



**ABORIGINAL
PLANTS**
in the grounds of
Monash University

-A Guide -

Monash University acknowledges the Original Owners of the land on which
the Campus has been built - the Wurundjeri clan
of the Woiwurrung speaking people.

Victorian Koories used plants for all the daily necessities of life - for food, medicine, fibre, canoes, houses and for all sorts of implements. There are many native plants in the grounds of Monash University, but in the Aboriginal Garden garden a special area has been devoted to plants which were important to the life of Koories of south-eastern Australia. Most of the plants can be viewed along the paths and walkways, but if you need to walk into the garden beds, please be careful where you tread. Some plants can be found at other places in the Monash University grounds. All plants are labelled. There are also some plants which were originally present in the garden area, or are of general botanical interest, for which no specific Aboriginal use is known.

On the label you will find: first, the **Koorie Name**, (where known) then the **English Common Name**, what it was used for, and finally the Latin **Botanical Name**.

The following abbreviations have been used on the labels: **Fruit** or **seed** means that these were used for food. **Med** means use for medicine. **Tools** means the use for implements such as boomerangs, shields, spears, clubs, digging sticks and containers of all sorts. **Fibre** means use for string, nets, baskets, binding, string bags and belts. This pamphlet will give you more detail.

There were many different Koorie languages in Victoria, so in this pamphlet, when a Koorie name is given, the part of Victoria or language from which it comes is also indicated. Many of the names were recorded at Coranderrk, near Healesville, in 1878. These were probably in the language spoken by the Wurundjeri, whose land included the Yarra River and its catchment. They were a section or 'clan' of the Woiwurrung language group, which is classed as one of the numerous Victorian Aboriginal Tribes.

To find out more about each plant, you can look it up in this list, which is set out in alphabetical order of the common name. Because plants sometimes die out, and in high summer some herbaceous plants may be dormant underground, you may not find all the plants mentioned in this booklet in the garden.

When Europeans first came to Victoria, they found a people who had lived here for at least 40,000 years, who, over thousands of generations, had accumulated a traditional knowledge of how to manage the natural resources of the land to provide them with a good living. Victorian Koories were more settled than those who lived in the low-rainfall areas of the continent, and their most important plant foods were storage roots of many sorts. Roots have the advantage of being available all year round, and the earth is a natural storage cupboard, while seeds and fruits are seasonal. Many of the plants in this garden are those which provided root foods. Those which are not water plants are usually dormant during the dry summer, sprout with the autumn rains, grow during the winter, flower in spring and summer, and die down in the hottest part of the year. Under the ground they store up food in swollen roots or stems, so that they will be able to sprout again the following autumn. This means that their appearance will depend on the time of

year you visit this garden. There are some plants in the garden which have no recorded use, but are named for their general interest.

Management of the food resources by the Aborigines required the regular use of fire, applied at the time when the storage roots were underground, in late Summer just before the Autumn rains. Firing was done in patches, resulting in a mosaic of areas in different stages of fire recovery. Using fire to keep the forests and the plains open, with room for the small herbaceous plants to thrive, ensured a regular supply of food. Edward Curr, in the 1840's said the Aborigine "tills his land and cultivates his pastures with fire" See the reference below for a fuller explanation of Aboriginal land management:

Gott, B. 2005 Aboriginal Fire Management in South-eastern Australia: aims and frequency. Journal of Biogeography 32, 1203-1208.

Another useful reference:

Zola, N. & Gott, B. 1992 Koorie Plants, Koorie People. Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne.

Apple-berries GARAWANG (Wurundjeri)

Billardiera species

There are three species in Victoria, the fruits of which were eaten. Common Apple-berry, *Billardiera scandens*, is common in southern Victoria, Sweet Apple-berry, *B. cymosa*, is found in drier areas; Purple Apple-berry, *B. longiflora*, occurs in mountain gullies. All are easily cultivated.

Austral Mulberry DJELWUCK (Wurundjeri)

Hedycarya angustifolia

The stems of this mountain gully shrub grow long and straight and were highly valued for fire-drills which were traded up into northern Victoria. They were also used as spear-prongs. The fruits resemble a yellow mulberry, but are NOT EDIBLE. Instead they were a medicine for cuts and stings.

Australian Indigo

Indigofera australis

The roots could be used as a fish poison, the leaves can contain cyanide.

Banksia species.

Coast Banksia *Banksia integrifolia*; Silver Banksia, *B. marginata* WAR-RAK (Wurundjeri)

The flower cones of all species of Banksias were soaked in water to make sweet drinks from the nectar. The dry cones of Silver Banksia, *Banksia marginata*, were used as strainers and to carry smouldering fire. Single flowers were used as fine paint brushes. There are several other Banksia species in the garden.

Berrigan BIRREGON (Wiradjuri, NSW)

Eremophila longifolia

One of the Emu Bushes, used medicinally for colds, sores, eyewash and applied as smoke. The wood was used as nosepegs and to strike out teeth. Nectar from flowers.

