

Ecological Cultural Knowledge - Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha

Knowledge shared by the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people



Local Land Services Western Region

This booklet was the product of an earlier project undertaken by a legacy agency of Local Land Services Western Region. It has been re-branded in line with Local Land Services Western Region publication standards and guidelines. Local Land Services Western Region would like to acknowledge and thank all who contributed their knowledge, time, expertise and financial support to the original project.



Mutthi Mutthi totem - Pukumanama (red kangaroo) is the totem of the Mutthi Mutthi People. This image was produced from an original painting by Jason Kelly.

Ecological Cultural Knowledge – Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha

Foreword

Local Land Services Western Region is committed to working with the Aboriginal communities of our region to improve their involvement in natural resource management; and to learn and share ecological cultural knowledge and understanding of their country with future generations.

Aboriginal people have a cultural, spiritual and social connection to the land and have an important role in environmental management. Local Land Services Western Region has a strong interest in supporting Aboriginal groups in the collection of information that can accurately, comprehensively and meaningfully define Aboriginal cultural links to the landscape.

Aboriginal people possess special knowledge, rights and interests in relation to the way that natural resources are managed and used. It is important that Aboriginal cultural knowledge of natural resources is only used in accordance with the wishes of the custodian of that information.

The objective of this project was essentially to provide Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people with the opportunity to identify and record plants of cultural significance and to correlate those plant species with vegetation communities which occur in their country.

The project was made possible through the support of the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha communities, with a discussion group comprising Elders, Traditional Owners and holders of knowledge regarding the usage of flora and places of spiritual, cultural, economic and social significance.

An important aspect of projects that engage Aboriginal communities in cultural heritage protection is the opportunity they provide for the strengthening of partnerships between government organisations and Aboriginal communities.

The effort to revive and preserve the rich linguistic and oral history of local Aboriginal

communities has provided invaluable background for developing awareness and knowledge of the Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the landscape.

The involvement of Elders, Traditional Owners and other community members has also assisted in rekindling the spiritual connections that the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people have with country by recording the traditional cultural and spiritual knowledge of local vegetation as an educational resource for future generations. I invite you to read this valuable resource and support Aboriginal communities to regain and strengthen access to their past as a pathway to revitalising their culture.

Tom Hynes
Chair
Local Land Services Western Region

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Aboriginal People

Please note that this report contains photographs and references to some Aboriginal Elders, Traditional Owners and knowledge holders who are now deceased.

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Acknowledgements

Local Land Services Western Region wishes to acknowledge the Elders, Traditional Owners and knowledge holders of the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people who participated in the earlier 'Plants of Cultural Significance' project which provided the basis for the content of this booklet.

Local Land Services Western Region also acknowledges the spiritual connection that Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people have to country and the importance that this and other similar research has in demonstrating their connection to country and their success in retaining a living and vibrant Aboriginal culture within Australia.

This acknowledgement includes all Mutthi Mutthi attendees as identified at the community consultation workshops during 2004: Kateena Boulton, Cheryl Charles, Daniel Kelly, Jedda Kelly, Joe Kelly, Maxine Kelly, Tommy Kelly, Maureen Reyland, John Winch, Patsy Winch, Noelene Johnson, Greg Kennedy, Ray Kennedy, Richie Kennedy, Herby Pettit, Joseph Blyth, Jean Charles, Jessie Charles, Tanya Charles, John Jackson, John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Patricia Kirby,

Mary Pappin, Alf Kelly, Daryl Kelly, Joan Kelly and Daryl Reyland.

This acknowledgement includes all Yitha Yitha attendees as identified at the community consultation workshops during 2004: Margaret Handy, Margaret Hannah, Lal Pearce and Barry Pearce. Other Traditional Owners attending were: John Jackson, Besley Murray (Wemba Wemba), Tommy Winch (Yorta Yorta), Bruce Baxter, Ruth Murray, Tanya Rose (Wiradjuri). These people contributed to the ecological cultural knowledge shared through the community consultative process.

For a complete list of reference material, please refer to the references section in the back of this booklet.



Participants in the Mutthi Mutthi/Yitha Yitha workshops. Back Row (L-R): Besley Murray, Bruce Baxter, Marlon Parsons, Peter Dykes, Lal Pearce, Bob Kennedy, John Jackson, Beth Gott, Tanya Rose. Middle Row (L-R): John Kennedy, Daniel Kelly, Jean Charles. Front Row (L-R): Mary Pappin, John Winch.



Elders Daniel Kelly, Lal Pearce and Bruce Baxter at the Mutthi Mutthi/Yitha Yitha workshops.

Ecological Cultural Knowledge – Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha

Introduction

Local Land Services Western Region commissioned the production of this booklet as part of a series of Ecological Cultural Knowledge publications which record the oral histories, traditional language and cultural uses of native plant species in the region. This publication is based on a study undertaken in 2004 by the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority (LMD CMA) in partnership with the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha Elders, Traditional Owners and knowledge holders. Known as the 'Plants of Cultural Significance' project, it involved both the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha Traditional Owner Groups as both of these groups were considered to be closely related historically. The map on page 3 indicates the project's cultural study areas.

Permission has been granted by the participating Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people for publication of this material. The plants included are not intended to be a definitive list, however all plants included in this booklet were agreed at the project workshops as culturally significant to both groups.

