

TOPIC: AUSTRALIAN NATIVE FOOD

GUEST SPEAKER : JOHN & MARY KING

MALENY GARDEN CLUB MEETING : 27 October 2015

Regarded as the Bible of Native Foods – ‘Wild Food in Australia’ by AB & JW Cribb as well as ‘Bush Heritage’ by Pat & Sim Symons plus ‘Wild Herbs of Australia & New Zealand by Tim Low – edible weeds as nutritional foods. The CSIRO study on the health benefits of Australian native foods used blueberries as the base line and found that their lauded beneficial properties were the lowest compared to those of Australian native plants.

- Lemon Myrtle is very high in calcium and magnesium as are Aniseed Myrtle and Lillypilly. Lemon oil good as flu preventative
- Black Apple – slow growing – now protected in the Mary Cairncross Reserve was once used as a timber tree and is related to the Persimmon. Fruits drop off while still green and are eaten by cassowaries which then spread the seed. Aboriginies buried the green fruits in sand to ripen for eating. Liqueur made from the fruit tastes similar to dry sherry
- Acacia Macradenia flowers are edible. Can roast and grind the wattle seed. Good small garden specimen. Wash pollen out of flower and use to make liqueur
- Brown Plum Pine – John collected 100kg of fruit one season and only ½kg next season. Great timber tree found in the mountains through to Victoria. They were woodchipped in Brisbane to make way for construction of the Inner City Bypass
- Cook native fruits in sugar syrup as natives are low in sugar content and need sugar to bring out flavours
- Cinnamon Myrtle is the main fringe tree in rainforests, is fire retardant and tolerant
- John has made 16 native fruit liqueurs
- Wild Mint is good in salads, makes flavoursome tea and grows well in pots also along cattle trails – cattle love it - mentha diemenica
- Sandpaper Fig is good to candy and glacé and use as a laxative. It freezes well
- Clove Lillypilly has clove oil in seeds, makes great jam as is high in pectin. Used as a footpath tree in Redcliffe
- John uses native herbs and spices to make curry powder, dukkah and herbal tea
- Midyim berries good for snacking. John used Midyim in a salmon roulade – too much overpowers salmon flavour. Tree doesn’t mind shade and loves water
- Strawberry Tea Tree oils taste of mixed berries and cinnamon. White flowering form grows in Cape York
- Native Guava grows in Mary Cairncross Reserve – only living example of first flowering plant – strong fragrance – grows ½m tall, loves shade and is loved by scrub turkeys. Sometimes only produces one flower and one fruit – great flavour, makes wonderful chai and scones and fruit cake
- Native Caper has a flower 25 – 50mm wide and is the main host plant of the white caper butterfly. Needs shade when young and sun when mature. There are 7 varietal forms of native capers in the west and 3 on the coast
- Desert Lime is the mother of all limes
- White Aspen – glacé rose leaf bramble – add sugar for rich raspberry flavour
- Glacé Desert Lime and Glacé White Aspen fruits were provided by John and Mary for tasting along with various Native Fruit Liqueurs. (END)