Bind-weed TAARUUK - name given to the root- (Gunditjmara & Tjapwurong) .

YOWANDUK (Lake Hindmarsh)

Convolvulus erubescens, *C. remotus*

The root is tough and starchy; it was cooked and kneaded into a dough. The flowers are pink. The name TAARUUK was also given to the root of the Small-leaved Clematis.

Black Bean, Moreton Bay Chestnut BOGUM (NSW)

Castanospermum australe

This Queensland rainforest tree may be seen in the Biological Sciences System Garden at the rear of building 17, on the south side. The very large seeds were shredded and soaked to remove toxins before being eaten.

Black She-oak WAYETUCK (Wurundjeri)

Allocasuarina littoralis

The young cones were eaten, and used for medicine and magic. The bark was also medicinal, and the wood used for boomerangs, clubs and shields

Black Wattle GARRONG (Wurundjeri)

Acacia mearnsii

The gum was eaten. The bark was used for medicine, applied to wounds and sores, used to make string and containers, the wood for implements.

Blackwood MOOTCH-ONG (Jardwadjali) BURN-NA-LOOK (Wurundjeri)

Acacia melanoxylon

The inner bark of this wattle-tree was used to make coarse string, and was heated to apply as a medicine for rheumatism. The wood was used for spear-throwers and shields.

Bluebell

Wahlenbergia communis

No known use.

Blue Stars MUDRURT (Wurundjeri)

Chamaescilla corymbosa

One of the native lilies, with several small tuberous roots which were eaten. Blue flowers in spring.

Boomerang Wattle

Acacia amoena

Seed may have been eaten, wood used.

Bootlace Bush

Pimelea axiflora

The stripped bark of this mountain shrub is so strong that it earned the name of "Bushman's Bootlace". The Koories soaked and beat it to free the fibres to make string. This was then knotted into fine nets with which to catch Bogong Moths for food.

Bottle Brush

Callistemon citrinus

The flowers were soaked in water to make a sweet drink from the nectar.

Bracken MOO-LAA (Tjapwurong)

Pteridium esculentum

The roots (rhizomes) were cooked and the starchy contents were separated from the tough fibre. The green shoots were rubbed on insect bites. Do not eat the green shoots, they can be carcinogenic.

Bulbine Lily PIKE (Wurundjeri)

Bulbine bulbosa, *B. crassa*

The rounded root was eaten. *B. crassa* is a species from Bass Strait, with tapered storage roots

Bunya Pine

Araucaria bidwillii

A native conifer found in Queensland, the seeds (pine nuts) were an important food. Widely planted in Victoria, there are two specimens in the lawn below the Science Centre. Very large cones are occasionally formed, the seeds have a hard coat and can be cooked in the same way as chestnuts.

BURGAN (Wurundjeri)

Kunzea ericoides

Spears, clubs and boomerangs were made from this tall shrub. The leaves were burned to repel insects.

Burrawang BURRAWANG (Sydney)

Macrozamia communis

This curious palm-like plant is really a living fossil, a Cycad, related to the Pines and Cypresses. Female plants produce large cones with red-coloured seeds, which were put through a lengthy preparation process by the Koories, because they are POISONOUS if eaten raw. Large plants may be seen outside the Science Centre and opposite Lecture Theatre S8 and in front of building 17. Native to New South Wales.

Cabbage Fan-palm TABBAR (Ganai)

Livistona australis

This palm is found in NSW, Qld. and a small local area of East Gippsland. The soft stem apex is edible, but cutting it out destroys the plant. Early accounts say that the Victorian Koories used it only after white settlement, probably for lack of other food.

Cherry Ballart BALLEE (Wurundjeri)

Exocarpos cupressiformis

The red succulent stalk of the fruit was eaten. There is a green seed on top, probably not eaten. The tree needs to attach its roots to those of other plants, but does not damage them seriously. The wood was used for spearthrowers and bullroarers, and the sap for snakebite. A difficult plant to cultivate, but frequent in forests around Melbourne.

Chocolate Lily

Arthropodiurn strictum

The edible root tubers form at the ends of the roots. A common bush plant, the purple flowers smell of chocolate.

Christmas Bush CORANDERRK (Wurundjeri)

Prostanthera lasianthos

The dry straight stems were used as fire-drills, spun between the hands on a base of grass-tree stem to create fire by friction.

Cider Gum

Eucalyptus gunnii

This gum tree has small round leaves. The Tasmanians made holes in the base of the trunk, in which the sap collected. This was then drunk through a straw. Sometimes it fermented, making the sap mildly alcoholic.

Club Rush, Sea-, Marsh-, BELILLAH (Lower Murray R., SA)

Bolboschoenus caldwellii, *B. medianus*

These tall sedges are growing in the pond. The root tubers are about the size of walnuts, with a very hard outer cover. They were roasted and pounded into a thin cake between two stones. The plants die back in the winter. The Sea Club-rush favors more salty places.

