



TRADITIONAL USES PLANTS

The traditional custodians of the land lived with nature and the seasons influenced what could be hunted or gathered. The moon and changing night sky were used as a calendar and reinforced which foods were in season depending on the changing position and appearance of particular constellations (Ngadjuri—Aboriginal People of the Mid North Region of South Australia).

According to James Gray (1930), there were rules about the sharing of kangaroo meat, certain parts going for example to the hunters, the elderly and young men.

After the animal was killed it was gutted and carried back to camp where women prepared a fire in a

sandy place and stones were heated. The kangaroo was stuffed with dry gum and mallee leaves and placed on the hot stones after the coals were raked aside. Hot ashes and sand were heaped over it.

This is only one way native plants were used in everyday life. The following pages provide information about other Barossa plants that have been traditionally used for food, shelter, medicine and other uses.

Native edible plants have become increasingly popular and modern research suggests that many plants are very nutritious and can have health benefits (Neville Bonney, 2012).



Image: Bottle Brush

PLANTS AND THEIR USES

The plants described in this list include only local Barossa vegetation and may not contain all plants or uses. It is illegal to collect any native plant parts from road sides or conservation areas and people are advised to seek permission from relevant authorities or landholders if intending to collect materials.

Neville Bonney is a South Australian native plant expert, ethnobotanist and published author and his book *Knowing, Growing, Eating—Edible Wild Native Plants for Southern Australia* contains lots of information of which some is used for plant descriptions in this list.

The Barossa Bushgardens does not take any responsibility for adverse reactions, e.g. allergic reaction to a plant when consumed. Some of the plants below can be found in the Barossa Bushgardens and anyone is welcome to try the self-guided Traditional Uses Trail Tour or book into a guided tour.

Acacia pycnantha and Acacia retinodes - Golden Wattle and Wirilda

Seeds were collected, roasted and then ground to a flour, mixed with water made into a dough. Green seeds were also used like peas, but steamed before consumption. Wattleseed contains Selenium which is a source of essential mineral. The roasted seed have a chicory, coffee-like aroma, protein levels are around 20% and carbohydrate 50-60%. They are good for diabetics and the amino acid balance is similar to legumes such as lentils.



Image: Golden Wattle, Source: greatwalks.com.au

The food industry uses the seed to make a coffee substitute, liqueur or wine. They are also used for flavouring cream, ice-cream, confectionery, sauces, bread, cakes and pasta.

The resin of some Acacias, e.g. Golden Wattles can be eaten, used as a glue or to help start a fire. The flowers have been worn in the hair for ceremonies by young women.

Acrotriche depressa - Native Currant

The fruit from this plant can be made into jams, jellies and desserts.

They are a great substitute for sultanas, currants or raisins. The plant itself is very hard to cultivate and products are therefore not commonly found.



Image: Native Currant, Source: James Tyler, citymag.indaily.com.au

Arthropodium sp. - Chocolate/Vanilla Lily



Like *Bulbine bulbosa*, the tubers are eaten.

Image: Chocolate Lily, Source: James Tyler, citymag.indaily.com.au

Banksia marginata - Silver Banksia

The nectar of the flower was consumed by soaking the flower overnight in water to sweeten a drink of water. Dried flowers were also used to strain water for drinking.



Image: Banksia Marginata, Source: Alan Fairley, resources.austplants.com.au/plant/banksia-marginata/

PLANTS AND THEIR USES

Bulbine bulbosa - Leek Lily

The bulbs of this lily are popular and apparently have a nutty taste when fried with butter.



Image: Leek Lily,
Source: Bungalook
Nursery,
[www.wcipp.org.au/
bulbine-bulbosa/](http://www.wcipp.org.au/bulbine-bulbosa/)

Bursaria spinosa - Christmas Bush

The plant itself is not known to be used but is very attractive for insects which then have been caught and eaten.



Image: Christmas
Bush

Callistemon sp. - Bottle Brush

The flowers of this species were sucked to get a sweet taste or fermented in water for a tasty drink.



Image: Bottle Brush

Carpobrotus modestus - Pigface

The succulent foliage of this plant can be eaten raw, in salads or pickled as it is fairly salty. The fruit however is sweet and can be used in jams, desserts and other sweets.



Image: Pigface

Clematis microphylla - Old Man's Beard

The warmed leaves can be used as a poultice for rheumatism and inhaled to relieve headache. Cooked roots are edible after being roasted on coals and pounded to a pulp. The twining stalks were used for body adornments and to bind stone tools.



Image: Old Man's Beard, Source: planthis.com.au

Correa sp. - Native Fuchsia



The leaves of some Correa species are very aromatic and can be crushed and used to make tea.

Image: Native Fuchsia

Cymbopogon ambiguous - Lemon-scented Grass

This grass can be used in teas or to stuff the cavity of an animal to give the meat a lemon flavour. It also has medicinal properties if made into a tea.