Plants identified in the Plants of Cultural Significance reports, as well as the oral histories and project information have been summarised into this current format with clear indicators as to categories of life form, traditional language plant names (where identified) and traditional uses. Additional information has been added where necessary, to the list of plants (selected by the groups and included in the previous publications) regarding plant descriptions, habitat and distribution.

Broad traditional uses are represented in this booklet with a brief description, however specific details of how a plant was prepared and used are not included, as this allows the cultural knowledge of a plant's use and values to be retained with an Elder, Elders Council or Traditional Owner Group. The setting of limits on the sharing of cultural information was a key aspect of the consultation process, and the main reason that broad use categories were used to record plant values.

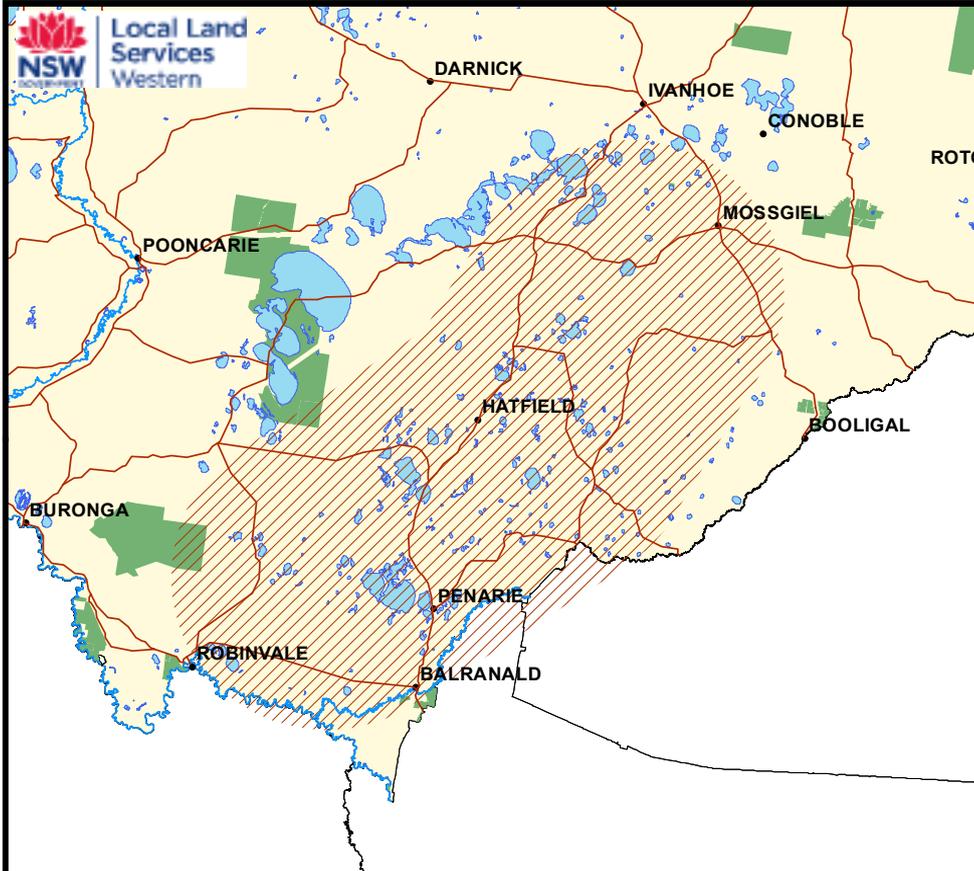
In some instances, a plant is listed as having cultural significance however no traditional use was identified in the workshops. Descriptions of traditional use include broad descriptions from other sources of general use by Aboriginal people as accepted by the project participants.

Local Land Services Western Region is committed to the engagement of Aboriginal people in natural resource management and appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people in the production of this valuable educational resource. This booklet will assist Local Land Services Western Region to protect the values of culturally significant vegetation in its region.



Thomas Pearce with his daughter Myrtle, on the Murrumbidgee River at Balranald c. 1919. Thomas Pearce was Alice Kelly's father and Myrtle her sister.

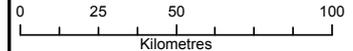
MAP OF CULTURAL STUDY AREA



**Map of Cultural Study Area:
Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha**

Legend

- Main Roads
- Towns
- Major Rivers
- Study area
- National Parks Estate
- LLS Western Region



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Ecological Cultural Knowledge – Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha

Oral histories

The loss of language skills is seen by the participating Elders as one of the great tragedies that Aboriginal people have experienced. Language is therefore central to any discussion about cultural values. The 'Plants of Cultural Significance' project sought to identify and record as many traditional names for plant species as possible, since many of the Elders, Traditional Owners and knowledge holders expressed that this was an important component of the project.

Current knowledge of Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha languages, particularly Yitha Yitha is limited. There are a multitude of causes of this language decline including past Aboriginal welfare policies, lack of access to land to practice culture, and decline in traditional cultural practices. Many Elders and other knowledge holders with good language and plant knowledge have died in recent years. Despite this, some important traditional knowledge of plants has been retained as a sufficient number of people are still familiar with plants of cultural significance.

During the 'Plants of Cultural Significance' workshops, a number of plants were deemed by Elders, Traditional Owners and knowledge holders to have an *exceptional cultural value*. All plant species identified by participants as having a cultural value were declared as being important, and it was made clear by the participants that the loss of any of these plants meant the loss of their country and their connection to country. Most participants felt particularly distressed about land clearing and the destruction of native vegetation that had occurred in recent times. The plants considered as very special are indicated in this booklet as 'Exceptional Cultural Value' plant species.