Coast Beard-heath NGOOR-LE (Buandig)

Leucopogon parviflorus

All species of *Leucopogon* have small edible fruits with a tough stone. This shrub is common on the coast, and has white fruits. Alpine Beard-heaths have red fruits.

Coast Wattle NAL-A-WORT (Buandig)

Acacia sophorae

In Tasmania, the fully-swollen green pods were laid on the fire, and the green seeds were then picked out and eaten with meat like green peas. The seeds were also eaten both green and ground up dry in S.A. Not all Wattle seeds make good food, the better ones have a high content of oil, which is contained in the attachment to the seed known as a funicle. Coast wattle seeds have a high oil content.

Crane's-bill TERRAT = root (Wurundjeri)

Geranium species

The inconspicuous native *Geraniums* are weedy, and have woody tap-roots, rich in starch. They were probably beaten before being cooked and eaten, to soften the fibre. Some were called Native Carrots. The leaves have a distinctive shape. The flowers are small and pink or white. Native *Pelargoniums*, *P. australe*, *P. rodneyanum* have more showy pink flowers. Their roots were probably also used for food.

Creeping Myoporum

Myoporum parvifolium

Used here as a ground cover, no known use.

Cumbungi, 'Bulrush', GUMBUNG (Wemba Wemba) BOURT-DEET (Wurundjeri)

Typha species

A widely used food plant, growing in the lake. The underground stem (rhizome) is rich in starch, and also is a source of strong fibre for string-making. The young flowering stems were eaten raw and the leaves were used to make baskets. The above language words apply to the rhizome, other parts and conditions of the plant had different names.

Cypress Pines, Murray Pines MARUNG (Wemba Wemba)

Callitris gracilis, *C. verrucosa*

The resin, BRIDJIRIM (Wemba Wemba) from these native conifers was used to cement stone axes, and the wood was used for womeras (spear-throwers), spears and canoe poles. Teething sticks for babies were made from the resinous wood. The five species of *Callitris* in Victoria were used similarly. Also see mature *Callitris* at various places in the Monash Grounds.

Darling Lily WITYERRUM (Wemba Wemba)

Crinum flaccidum

A large cream-flowered lily which grows on the flood-plains of the Murray-Darling river system. The bulb is rich in starch, but it is bitter, and not eaten by stock. It is regarded as poisonous to eat, but is rubbed on the skin as a medicine.

Drooping She-oak

Allocasuarina verticillata BRAKBRUK (L.Hindmarsh)

The soft young cones were eaten. Mature cones were powdered up for medicine for sores and rheumatism, and bark and wood extracts were also used medicinally. Boomerangs and clubs were made from the wood, and the smoke from cones put into a fire was said to blind a man. Boomerangs, 10,000 years old, made from this tree were found in a swamp in South Australia a few years ago.

Dune Thistle

Actites megalocarpa

This is a native thistle found on beach dunes, and may have been the thistle which was "eaten raw to soothe pain and induce sleep".

Early Nancy

Wurmbea dioica

This lily has a very small starchy bulb with a black covering. The white flowers are banded with purple, and appear very early in the spring.

Emu Bush

Eremophila glabra

All over Australia the leaves and fruits of many species of Emu Bushes were used medicinally for various ailments. See also Berrigan.

Finger Lime

Citrus australasica

Found usually in NSW rainforest, this native Citrus has green finger-shaped fruits. It can be cultivated and has been hybridised with other Citrus species, resulting in the Red Desert Lime and Sunrise Lime which can also be seen in the garden.

Flax Lily MURMBAL (Wergaia)

Dianella revoluta

The leaves were split and then twisted together to make a strong tie. The flowers are blue and the berries purple, but the berries may not have been eaten. The larger *Dianella tasmanica* was used by the Tasmanians to make baskets, and other *Dianella* species were similarly used.

Garland Lily

Calostemma purpureum

The bulb was probably eaten. The flowers are yellow or pink. Found on flood-plains along the Murray River.

Geebung. GEEBUNG (Dharuk, Sydney), BOLWIN = fruit (Ganai)

Persoonia pinifolia

The fruits of *Persoonia* species have a hard stone covered with a soft layer. Both this and the seed inside the stone were eaten.

Golden Wattle KARRANK (Gunditjmara)

Acacia pycnantha

Australia's floral emblem. Roasted seeds and gum were eaten, and the bark was used for medicine, as a mild sedative for rheumatism.

Grampians Gum.

Eucalyptus verrucata

Found only in the Grampians, the leathery leaves are very resistant to wind. No specific Aboriginal use is known.

Grass Lily.

Caesia calliantha

The numerous tubers were eaten. The flowers are blue.

