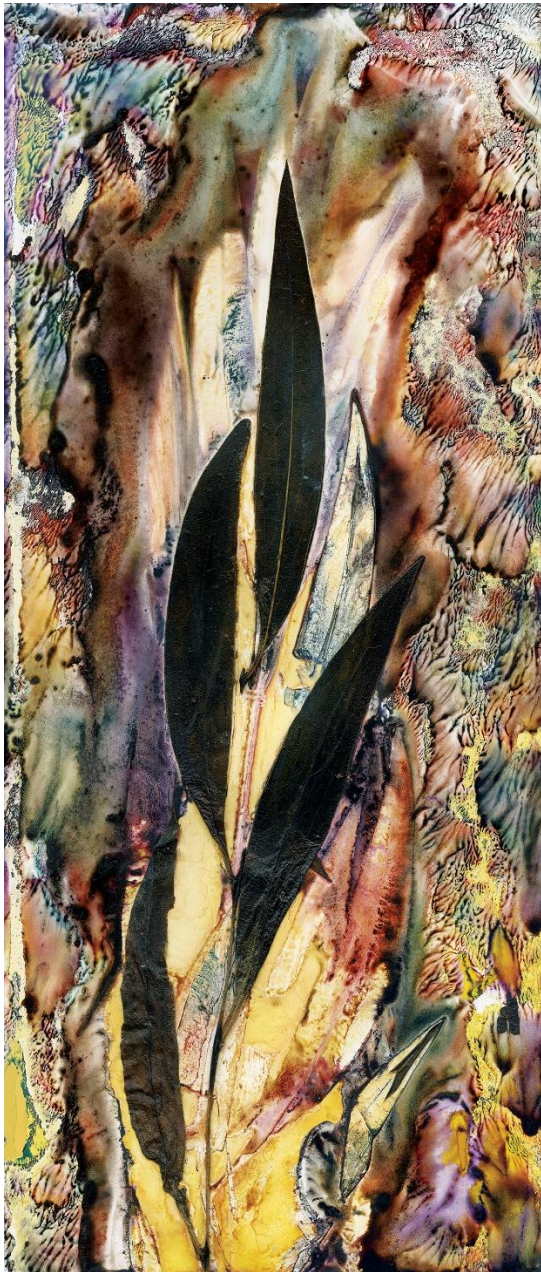


Persoonia sp.
Binna Burra, Qld

Carpenter. His insights helped me understand that these plants are not relics frozen in the past, but living lineages that continue to evolve today. That perspective shaped both my work and my understanding of Australia's flora.

At Binna Burra, I created works of geebung through my biochrome process, where photographic materials interact with organic matter over extended periods of time. The process traces transformation, microbial activity, and the cycle of life, allowing the plant itself to leave an imprint on photographic paper. From these explorations came textile and paper-based biochromes, as well as an illuminant—a lampshade glowing with the textures and warm colours of the plant, bringing the presence of nature indoors.

The textile *Geebung* (*Persoonia* species) – *Healing Sweet Snack* was recently featured in *Resonance – Dialogues in Art and Ecology*, an exhibition of Australian artists within the ecoartspace transnational platform, presented by Southern Forest Arts in Western Australia. *Resonance* brought together artists responding to the interconnected systems that sustain life, encouraging deeper awareness of our



Left

Geebung (Persoonia sp.) Healing Sweet Snack

Gondwanan Biochromes Series

Textile, 197cm x 85cm, Edition / 3.

Archival pigment print on paper, 50 x 21cm, Edition / 5

Above

Highlighting Pat's book display

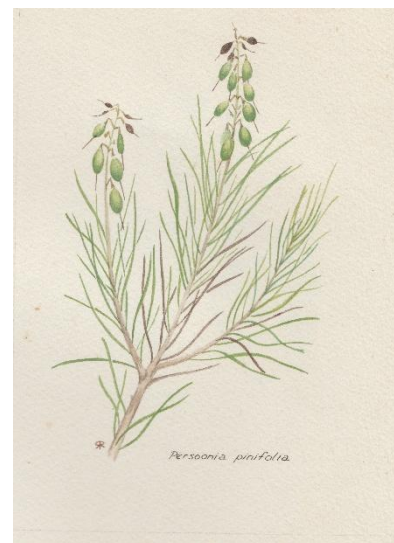
shared ecological reality. The geebung work honours the plant's nourishing fruit and the reciprocal relationship between people and place.