Mutthi Mutthi

Mutthi Mutthi country was identified as north and west of Balranald in New South Wales. There are numerous cultural heritage sites in the area, including along the Murrumbidgee River. One of these, a declared Aboriginal place, is Diplo Ceremonial Ground. The photograph shown on the left hand side of page 7 shows Tanya Charles

standing in front of the Birthing Tree with the Diplo and the river in the background. This place is also the birthplace of well known and respected Mutthi Mutthi Elder, Alice Kelly.

The Mutthi Mutthi Elders involved in this project requested that the following dedication to Alice Kelly be retained within the revised format.

Dedication



Alice Kelly (26/06/1919 – 30/06/2003) – Mutthi Mutthi Elder

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Alice Kelly (nee Pearce) was born at Balranald (Dippo) in June 1919, daughter of Tom Pearce and his second wife Lily Pearce (nee Kirby). She lived her whole life in Balranald on country.

Alice was an Elder of the Mutthi Mutthi people. Within her lifetime, she had been actively involved in the establishment of the Willandra World Heritage Area and Mungo National Park.

Alice is recognised internationally and locally for a lifetime of work in advocating Aboriginality and self-determination for all Aboriginal people in the fields of education culture, environment and heritage.

In 1988, (the year that the survival of Aboriginal culture was recognised), Alice was awarded the National and State NAIDOC award for Aboriginal of the year.

Alice Kelly died in June 2003.

Yitha Yitha

Yitha Yitha country was identified as north east of Balranald and south of Ivanhoe, incorporating the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers. Dr Luise Hercus, linguist, notes that Yitha Yitha people spoke a language that was very different from both Barkindji (Paakantyi) and Mutthi Mutthi.

Due to the dislocation of the Yitha Yitha people however, the language was lost early and the only information we have comes from early sources.

The Yitha Yitha Elders involved in this project requested that the following dedication to Charles Kirby be retained within the revised format.

Dedication

Charles Alexander Kirby – early 1870s to mid 1960s.

“I am Yitha Yitha and come from the Lachlan River where the blackfellows talk backwards.

Charles Kirby was of Yitha Yitha origin and originally spoke Yitha Yitha which is a language related to languages further down the Murray River from its junction with the Murrumbidgee River, and distinctly different from those spoken by tribes that neighboured the Yitha Yitha people.

There were fifteen children born to Charles Kirby and Christine Bright. Charles could speak to other tribes in their own language and was recognised as a multi-linguist. His knowledge of languages developed from extensive travel that he and his family undertook, from their country of the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers to other

traditional tribal country around Ivanhoe and along the Murray and Darling Rivers. His children married into other tribes.

Charles was one of a small number of Yitha Yitha people who had an opportunity to make a contribution to the recording of Yitha Yitha language and history. Others from an earlier period included Annie Raquon from Euston, Annie Hamilton (Johnson) and particularly Angus Myers. Of these individuals, Charles has the greatest number of descendents living in traditional Yitha Yitha country today.

There are other important Yitha Yitha ancestors, including Queen Caroline of Oxley and Tom Ivanhoe, who did not have the opportunity to record any of their language.



Leonard Kirby, Christine Bright, unknown and Charlie Kirby (L-R)

Ecological Cultural Knowledge – Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha

Life Form



Tree



Small Tree



Shrub



Forb / Herb



Climber



Reed / Grass

Traditional uses groups



Ceremonial



Arts / Craft



Fire



Foods



Tools / Hunting



Medicinal



Shelter



Spiritual Association



Wildlife Habitat



Women's Use



Other

Cultural value



Exceptional

Identification of cultural uses of plants was obtained from Elders at project workshops and other historical text.



Ecological Cultural Knowledge -
Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha
Tree Section





River Cooba (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: River Cooba
Scientific name: *Acacia stenophylla*

The seed pods of River Cooba were used as a source of food, and the wood used in making implements. Other uses were also identified although not defined.

Description: Straggly tree to 10m high, with drooping leaves and small branches. Leaves 15-40cm or more long, 3-6mm wide, slightly curved, thick, rigid. Flowers pale-yellow, in globular heads 6-9mm in diameter. Pods 10-20cm long, to 10mm wide, leathery, thick. Flowering occurs mainly during summer-early autumn.

Habitat: Occurs on heavy clay soils in river red gum communities along river and creek banks and swamp margins. Also found in mitchell grass, black box, bumble box, coolibah and belah communities, usually in close proximity to a river or creek channel.

Distribution: Found throughout New South Wales, along rivers and creeks (permanent or ephemeral) in ribbon-like stands.

Marrangi, Marini, Murr



Common name: Cypress Pine,
Slender Cypress Pine,
White Cypress Pine

Mutthi Mutthi name: Marrangi,
Marini

Yitha Yitha name: Murr

Scientific name: *Callitris glaucophylla*, *Callitris gracilis*

Used as a source of medicine and in a variety of applications. The tree provides good habitat for

birds and other wildlife. The sap may be used as an antiseptic for cuts and burns. Generally, the wood, cones and resin were used.