Grass Tree BAGGUP; Small Grass Tree TOOLEMERIN (Wurundjeri)

Xanthorrhoea australis, X. minor

The large Grass-tree eventually develops a trunk. The tuberous roots of young plants were eaten, the resin from the leaf bases was an adhesive, the flowers provided nectar, the flowering stem was a base for firemaking, and the leaf was used to cut meat. The Small Grass Tree does not develop a trunk but the leaf bases can be eaten and the flowering stem was used for small spears. Grass Trees are stimulated to flower by fire.

Grasses.

The grassland area contains several native grasses. Some have stronger stems suitable for making string and baskets. Grass seed was little eaten in Victoria, but was an important food in desert areas of Australia. The following grasses can be seen: Wallaby Grasses (*Austrodanthonia caespitosa, A. geniculata, A. setacea*); Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*); Spear Grass (*Austrostipa scabra*); Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri, P. sieberiana*); Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*).

Gum Trees

Eucalyptus, Corymbia species

There are many different species in the garden, and they had many uses – for tools, weapons, shelter, nectar from the flowers, even the seed was sometimes eaten. Some mature trees were already in this garden, others are newly planted.

Spotted Gum, *Corymbia maculata*, is widely planted on the Monash Campus. See also Mallees and individual species.

Hawkweed

Picris squarrosa/ P. barbarorum

Major Mitchell found the Swan Hill Koories eating the cooked stems of this weedy plant in 1836.

Hazel Pomaderris KALERTIWAN (Ganai)

Pomaderris aspera

Pegs for stretching animal skins were made from the stems.

Hemp Bush

Gynatrix pulchella

The bark was used to make string for a “cat’s cradle“ game; the leaves were applied as poultices for boils and ulcers. Male and female flowers are found on separate plants; these are male.

Honey Grevillea

Grevillea eriostachya

A handsome dry country Grevillea, the flower spikes were sucked for their nectar.

Honey Pots BURGIL BURGIL (Wurundjeri)

Acrotriche serrulata

The small flowers, borne underneath the plant, are full of a fragrant nectar.

Hop Bush KUUNGURRUN (Wurundjeri)

Dodonaea viscosa

The juice of the root of this plant was used as a medicine for toothache, cuts and stings. The sticky leaves may also have been used.

Kangaroo Apple MEAKITCH (Lake Condah)

Solanum laciniatum

The fruits of several species of *Solanum* were eaten by Koories. It is important to realise that these fruits can be POISONOUS until they are soft-ripe, and that some species are more poisonous than others. This species has purple flowers, and oval orange berries. It grows easily from seed and often appears in home gardens, being spread by birds.

Solanum aviculare

The fruits of this species are more pointed, and become scarlet when ripe.

NEVER EAT *SOLANUM* FRUITS UNLESS YOU ARE SURE THAT YOU HAVE AN EDIBLE SPECIES AND IT IS SOFT-RIPE.

Kangaroo Grass WUULOT (Gunditjmara)

Themeda triandra

String was made from the leaves and stems, especially in Gippsland, but other plants made stronger string.

Kurrajong KURRAJONG (NSW word)

Brachychiton populneus

The name KURRAJONG means bark which was used for string, so several other plants were also called Kurrajong, such as *Pimelea* species. New South Wales Koories ate the young roots, and the seeds were ground up and cooked. Widely planted as a street tree, it is more common in NSW and Queensland than in Victoria. It can be seen in front of building 17. Behind S8, next to Building 23 (Chemistry) is the related Queensland Bottle Tree, BINKEY, *Brachychiton rupestris*. The wood contains a nourishing gum, and the Queensland Aborigines tapped the tree for its sweet sap.

Leek Lily

Bulbine semibarbata

The leaves were cooked and eaten as a green vegetable.

Lilly Pilly WANDUIN (Ganai)

Acmena smithii and *Syzygium* species

The fruits were eaten. An East Gippsland species, but now often planted in gardens and streets. *Syzygium paniculatum*, Magenta LillyPilly, is particularly tasty and grows well in Melbourne.

Macadamia KINDAL KINDAL (NSW?)

Macadamia integrifolia

Used by Queensland Aborigines, Macadamia nuts can be grown in Melbourne. There is a mature tree in the Biology Department System Garden.

Mallee Eucalypts MALLE (Wemba Wemba); several names for different species.

Port Lincoln Mallee, *Eucalyptus lansdowneana*; Bull Mallee, *Eucalyptus behriana*; Soap Mallee, *Eucalyptus diversifolia*

When Koories went into the Mallee, they were able to get water from the roots of Mallee Eucalypts. The roots run horizontally under the ground for long distances, and when they were dug up and chopped into lengths, their stored water could be drained out into a bark container. A tiny sap-sucking insect, known by its Koorie name of LERP, lives on the leaves of this and other Eucalypts. It builds itself a firm little cover out of the sugary sap it sucks from the leaf, and the Koories collected this food by the bagful.