Image: Lemon-scented Grass, Source: www.innerpath.com.au

Cyperus sp.



The seed and roots were sought after.

Image: Spiny Flat Sedge, Source: westgrow.com.au

PLANTS AND THEIR USES

Dianella revoluta - Flax Lily

The dark blue ripe berries are edible raw, but taste better when used in baking. The roots can be boiled to create a cold remedy. The leaves are split down in the middle, rolled on thigh into twine and woven.



Image: Flax Lily,
Source: dawsonsgardenworld.com.au

Dodonaea viscosa - Sticky Hopbush

The smoke from burning leaves and twigs are believed to relieve pain. The leaves could be used



Image: Sticky Hopbush, Source: SA Seed Conservation Centre

Enchylaena tomentosa - Ruby Saltbush

From this plant the fruit can be eaten fresh, dried or used as dye. The leaves of other salt bush species are also used. Both, fruit and leaves have a salty taste and are popular ingredients for cooking or in bread.



Image: Ruby Saltbush, Source: olelantanaseeds.com.au

Eucalyptus camaldulensis - River Red Gum

Wurlies were made by placing three sticks in the ground in a triangular position. Big sheets of red gum bark were cut off and laid against the sticks. Yacca leaves and reeds were then placed to complete the cover (Rosier in Gladstone Centenary

Committee 1980).

The leaves were boiled to extract the oil for sprains. Grubs in trunk are traditionally harvested by men but if they were in the roots, everyone was allowed to collect. The hollows in trees were used for storage. Canoes and other useful things were also made from River Red Gums.



Image: River Red Gum

Eucalyptus leucoxylon ssp. - Blue Gum

Young wood was used to make spears. Leaves were boiled and the steam relieves many illnesses.



Eucalyptus generally is used for many things today, such as in cleaning products, medicine and much more.

Image: Blue Gum, Source: EUCLID, apps.lucidcentral.org

Eucalyptus odorata - Peppermint Box

This species is known to host insects called lerps that have a white outer casting which was scraped off and eaten.

The Peppermint Box was also used in ceremonies and for smoking.

Image: Peppermint Box, Source: plantdollar.com



PLANTS AND THEIR USES

Exocarpus cupressiformis - Native Cherry

The berries are edible when ripe and have a sweet flavour.

Image: Native Cherry, Source: Cherry Ballart Lind N.P., wtland-care.org



Microseris lanceolata - Yam Daisy

The tuber of this plant is edible.

Image: Yam Daisy,

Source: garden-ingwithangus.com.au



Hardenbergia violacea - Native Lilac



The leaves are boiled into a sweet drink. Flowers used as decoration or soaked in water to make purple dye.

Image: Native Lilac



Native Raspberry are related to the introduced Rubus fruticosus but is less invasive and lacks some of the taste. The fruit can be eaten raw or used in fruit salads, jams, on cakes and in desserts.

Image: Native Raspberry, Source: SA Seed Conservation Centre

Kunzea pomifera - Muntries

The ripe berries have a similar taste and smell to apples and can be eaten fresh of the plant or made into jams, chutney, leather straps or used in salads, sauces or desserts.

Image: Muntries,

Source: www.australianseed.com



Santalum acuminatum - Quandong

The fruit of this plant is a rich source of antioxidants, vitamins and elements. The stone (kernel) can be eaten but was mainly used for medicinal purposes. Ripe fruit is used dried, cooked or baked into many forms. Its cultivation can be tricky as it needs a host plant to survive and does not like to be transplanted.



Image: Quandong, Source: Aimee Volkofsky, www.abc.net.au

Lomandra sp. - Iron Grass



Seeds are ground to flour to make damper. Leaf base is chewable with a starchy taste. The leaves are softened in water and woven into mats, baskets and adornments.

Image: Iron Grass

Senna artemesiodes - Silver Cassia



Senna seeds are still used in modern medicine as a laxative but the resin is used as a glue.

Image: Senna,

Source: Gawler Environment Centre

References:

Bonney, Neville (2012) *Knowing, Growing, Eating—Edible Wild Native Plants for Southern Australia*, Openbook Howden, ISBN 978-0-646-57521-6

Gray, James (1930) *Notes on native tribe formerly resident at Orroroo, South Australia*, SA Naturalist, Vol XI 1:4-6

Warrior, Fred; Knight, Fran; Anderson, Sue; Pring, Adele (2005) *Ngadjuri: Aboriginal People of the Mid North Region of South Australia*, SASOSE Council Inc, Meadows, South Australia, ISBN 0-646-42821-7

Barossa Bushgardens

653 Research Road

Nuriootpa SA 5355

(08) 8563 8330

bushgardens@barossa.sa.gov.au

www.barossabushgardens.com.au

Opening hours:

Monday and Friday by appointment

Tuesday & Thursday

9 am - 4.30 pm

Wednesday

9 am - 12.30 pm