Description: Tree with a single trunk to about 20m tall, the bark rough and furrowed. *Callitris glaucophylla* leaves are aromatic, with similar bluish-grey foliage. *Callitris gracilis* leaves are aromatic with olive green to bluish grey foliage which is jointed and needle-like. The fruit of both is a woody cone about 20-25mm in diameter. Flowering occurs in spring-summer.

Habitat: *Callitris glaucophylla* is found on coarse-textured red and brown earths. *Callitris gracilis* occurs on sandy soils particularly on sandy ridges in almost pure stands.

Distribution: *Callitris glaucophylla* is widely distributed throughout most of New South Wales, except along the coastline. *Callitris gracilis* occurs in the southern parts of the Western Division of New South Wales but density is greatly reduced since European settlement.





Ngarringi



Common name: Belah
Mutthi Mutthi name: Ngarringi
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Casuarina pauper*

Provides very good firewood, especially for cooking, as it burns for a long time and produces white ash. Ngarringi has ceremonial value, the leaves were used as medicine, and the branches used to make implements. The tree provides good habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Description: Tree to about 15m high, with slender branchlets about 1-2mm thick, striated, jointed. Bark is dark grey, finely fissured in a regular pattern of squares. Fruits form an oblong woody cone about 20mm long, with several rows of prominent protruding valves. Flowering usually occurs summer-autumn.

Habitat: Occurs on sandy red earths, sandplains, floodplains and foothills. May be found as individuals or in dense stands.

Distribution: Widespread in the western half of New South Wales.

Piyaly, Biali, Thunine **E**



Common name: River Red Gum
Mutthi Mutthi name: Piyaly, Biali
Bial-bial (forest of River Red Gum)
Yitha Yitha name: Thunine
Scientific name: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*

The bark was used for canoes and coolamons. The tree has many traditional uses including for ceremonies, as a food source, and for firewood. The bark and branches make excellent shelter and the

tree has spiritual association for the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people. Its cultural value includes women's use and medicinal qualities. The bark and wood have been used in making implements including weapons and didgeridoos.

Description: Medium-sized to large tree, 25-40m high. Bark dark, rough and persistent on the lower trunk, smooth elsewhere. Leaves alternate, 12-22cm long, 8-15mm wide, thin, drooping, green or blue-green. Flowers cream coloured, in clusters of 5-10. Buds 6-10mm long, 4-5mm

wide, conical cap. Fruit hemispherical to top-shaped, 7-8mm wide, with sharply triangular protruding valves.

Habitat: Most extensive on grey heavy clay soils along riverbanks and on floodplains subject to frequent or periodic flooding.

Distribution: Occurs throughout New South Wales, except for coastal areas.





Garini



Common name: Congoo Mallee,
White Mallee
Mutthi Mutthi name: Garini
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Eucalyptus dumosa*

Description: Tree with mallee habit, to 8m tall, bark persistent at the base to 1m, rough and flaky, rest of stem white or yellowish-white and smooth. Leaves alternate, 7-10cm long, 1-2mm wide usually bluish-green. Flowers whitish, in clusters of 3-7. Buds 10mm long, 7mm wide. Fruit bell to cup-shaped, 7-10mm long, 5-7mm wide, valves pointed, Flowering occurs in winter summer.

Habitat: Occurs on sandplains and low dunefields with deep soils often with limestone present, usually with other mallee species.

Distribution: Occurs throughout the southern half of the Western Division of New South Wales.

Puletyi, Gegada, Bulloot **E**



Common name: Box Tree, Black Box
Mutthi Mutthi name: Puletyi,
Gegada
Yitha Yitha name: Bulloot
Scientific name: *Eucalyptus
largiflorens*

Used in ceremonies, burned as firewood for warmth and cooking, and the branches used for shelter. It was also used for making implements and provides habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Description: Tree to 20m high, with a large spreading crown and drooping branches. Bark persistent throughout except on the smallest branches, hard, dark, rough and somewhat furrowed. Leaves alternate, 60-120mm long, 15-27mm wide, thick, dull-green or grey. Flowers off-white, in clusters of 3-7. Buds 5mm long, 3-4mm wide, the cap hemispherical. Fruit hemispherical, 5mm in diameter, the valves enclosed. Flowering occurs in spring-summer.

Habitat: Found on heavy clay soils of periodically flooded alluvial plains and along dry-lake margins. Also grows in depressions and drainage lines in nearly all communities.

Distribution: Occurs throughout western New South Wales.





Garini



Common name: Glossy-leaved Red Mallee

Mutthi Mutthi name: Garini

Yitha Yitha name: Not identified

Scientific name: *Eucalyptus oleosa*

Description: Mallee or small tree 3-12m tall, bark rough, dark and fibrous, persistent at the base, peeling in ribbons above. Leaves alternate 60-90mm long and 15-20mm wide, thick, shiny light-green. Flowers white or cream in clusters of 5-14 on a common stalk 8-12mm long. Buds 6-9mm long, 5-6mm wide. Fruit club to top-shaped 5-9mm wide, valves narrow, protruding and persistent. Flowering occurs any time but mostly in summer.

Habitat: Sandplains and low dunefields with deep sandy red earths, often with limestone present, mixed with other mallee species.

Distribution: Scattered through the southern part of the Western Division of New South Wales.

Puri, Buri



Common name: Wilga
Mutthi Mutthi name: Puri, Buri
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Geijera parviflora*

Although traditional use was not identified in the project workshops, the Wilga tree provides a range of source material, with the seeds, bark, roots, leaves, flowers and wood all being used broadly. Due to its canopy, the tree was

used for shelter. The flowers are edible and are sweet tasting. The wood is used for making boomerangs.