Manna Gum WURUN (Wurundjeri)

Eucalyptus viminalis

Hardened sugary sap can form from holes made by insects, falling as "manna". The bark provided shields and containers, and the leaves were used to smoke out fever. Recognised by its ribbony bark and buds in threes.

Midgen Berry MIDYIM (Qld)

Austromyrtus dulcis

A semi-prostrate shrub found on the NSW and Qld coast. The sweet fruit is white with purple spots

Milkmaids POPOTO (Lake Condah)

Burchardia umbellata

The starchy swollen roots were eaten. This common lily has clusters of white flowers with pink centres.

Mint Bush

Prostanthera ovalifolia

The mintbushes contain aromatic oils and were probably used medicinally.

Mountain Pepper

Tasmannia lanceolata

This has become a popular spice used in bush tucker cuisine, it is not known if it was used as a food by Koories, but the unripe berries were used as a medicine on sores and rashes.

Mudgee Wattle.

Acacia spectabilis

The leaves are pinnate. Seeds possibly eaten.

Mulga MALKKA (Paakantyi)

Acacia aneura

This wattle is common and widespread in arid Australia. The seed and the insect galls were used for food. Many implements were made from its very hard wood.

Muntries MUNTER, MONTERRY, NGURP – (Bunganditj, Western Vic & SA)

Kunzea pomifera

This attractive woody ground-cover has white flowers resembling gum-blossom, and bears clusters of fragrant red sweet fruit, like tiny apples. It grows on sand dunes in far west Victoria, in the Mallee and along the Coorong in SA. The fragrant fruit has become popular as bush tucker. The plant can be bought from some nurseries, but needs alkaline soil and strong sunlight to flower.

Murnong, MURRNONG (Wurundjeri); MUNJA (Mallee area); PUN'YIN (Tjapwurong)

Microseris lanceolata

This is the Indigenous root food which was most often mentioned by early European settlers in West and Central Victoria. The tuber is white, milky and radish-like, and a new one forms each year. The flower is yellow, and resembles a dandelion, with a nodding bud. Murnong was once very plentiful, but it was rapidly eaten out by the settlers' sheep, thus depriving people of one of their most important foods. It has several different forms and is difficult to cultivate.

Myall BOREE (Wiradjuri, NSW)

Acacia pendula

A large dry-country Wattle tree, the wood was used for boomerangs, spear-heads and clubs

Nardoo TALEM TALEM (Wemba Wemba)

Marsilea drummondii

This little water-fern has leaves like a four-leaf clover. When the water dries up, hard little spore-cases are left, and these were used after careful preparation. Nardoo was never an important food in Victoria, but was used in the dry central areas such as Cooper's Creek, where the explorers Burke and Wills met their death while eating it.

Native Flax

Linum marginale

The oily edible seeds are similar to those of the European Linseed, but are yellowish. The stems were stripped and beaten to free the fibre to make string. The flowers are blue. This is self-seeded in many places in the garden.

Native Parsnip

Trachymene composita

The root is fibrous, but edible.

Native Passionfruit BUNGGHUM (NSW)

Passiflora cinnabarina

The seeds in the green-colored fruits are edible, but have little taste; the stems were woven into baskets.

Native Rosella WYRRUNG (NSW)

Hibiscus heterophyllus

The young stem, leaf and root were eaten, the bark is a source of string.

Native Tobacco

Nicotiana suaveolens

This is one of the native tobacco species which is a source of nicotine. Probably chewed or smoked.

Native Willow WARPUR (Wemba Wemba)

Pittosporum angustifolium

Known also as the Weeping Pittosporum, the sticky seeds and the gum were eaten in dry areas. The seed and leaves were medicines for colds and eczema. The flowers are creamy, the fruits hard and orange-coloured, with resinous red seeds.

Needle Wattle NELIA (Ngiyambaa, NSW)

Acacia rigens

The phyllodes ('leaves') are needle-like. The wood was used for weapons

New Zealand Spinach, Warrigal Cabbage

Tetragonia tetragonioides

The green leaves were eaten cooked or crushed as a medicine for sores.

Nodding Greenhood.

Pterostylis nutans

The round root tubers of this and other Orchids were eaten. The flowers are green, and appear in early spring.

Nodding Saltbush

Einadia nutans

The small red fruits were eaten and used as a dye or face paint

Old Man Saltbush TYULERN (Wemba Wemba)

Atriplex nummularia

The salty leaves were cooked for food and were also applied as a medicine to cuts and stings.

Old Man Weed. GUKWONDERUCK (Wergaia)

Centipeda cunninghamii

A renowned Aboriginal medicine, used for many ailments. Found on floodplains, especially on the Murray River. Dies down in the Melbourne winter.

Pale Rush KURUNG BUWITCH (Wergaia)

Juncus pallidus

The stems of this and other strong rushes (*Juncus* species) were used for string and to weave baskets.