More recently, both the Geebung textile and a smaller print on paper were displayed during the IPHA Field Day at Mapleton, which focused on bush fruits. The event connected visitors with the healing and cultural significance of native plants through talks, activities, art, and the IPHA Knowledge Cards. The Geebung card features several *Persoonia* species, and the cards continues an important role in sharing accessible plant knowledge through botanical drawings and information about edible and medicinal uses.

Beyond its edible fruit, Geebung supports pollinators and contributes to the health of Australian ecosystems. Its ability to adapt across dry soils, exposed heathlands, and changing climates reflects the endurance of these plant lineages.

Geebung reminds me that nourishment is never isolated; it exists through exchange, adaptation, and continuity between people, plants, and place. Through exhibitions, workshops, and biochrome works, I hope to encourage deeper connection with native plants and the stories they carry—stories of ecology, healing, belonging, and care for the living world.

To view my biochrome artworks, including geebung and the recent *Resonance* exhibition, please visit: [Renata Buziak Website](https://www.renatabuziak.com/)



You can also view my artist talk for *Resonance* on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im3p4v7A82A&t=6s>

Other EVENTS:

Australian Walking Artists (AWA) Retreat 20-23 August 2026

Walking the wilds, the winds and the rainbow

Rainbow Beach, Qld (3 hours North of Brisbane).

The Retreat will happen alongside the *WALKING ART NOW* exhibition at Gympie Regional Gallery, 17 July - 27 August 2026.

Public program of workshops and talks: Saturday 22 August.

A full program of workshops and other activities is available now on the AWA website: www.australianwalkingartists.org

IAM Straddie Arts Trail 14 – 16 August 2026

Open Studios, Exhibitions, Workshops, Tours, Event, Activities, Markets

Minjerribah / North Stradbroke Island, Qld

www.iamstraddie.com.au

@iam_straddie

Events and News of interest

The right to food, finance and national action plans

In the present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 43/11, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, provides a way to develop national right-to-food action plans within existing budgets that can transform food systems and progressively realize the right to food. In the light of the global debt crisis, high inflation and high food prices, many countries are faced with the impossible choice of either feeding people or servicing debt. Using public funds to ensure that people have access to adequate food can cause a government to fall into arrears, worsening financial shocks; servicing debt instead leads to more hunger and malnutrition. This means that the current international system of finance resolutely impedes the ability of Governments to meet their obligations with regard to the right to food. In the report, the Special Rapporteur suggests how significant improvements in food systems – and the conditions for transformation – could be achieved by redesigning public budgets.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5848-right-food-finance-and-national-action-plans-report-special>

Diverse Forage Enhances the Antimicrobial Potency of Australian Honey

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12929673/pdf/MBO3-15-e70238.pdf>

Celebrating Indigenous Scientists

Seed banks to safeguard Country and culture

The Australian Academy of Science has awarded its 2026 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scientist Award to Dr Cassandra Sedran-Price from the University of Sydney and Mr Jacob Birch from the University of Queensland.

https://science.org.au/news-events/news-views/indigenous-scientists-recognised-climate-resilience-research?fbclid=IwDGRzaAQnRdtjbGNrBCdFT2V4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyGdMGYXBwX2lkDDM1MDY4NTUzMTcyOAABHo7m-etuod6U-a9w5DINZpxCQisiDgcPBnbBUMhvmfFhHuGbK6swOD4-xf0_aem_SwmA-S9tZ7PNBBw9YMFNyQ&sfnsn=mo

Polyphenols in coffee and proanthocyanidins found in fruit reduce cardiovascular risk factors and metabolic syndrome

https://dailycoffeenews.com/2025/05/13/study-polyphenol-rich-foods-like-coffee-no-doubt-reduce-metabolic-syndrome/?utm_source=Roast+Magazine+%26+Daily+Coffee+News&utm_campaign=881d25e113-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_6_14_2018_8_20_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8f24fab631-881d25e113-193804175

GATHAA Bushfood Markets – Mooloolah, Qld

<https://gathaamarkets.com.au/>

Bosisto's to triple its eucalyptus oil production with new \$10 million distillery in central Victoria

<https://share.google/cgoq8cmP3e1dkWSxC>

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 _____