Description: Small to medium-sized tree to 9m tall, with a large, often rounded, dense canopy. Leaves strongly aromatic when crushed, alternate, 6-18cm long, 4-7mm wide, shiny and dark-green. Flowers white, small, 3mm wide, with an unpleasant odour. Fruit globular, 4-5mm wide. Flowering mainly occurs in winter-spring.

Habitat: Grows in inland regions of New South Wales in mixed woodland communities. Usually found in areas with calcareous red clay loams, also on calcareous sandy soils.

Distribution: Widespread throughout western New South Wales, except for the far north-west; infrequent in the south east.





Nhalan



Common name: Silver Needlewood,
Hooked Needlewood

Mutthi Mutthi name: Nhalan

Yitha Yitha name: Not identified

Scientific name: *Hakea leucoptera*
subsp. *leucoptera*, *Hakea*
tephrosperma

Description: Small shrub or tree to around 5m. Leaves alternate, rigid, cylindrical to about 8cm long and 1.5mm wide, with a sharp point at the tip. *Hakea leucoptera* flowers white, hairless, tubular at the base, the tube 5-6mm long. Fruit a woody capsule, 20-30mm long, opening in two longitudinal halves. *Hakea tephrosperma* flowers white, hairy, tubular at the base, tube 5-6 mm long. Fruit a woody capsule, 20-30mm long opening in two longitudinal halves to release two winged seeds. Flowering occurs late spring-summer.

Habitat: *Hakea leucoptera* grows in a wide range of grasslands, shrublands and woodlands, in sandy to clay soil. *Hakea tephrosperma* occurs usually on sandy to clay soils in woodlands.

Distribution: Both varieties found throughout the western half of New South Wales.

Marndi, Mandi



Common name: Sugarwood
Mutthi Mutthi name: Marndi,
Mandi
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Myoporum
platycarpum*

Although traditional use was not identified in the project workshops, Sugarwood has generally been used for food and in making weapons. Both the sap and wood were used.

Description: Tree to about 10m tall, bark rough, fissured and divided into segments. Leaves lance-shaped, 3-6cm long, 4-7mm wide, tipped with a stiff point, fine teeth on both sides near tip, foliage often sticky. Flowers white, in groups of 4-8 at base of leaves, bell-shaped and 4-6 lobed, 6-8mm long, often yellow inside. Fruit an almost dry berry about 6mm long. Flowering occurs late winter-early summer.

Habitat: Most abundant in mallee and belah-rosewood communities, on red and red brown earths.

Distribution: Widespread over the Western Division of New South Wales particularly in the south.





Native Plum, Sandalwood (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Native Plum,
Sandalwood

Scientific name: *Santalum
lanceolatum*

*Sandalwood or Native Plum tree has ceremonial
value and was used for medicine.*

Description: A shrub 2-4m or a tree over 5m tall, open crown and drooping foliage. Leaves opposite and usually lance-shaped, 3-6cm long, 2-4cm wide, bluish-green. Flowers 5-6mm long with 4 lobes. Fruit like a plum, dark blue 12-4mm long, 8-10mm wide, with a circular scar at the end, stone hard and rough. Flowering occurs in spring-summer.

Habitat: Occurs on sands, sandy loams and clay loams in a wide range of woodland communities.

Distribution: Widely distributed, as scattered trees, sometimes in groups throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.



Ecological Cultural Knowledge -
Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha
Small Tree Section





Cooba, Willow Wattle (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)

E



Common name: Cooba, Willow Wattle

Scientific name: *Acacia salicina*

Cooba has been identified by the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha as a source of food and medicine. It also provides habitat for birds and other small wildlife.

Description: Small to large tree to 20m tall with willow-like deep green foliage. Leaves linear, long and narrow, 4-12cm long, 4-7mm wide, thick, fleshy tapering to both ends and usually finely pointed. Flowers cream to pale yellow, in globular heads, 5-7mm diameter which are single or in long groups of 2-10 heads at the base of the leaf. Pods are straight often ash-coloured, 3-12cm long 6-10cm wide, woody with thick edges, often strongly constricted between seeds. Flowering occurs mostly summer-autumn.

Habitat: Commonly occurs along waterways, soils ranging from sands to clays.

Distribution: Throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.

Butterbush, Weeping Pittosporum (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Butterbush, Native Apricot, Weeping Pittosporum
Scientific name: *Pittosporum angustifolium*

Butterbush is used by Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people as medicine.

Other sources indicate that the seeds have also been used as food and medicine, and the wood used in making tools.

Description: Shrub or small tree, to 6m high and 4m wide, drooping branches and a whitish or mottled trunk. Leaves alternate, narrow, flat, deep-green, shiny, thick, 3-10cm long, 3-10mm wide. Flowers cream or pale-yellow, fragrant, 6-12mm long. Fruit capsule 10-20mm long, egg-shaped, bright-orange when ripe, exposing 2-7 orange-red seeds in each half when opening. Flowering occurs in late winter-spring.

Habitat: Grows in woodland and mallee communities, and widespread on sandy soils in the arid zone.

Distribution: Occurs throughout New South Wales; uncommon along the coast.