Paperbark 'Snow in Summer'

Melaleuca alternifolia

The papery bark of this and other *Melaleuca* species was used to wrap babies, as a fishing float, for bandages, and to wrap food for cooking. The leaves were medicinal, the wood was used for spears and digging sticks

Pig-face KATWORT (Gippsland) KEENG-A (Bunganditj)

Carpobrotus species

The fruit is red when ripe, with tiny seeds, and the salty leaves were also eaten with meat. The sap was used as an eye-wash. The flowers are pink, with many long thin petals. Once very plentiful on the Northern plains, but it has disappeared under grazing and trampling by sheep and cattle.

Prickly Moses.

Acacia verticillata

The inner bark of larger specimens was used to make fishing lines.

Prickly Currant-bush MORR (Wurundjeri)

Coprosma quadrifida

This is common in gullies, and has small red fruits; several are growing by the path up towards the Science Centre.

Punty Bush PUNTY (W.A.)

Senna artemisioides

The seed was probably eaten, and the leaves made a medicinal wash. A dry-country species with many sub-species.

Purslane MUNYAROO (SA)

Portulaca oleracea

A common summer weed in our gardens; the Aborigines in Central Australia ate both the seed and the leaves. Purslane is found world-wide, and is eaten in many countries as a green vegetable or a salad. There are other species of *Portulaca* in Central and Northern Australia which were also eaten.

Quandong, Sweet. BIDJIGAL (Lake Hindmarsh) QUANDONG (Wiradhuri NSW)

Santalum acuminatum

The red fruit was eaten raw. Inside the hard stone of the fruit is an oily seed which in Central Australia was ground up into a medicinal cream for the scalp. The tree is a harmless root parasite on other plants, and is being developed as a commercial crop by CSIRO.

Ray Flowers.

Anthocercis ilicifolia, *Cyphanthera tasmanica*. POISONOUS

A source of strong nicotine. These are a subject of study by the Department of Genetics at Monash.

Red Box TEERING (Jaara) DERN (Ganai)

Eucalyptus polyanthemos

The bark is fine and fibrous, characteristic of 'Box' eucalypts. Like other trees, the wood was used for implements and weapons.

Red Centre Lime

Citrus hybrid

A cross between a red variety of the native Finger Lime and Mandarin.

Red Fruit Saw Sedge

Gahnia sieberiana

The hard nuts (seeds) are difficult to grind, but may have been used for food.

River Mint PANARYLE (Wurundjeri)

Mentha australis

This native mint was used as a medicine for coughs and colds. The Koorie word is thought to be derived from the English "Penny-royal", which has a similar smell.

River Oak BILLAR (Wiradjuri, NSW)

Casuarina cunninghamiana

The seeds are easily freed from the cones and were ground into a paste for eating.

The wood was used for implements. This She-oak is native to New South Wales and Queensland, but grows easily in Victoria. Swamp She-oak, *Casuarina glauca* was similarly used. Both are planted in Monash Grounds.

River Red Gum BE-AL (Wurundjeri and Western and Central Victoria)

Eucalyptus camaldulensis.

One of the most widespread of the gum trees, with many uses. The smooth bark was cut to make canoes and containers. In the garden is a large dead Red Gum trunk which shows a scar where Aborigines removed bark to make a bark dish (coolamon) or a shield. This tree was found buried in the Mullum Mullum Creek, a tributary of the Yarra River.

Rough Tree-fern POO-EET (Wurundjeri)

Cyathea australis

The pith of the top of the trunk was eaten. The bases of the fronds are rough. This species tasted better than the Soft Tree-fern. Look for tree-ferns in the System Garden at the back of the Biology Building, No.17.

Ruby Saltbush KURRKUTY (Wemba Wemba)

Enchylaena tomentosa

A dry-country ground cover plant bearing tiny edible red fruits which were shaken off onto a sheet of bark.

Running Postman KABIN (Wurundjeri) NALL (Lake Condah)

Kennedia prostrata

Nectar was sucked from the red flowers and the stem was used to tie things up.

Saloop (a Saltbush)

Einadia hastata

The small red fruits can be eaten or used as a dye or face paint. They are rather bitter to taste.

Sandfly Zieria

Zieria smithii, *Z. fraseri*

This and other small Zieria species may have been used medicinally.

Sandpaper Fig.

Ficus coronata

The rough leaves were used as sandpaper, the sap was applied to wounds.

Scrub Cypress-pine

Callitris verrucosa

This shrubby Callitris provided resin for a cement and wood for tools.

Sea Celery

Apium prostratum The green leaves were used as food, usually cooked.

Sedge (no specific English name) POONG'ORT (Lake Condah, Tjapwurong)

Carex tereticaulis

Still used by Koorie women of the Lake Condah area in Western Victoria to make traditional baskets. The thin stems are very strong, and can be split into fine strips which are woven in a spiral pattern. Examples may be seen at the Hamilton Aboriginal Keeping Place and the Museum of Victoria . Also made into a cape and worn to cure toothache.

Showy Podolepis

Podolepis jaceoides

The thick taproot was eaten. Alpine Podolepis, *P. robusta* and Long Podolepis, *P. hieracioides* were probably also eaten.

Silky Hakea

Hakea decurrens

Nectar came from the flowers, the small seeds inside the woody follicles were eaten as a snack.

Silver Banksia WOORIKE (Wurundjeri)

Banksia marginata

The flower-cones were soaked in water to make a sweet drink, and the dry cones were used as strainers.

Silver Needlewood DJIN (Wergaia)

Hakea leucoptera

The roots were dug up and drained as a source of water in Mallee country.

Silver Saltbush

Atriplex rhagodioides

Saltbush leaves were used for food, and as medicine for bites, scratches and burns. The very small seed could also be eaten.

Silver Wattle MOY-YAN (Wurundjeri)

Acacia dealbata

The bark was used to make coarse string, and for medicine; the gum was eaten, mixed with burnt shell or ashes to make cement, and also applied to wounds and sores. The wood was used for implements, particularly to make bark buckets and axe handles. It flowers in late winter, the first local Wattle tree to do so. Black Wattle, *Acacia mearnsii*, called GARRONG by the Wurundjeri, has similar leaves, and was used in the same way.

Slaty She-oak

Allocasuarina muelleriana

Young shoots and soft young cones were eaten. This is a shrubby species.

The main sheoak trees in the garden are *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, River She-oak, and Swamp She-oak, *Casuarina glauca*, both NSW species. The Drooping Sheoak, *Allocasuarina verticillata*, and the Black Sheoak, WAYETUCK (Woiwurrung) *Allocasuarina littoralis*, are native to the Melbourne area.

Small-leaf Bramble, Native Raspberry EEP AEEP (Wurundjeri)

Rubus parvifolius

This native raspberry provides small but delicious fruit. It grows best in mountain gullies, but has often been displaced by the introduced Blackberry, also a *Rubus* species. Another Native Raspberry in the garden is *Rubus hillii*, Broad Leaf Bramble, found in East Gippsland forests.

Small-leaf Clematis TAROOK, name for root (Gunditjmara, Tjapwurong)

Clematis microphylla

The root is tough and starchy; it was cooked and kneaded into dough. The plant is a climber, and has masses of pale yellow flowers and feathery seeds. The name TAARUUK was also given to the tough root of the Pink Bindweed.

Soap Mallee

Eucalyptus diversifolia

Water was obtained from horizontal roots which store water.

Soft Tree-fern KOMBADIK (Wurundjeri)

Dicksonia antarctica

The inside pith of the top of the trunk was eaten, but it did not taste as good as that of the Rough Tree-fern, *Cyathea australis*. Most of the tree-ferns grown in our suburban gardens are *Dicksonia*. The bases of the fronds are smooth. See this also at the back of the Biology Building, No. 17.

Sow Thistle DALURP (Wurundjeri)

Sonchus oleraceus

The green leaves and stem were eaten. Although often regarded as an entirely introduced weed, the Sow Thistle was probably also native.

Spear Lily

Doryanthes palmeri

Native to Queensland, these large lilies are planted across the Monash grounds. In the Gymea Lily, *D.excelso*, the root, the young flower stem and the red flowers were eaten, and it is possible that the same was true of the Spear Lily.

Spiny Flat-sedge MANGATU (Buandig, S.A.)

Cyperus gymnocaulos

The strong stems were used to make fine baskets, mats and string. The stems were soaked in water for sore throats

Spiny Headed Mat-rush KURAWAN (Wurundjeri)

Lomandra longifolia

This was the main plant used by the Yarra Tribe, the Wurundjeri, for baskets, mats and eel-traps. The flowers are small, cream-coloured, and borne on a spiny stem. Other *Lomandra* species were also used. They have become popular in roadside plantations and gardens.

Stinkwood

Zieria arborescens The Tasmanians bound the rather unpleasant-smelling leaves of this gully shrub around the head to relieve pain and headache. Other *Zieria* species have pink flowers, and may also have been used.

Storksbills

Pelargonium australe, *P.rodneyanum*

The tough starchy roots were probably eaten. *P.rodneyanum* has deep pink flowers

Sunrise Lime

Citrus species hybrid

This is a cross between the native Finger Lime and Mandarin and Cumquat.

Swamp Paper-bark BARLAN (Ganai)

Melaleuca ericifolia

For clubs, digging sticks; the bark for medicine and as wrapping.

Sweet Apple-berry

Billardiera cymosa

Found in the Mallee, an attractive climber with purple flowers, the sweet fruit was eaten.

Sweet Pittosporum BART-BART (Gippsland)

Pittosporum undulatum

Found in eastern Victoria, widely planted, the sticky substance around the seed was used as a medicine for insect stings. The inner bark was used for string.