Kuti (Kurti), Gudi-gudi & Mirnkun, Mingun **E**



Common name: Sweet Quandong, Bitter Quandong

Mutthi Mutthi name: Kuti (Kurti), Gudi-gudi, Bidigan (Quandong fruit), Mirnkun, Mingun

Yitha Yitha name: Not identified

Scientific name: *Santalum acuminatum*, *Santalum murrayanum*

The fruit is used as a source of food. The seeds can be dried and ground to make flour, or used decoratively, for example in jewellery making. Both of these plants have been identified as having

ceremonial value, however Kuti or Gudi-gudi (Sweet Quandong) was identified as of 'exceptional cultural value'.

Description: *Santalum acuminatum* is a spindly shrub to 5m tall, with drooping branchlets. Leaves olive-green, 5-7cm long, 4-10mm wide, tapering to a curved point.

Santalum murrayanum is a shrub to 4m tall with long pendulous branchlets. Leaves grey or silvery green, linear and lance-shaped, 25-30mm long and up to 3mm wide, tapering to a curved point.

For both species flowers creamish, fruit fleshy, red or brownish-red, 2-3cm wide, the stone slightly pitted. Flowering occurs in spring-early summer.

Habitat: Grows in a range of woodland communities, on sandy sites to gravelly ridges.

Distribution: *Santalum acuminatum* is found on and west of the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales. *Santalum murrayanum* is widespread throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.



Ecological Cultural Knowledge -
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Shrub Section





Spine Bush, Needlebush (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Spine Bush,
Needlebush

Scientific name: *Acacia colletioides*

Spine Bush was used to make implements.

Description: Tangled, brambly often dome-shaped shrub to 3m tall. Leaves 1-3cm long and 2mm thick, cylindrical, stiff with a sharp point. Flowers yellow in heads 5mm in diameter occurring singly or in clusters. Pods 3cm long, 3-5mm wide, thin and flat, curved or twisted, constricted between seeds, flowering occurs mainly in spring.

Habitat: Sandy red earths, red earths with limestone present, with mallee, belah and other woodlands.

Distribution: Widespread in the Western Division of New South Wales but not on riverine plains.

Old Man Saltbush (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Old Man Saltbush
Scientific name: *Atriplex nummularia*

Old Man Saltbush is fire resistant and the leaves are edible, being dried and used as seasoning on meat. The leaves are also used as medicine and the plant is of ceremonial value to the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha.

Description: Large grey-scaly shrub, with brittle woody branches, up to 2m high and 4-5m wide. Leaves almost circular, 10-25mm long. Flowers in loosely branched clusters at the end of branches. Fruiting body round or fan-shaped, 5-8mm long. Flowering occurs mainly during spring-early summer. Male and female flowers occur on separate plants.

Habitat: Found mainly on clay soils, usually in flat or low-lying situations, but found on most soil types at all levels. Also found in mallee and most other communities.

Distribution: Occurs throughout the western plains of New South Wales.





Kurrkuty, Dolra, Naretha



Common name: Ruby Saltbush
Mutthi Mutthi name: Kurrkuty
Yitha Yitha name: Dolra, Naretha
Scientific name: *Enchylaena tomentosa*

Ruby Saltbush is a valuable source of food for the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people. The fruits (berries) are edible and taste sweet and succulent. This plant can also be used as a green vegetable.

Description: Perennial shrub to about 1m high with stems covered with woolly hairs. Leaves cylindrical, 6-15mm long, covered with short hairs. Small flowers occur singly in leaf axils. Fruit succulent, 4-6mm wide, green, yellow or red, drying to black. Flowering occurs throughout most of the year, but mainly in spring-early summer.

Habitat: Occurs on a wide variety of soil types in all vegetation communities.

Distribution: Widespread throughout New South Wales.

Slender Cherry (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Slender Cherry
Scientific name: *Exocarpos sparteus*

Slender Cherry provides a source of food, mainly from the fruit. It is also of cultural value to the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha for making implements and for women's use.

Description: Shrub or small tree to 4m tall, with slender pendulous branchlets which are strongly striped longitudinally. Leaves are narrow, to about 7mm long but shed for the branchlets early. Flowers minute in spikes 4-8mm long. Fruit a more or less globular nut 4-5mm diameter, orange turning to brown, seated on a very succulent whitish, red, yellow to purple stalk, 6-8mm long. Flowering occurs mainly in spring, but occasionally at other times.

Habitat: Occurs on sandy soils in dunefields and sand plains amongst mallee.

Distribution: Uncommon, occurs in the south western section of the Western Division of New South Wales.





Cherry Ballart, Pale-fruit Ballart (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Cherry Ballart,
Pale-fruit Ballart
Scientific name: *Exocarpos strictus*

Cherry Ballart fruit is used as food, and the branchlets used for making implements. This shrub has cultural value for women's use.

Description: Shrub to 2m tall and 2-3m wide with erect light green branchlets that are slender but stiff, triangular in cross section and are flattened. Leaves reduced to scales, 2-3mm long which are quickly shed. Flowers minute in small clusters. Fruit a hard globular nut seated on a larger whitish to lilac succulent stalk. Flowering occurs in early summer.

Habitat: Occurs in riverine areas mainly on sandy or well drained clay soils, in river red gum communities.

Distribution: Restricted to the immediate vicinity of permanent streams.