Tall Sedge

Carex appressa

No known use, the leaves can cut the fingers.

Tasman Flax Lily

Dianella tasmanica

Blue flowers, purple-blue berries. The leaves can be used for string or baskets, but there is no record of the berries being eaten.

Tassel Sedge

Carex fascicularis

Found on the edge of the lake, no known use.

Tea Trees

Leptospermum species.

There are 15 species of *Leptospermum* in Victoria. The aromatic leaves were used for medicine; the stems of tall species were used for spears. Woolly Tea-tree – WOOLERP (Woiwurrong), *L.lanigerum*; Coast Tea-tree NOWART (Ganai) *L.laevigatum*, was used to build huts.

Trigger Plants PINNONG (Lake Condah)

Stylidium graminifolium; *Stylidium adnatum* (WA)

If the pink flowers are gently poked, the style will suddenly snap over. This was an amusement for Koories, as it is for all people. It is a pollination mechanism for the plant.

Turpentine Bush DIRAG (Wergaia)

Beyeria lechenaultii

The smoke from the resinous leaves was a medicine against fever.

Tussock Grass BOWAT (Wurundjeri)

Poa labillardieri and other *Poa* species

Stems and leaves of large tussock grasses were twisted and used to make baskets, mats and net-bags.

Vanilla Lilies

Arthropodium milleflorum, *A. minus*, *A. species 1*.

Each plant has many edible tubers, and vanilla-scented purple to white flowers in Spring and Summer. A very large form, species 1, comes from the High Plains and flowers in summer.

Varnish Wattle

Acacia verniciflua

The pods and seeds were eaten, possibly when green. The sap was a fish poison, probably due to tannin.

Wallaby Grasses

Austrodanthonia species.

Common native grasses with many species. No particular use, possibly for string. The tussock structure is resistant to damage by fire.

Water Pepper

Persicaria hydropiper

Found at the edge of the lake. The leaves have a strong peppery taste and were used as a fish poison. The peeled stem was cooked and eaten.

Water-ribbons POLANGO (Wathaurung); NGARELI (Wemba Wemba)

Triglochin procerum & other tuberous species

A common water plant with many sweet or starchy tubers which grow in the mud beneath the main stem. They were usually cooked, and were an important food along the Murray River. Water Ribbons can easily be found in dams and streams, and will grow in a pot if the base is kept wet. The green flowers are borne on a spike.

Wattles.

Acacia species See individual labels.

Wattles had many uses, and there are a large number of different species. Some, like the Golden, Silver and Black Wattle trees, produce edible gum, and the Koories used to notch the bark to get a regular supply. The gum was also mixed with burnt mussel shells to make a cement for use on spears and axes. The bark was soaked in hot water as a medicine for indigestion, it was also used to make coarse string. Tasmanians ate the green seeds of the Coast Wattle, *Acacia sophorae*, and the dry seeds of some Central Australian wattles were ground up to make damper; they are rich in protein, similar to beans and peas. Not every species of wattle is suitable for food.

Weeping Grass

Microlaena stipoides

No particular use. Makes a good native lawn.

Weeping Pittosporum WARPUR (Wemba Wemba)

Pittosporum angustifolium

Fruit and leaves were used for medicine. The gum was a cement, and the wood of large specimens was used for shields.

White Cedar

Melia azedarach

A widely planted tree, deciduous in winter, with fragrant purple flowers and poisonous yellow fruit, no known use. It is also native to Asia.

White Elderberry BURNE-BURNE (Lake Condah)

Sambucus gaudichaudiana

The small creamy-white fruits were eaten. This species is found in cool shaded places. The European Elderberry has black fruits.

Wilga WILGARR (Wiradjuri, NSW.)

Geijera parviflora

The bark and the leaves were used as medicine, particularly to relieve pain.

Willow Wattle BREMGU (Wergaia)

Acacia salicina

The leaves were used to heal wounds, and the bark was used as a fish poison.

Wollemi Pine

Wollemia nobilis

This ancient Conifer was known as a fossil 90 million years old, but was discovered as a living tree in 1994 in Wollemi National Park. It is related to the nearby Bunya Pine. It has been propagated and now can be bought and grown as a potted plant. Its seeds are probably edible.

Wombat Berry

Eustrephus latifolius The tubers and part of the fruit of this Gippsland climber were eaten after processing. The tough stem was used for tying. Found in rainforest.

Woolly Tea-tree WOOLERP (Wurundjeri)

Leptospermum lanigerum

The straight stems were used for spears.

Yellow Gum EASIP (Wurundjeri)

Eucalyptus leucoxylon

The wood was used for clubs and shields. The red flowers make this an attractive tree.

Yellow Star

Hypoxis vaginata

The flowers are yellow and star-like, with six petals. The edible root is a small swollen corm. The plants favour water-logged ground.