Purukul, Burugul



Common name: Lignum, Tangled Lignum

Mutthi Mutthi name: Purukul, Burugul

Yitha Yitha name: Not identified

Scientific name: *Muehlenbeckia florulenta*

The traditional use of Purukul or Burugul was not identified in the project workshops, however the

plant is generally known for its use as a source of food, the shoots being eaten, and was also used for making tools.

Description: Hairless perennial shrub to 2.5m tall with many slender tangled striated branches and branchlets. Leaves alternate, linear or lance-shaped, remaining for only a short time. Flowers small, yellowish, solitary or in a cluster along the branchlets. Fruiting body more or less top-shaped, 5mm long. Flowering occurs throughout most of the year.

Habitat: Occurs on swamps and riverflats and other intermittently wet areas often associated with black box and river red gum communities.

Distribution: Occurs throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.





Dilang, Dilangi



Common name: Dillon Bush
Mutthi Mutthi name: Dilang, Dilangi
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Nitraria billardierei*

Dilang or Dilangi provides a source of food, the berries or fruit being fleshy when ripe.

Description: Rigid spreading shrub, 1-2m in height, the branches often tangled and sometimes spiny. Leaves alternate, 1-4cm long, thick, flat, smooth, blue-green or green. Flowers small, white, in small clusters along the branches. Fruit fleshy, oval in shape, 1-2cm long, turning purple, red or golden when ripe. Flowering occurs mainly in spring, with the fruit ripening in midsummer.

Habitat: Often grows on saline or over-grazed areas, on loamy or clayey soils, in inland districts.

Distribution: Widespread throughout the western half of New South Wales.

Dolra, Naretha



Common name: Spiny Saltbush

Mutthi Mutthi name: Not identified

Yitha Yitha name: Dolra, Naretha

Scientific name: *Rhagodia spinescens*

Description: Shrub with rigid branches to 1.5m high, the older branchlets often ending in a spine. Leaves white or greenish, 5-10mm long, oblong to almost round. Flowers in spikes or small clusters. Fruit a deep-red berry, 4-6mm wide. Flowering occurs throughout most of the year but mainly in spring-summer.

Habitat: Occurs on a wide range of soils, more frequently on loams and clay loams but also common on heavy clays.

Distribution: Found throughout areas west of the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales.

The red berries of Spiny Saltbush are used as a source of food. The spiny branchlets can also be used for making implements or tools.





Ecological Cultural Knowledge -
Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha
Forb / Herb Section

Old Man Weed (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha names not identified) **E**



Common name: Spreading Sneezeweed, Old Man Weed, Common Sneezeweed, Scent Weed
Scientific name: *Centipeda minima*, *Centipeda cunninghamii*

Old Man Weed is a source of medicine and also has other uses for the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people who have identified both varieties as of exceptional cultural value.

Broadly, the stems, leaves and seeds are used externally as medicine.

Description: *Centipeda cunninghamii* is a small aromatic perennial forb, about 20cm tall. Flower heads creamy-green without petals. Flowering occurs in spring-autumn.

Centipeda minima is a weak prostrate to slightly upright aromatic annual forb, 10-20cm high, 15-30cm diameter. Flowerheads reddish, yellow or green. Flowering occurs in spring-summer.

Habitat: Occurs on a wide range of soil types but usually in damp areas, found in most vegetation communities.

Distribution: Both are widespread throughout the Western Division of New South Wales, and *Centipeda minima* is found particularly in the east.





Winmuru



Common name: Sowthistle
Mutthi Mutthi name: Winmuru
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Sonchus oleraceus*

Winmuru has been identified as a plant of cultural significance by the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people, although the use was not identified in the project workshops. As an introduced plant since European settlement, it is assumed its use to be more recent as a food source.

Description: An introduced exotic plant. Erect, hairless annual forb with hollow stems, up to 1m tall, exuding milky sap when broken. Leaves thin and soft, dull-green deeply lobed, margins toothed and ending in spines. Flower heads with numerous unequal yellow petals in clusters on short stalks at end of stems. Bud conical when grown, 10-12mm long. Seeds about 3mm long and up to 1mm wide, flattened with a tuft of white silky hairs. Flowering occurs mostly in spring.

Habitat: Occurs on most soil types and in most plant communities.

Distribution: Widespread throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.



Ecological Cultural Knowledge -
Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha
Climber Section





Old Man Beard (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha names not identified)



Common name: Old Man Beard,
Small-leaf Clematis

Scientific name: *Clematis
microphylla*

Old Man Beard has been identified by the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people as having medicinal value.

Description: Woody climber to about 3m high. Each leaf with 3 leaflets 3-6mm wide and 1-4cm long. Flowers creamy-white, 18-30mm long, in groups. Fruit is a cluster of flattened fruitlets. Flowering occurs during midwinter-spring.

Habitat: Found climbing on trees and shrubs of various types, abundant in mallee communities and also found in numerous woodlands on sandy soils.

Distribution: Occurs mainly in the southern half of the Western Division of New South Wales.

Bindweed (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Bindweed
Scientific name: *Convolvulus erubescens*

Bindweed has been identified by the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people as having cultural value as a medicinal plant.

Description: Hairy prostrate often greyish perennial forb, with twining or creeping stems 1m or more long, arising from a central rootstock. Leaves alternate, stalked, variable in shape and size to 3cm long and 1-2cm wide, divided into narrow lobes. Flowers pink or white, in groups of 1-4 on stalks to 4.5cm long at base of leaves. Each flower is funnel-shaped, 12-20mm long, 18mm across when open. Fruit an egg-shaped capsule, 2-celled with each cell containing two dark-brown seeds about 4mm long. Flowering occurs during the warmer months.

Habitat: Variable, grows on all soil types and in most vegetation communities.

Distribution: Widespread throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.





Ecological Cultural Knowledge -
Mutthi Mutthi & Yitha Yitha
Reed / Grass Section

Marsh Club-rush (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Marsh Club-rush
Scientific name: *Bolboschoenus medianus*

The nut from Marsh Club-rush was used as a source of food.

Description: A perennial grass-like herb (or sedge) with an underground fleshy stem (rhizome). Leaves 6–8mm wide. Flower heads with 4–6 branches 2–10cm long, bearing clusters of 1–6 spikelets. Spikelets 1–2cm long. Scales around the flower (bracts) 7mm long, yellow-brown. Bristles no more than two-thirds as long as nut, often shed. Nut flat to convex or three-sided with concave faces, 3–4mm long, 2–2.5mm diameter, shining. Flowering occurs in spring–summer.

Habitat: Grows in swamps and around waterholes.

Distribution: Restricted to permanent waterways and waterholes and nearby areas throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.





Pungert, Buned



Common name: Basket Rush
Mutthi Mutthi name: Pungert,
Buned
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Carex tereticaulis*

Pungert or Buned has been identified by the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people as of cultural significance, although the use has not been identified.

Description: Densely tufted perennial sedge, forming clumps to 50cm or more in diameter. Stems to 100cm or more tall, smooth and cylindrical, or roughly triangular near the top only, hollow or almost so, filled with a soft pith, rough on the edges towards the top. Leaves 3-6mm thick, grass-like, roughened on the edges, mainly arising from the base of the plant. Flowerheads brownish, spike-like, less than 10cm long comprised of 20 or more spikes. Flowers in numerous brownish spikelets about 5mm long. Fruit a nut contained in a beak-like sack 3-3.5mm long. Flowering occurs in spring-autumn.

Habitat: Found on coarse textured alluvial soils on the margins of creeks, also on heavy clays on river banks and in shallow water around the margins of swamps.

Distribution: Recorded at numerous locations associated with permanent waterways in the south-east of western New South Wales.

Common Reed (Mutthi Mutthi, Yitha Yitha name not identified)



Common name: Common Reed
Scientific name: *Phragmites australis*

Common Reed provided a range of uses for the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people, including decoration, food, and the making of implements. It also provides habitat for water birds and other aquatic species.

Broadly, the leaves, shoots and rhizomes are used as food, for making baskets and spears, as well as being used for fuel.

Description: Robust perennial grass, 1.5-3m high, spreading by rhizomes. Stems cane-like, rigid, smooth, hairless. Leaves mostly on the stems, flat, 20-60cm long, 10-30mm wide, tough, smooth, hairless. Flowerhead dense, soft, brown to purplish, silvery white at maturity, 15-40cm

long, with numerous short branches. Flowering occurs summer-early winter.

Habitat: Grows in wet places especially at the edge of ponds and streams. Usually occurs on heavy clay soils.

Distribution: Occurs mostly in the southern half of western New South Wales.



Ngarrilli



Common name: Water Ribbons
Mutthi Mutthi name: Ngarrilli
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Triglochin procera*

Ngarrilli is a source of food for the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people as well as being used to make implements.

Broadly, the tubers are baked and eaten.

Description: Robust perennial aquatic plant with rhizome and roots which end in tubers. Leaves all basal, strap-like, thick and fleshy, sheathed each side at the base, up to 1m long and 35mm wide, the upper end floating. Flowers small, greenish, numerous on stalks 1-2mm long in an erect tapering spike to 30mm long, terminating the cylindrical stem, the whole to 50cm or more. Fruits more or less globular or conical with six fruitlets 4-10cm long, the fruitlets eventually separate and fall leaving the short stalks on the stem. Flowering occurs spring-autumn.

Habitat: Occurs in still and slow-flowing water to about 1m deep, also in periodically flooded depressions, but reduced in size.

Distribution: Restricted to permanent waterways and waterholes and nearby areas throughout the Western Division of New South Wales.

Cumbungi, Gamban **E**



Common name: Cumbungi, Bulrush
Mutthi Mutthi name: Cumbungi, Gamban
Yitha Yitha name: Not identified
Scientific name: *Typha domingensis*, *Typha orientalis*

Cumbungi or Gamban is a plant of exceptional cultural value to the Mutthi Mutthi and Yitha Yitha people, with many uses identified.

These include ceremonial use, decoration, source of food, making of implements, spiritual association and shelter. It also provides habitat for small animals. Sources indicate that the stems can be eaten raw or slightly roasted, producing a taste similar to asparagus. The roots can be ground to make flour. The long reeds are used for weaving baskets and for making disposable reed spears.

Description: Robust semi-aquatic perennial reed, to 2m tall or more, with rhizomes to about 20mm wide and stems to 20mm wide. Flowers massed

in 2 dense spikes, one above the other, at the end of each stem. Flower spikes cylindrical, velvety, brownish, 10-25cm long, 1-2cm wide. When mature, the spike releases copious amounts of tiny fluffy seeds. Flowering occurs in summer.

Habitat: Grows in swamps, margins of lakes and streams, fresh or slightly brackish water.

Distribution: Widely distributed throughout New South Wales.



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