

Plant of the month

Red Boppel Nut *Hicksbeachia pinnatifolia*

by Richard Burer

Red Boppel Nut is a small tree reaching a height of about 12m, usually with one or more unbranched stems arising from the root stock.

This stunning species' usual habitat is subtropical rainforest on basaltic derived soils, and despite being reclassified as a threatened species, it is common in the Nimbin area. Those living east of the village, particularly those along Tuntabale Creek, would enjoy seeing this attractive edible nut tree.

Flowering typically in September, but unusually now in the beginning of August, this tree's nut can be harvested around



Christmas. For those interested in growing it, plant directly into the soil within your conservation area.

However slow growth rates are common, and this rainforest tree does not like being grown in pots.

Koala Kolumn



by Lorraine Vass

The Federal Environment Minister, Greg Hunt has until 14th August to make his decision on the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade including the route of Section 10 from the Richmond River to Wardell.

The NSW Government's approval and conditions were received on 4 July 2014. As well as assessing the approval documentation the South-East Assessment Branch is also accepting new information. The population viability analysis (PVA) recently carried out by Dr Steve Phillips on the koalas in the way of the highway is an example. This analysis predicts the likelihood of the koala meta-population's functional extinction by 2035 if the route proceeds. The smaller eastern cell (approximately 80 koalas) will go first and the larger western cell (120 animals) will eventually collapse due to depleted recruitment.

The wider impact of the population's demise is, at this stage, somewhat speculative. We expect genetic analysis will confirm a relationship with surrounding populations. If this is the case then the entire koala population north of the Richmond River could be at risk. PVA is a species-specific method of risk assessment frequently used to estimate the likelihood of a population's extinction for the purposes of indicative

urgency and stages or processes that need to be the focus of recovery efforts. It's been around since the late 1970s but has escalated in development and use since the universal uptake of personal computers and software packages.

The Vortex software used by Dr Phillips simulates deterministic forces as well as probable demographic, environmental and genetic events based on known data. The simulation is reiterated many times to generate the range of fates that the population might experience. It is freely available and widely used by international conservation agencies, so we're extremely surprised that the NSW Government's assessment did not appear to include modelling future population viability.

We're also dismayed by RMS's apparent inability to take a landscape approach to environmental planning associated with the highway's upgrade. Despite claims of extensive experience and success in managing linear infrastructure projects traversing environmentally sensitive areas, RMS seems to be focussed on keeping koalas (and other animals) off the roads with a bit of engineering lip-service to (but no real understanding of) connectivity functionality for future survival.

In late July, the Australasian Network for Ecology and Transportation (ANET) held its inaugural conference in Coffs Harbour. ANET is a network for people from research institutes, consultancies, government, NGOs and community groups who are interested in road and linear infrastructure ecology. I didn't attend but I've spoken to a number of participants who all confirmed the hot topic being the necessity for landscape-scale environmental planning to underpin linear

Wampoo Gorge field day

Sixty-five visitors attended the field day hosted by EnviTE Environment and Dailan Pugh at Wampoo Gorge on 25th July.

Wampoo Gorge is the name of Dailan's 79ha property located at the southern end of Wanganui Gorge. The property links the Nightcap and Goonengerry National Parks.

The field day was timed to mark the August 1st, 2014 handover of Dailan's property to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), as well as showcase restoration work by EnviTE over the last six years, of the critically endangered subtropical lowland rainforest on the site.

The property is significant at a state and national scale,

due to its threatened lowland rainforest and high numbers of threatened flora (16) and fauna (29) species.

Dailan explained that the property had come up for sale in 1996 and he had actively encouraged the NPWS to purchase it, because of its exceptional conservation values.

"This did not occur, and I purchased the property to ensure its protection from inappropriate use and development," Dailan said.

"I am very happy that this unique site with its outstanding conservation values can at last belong to the people of NSW for protection in perpetuity.

"The community must be vigilant, however, as proposals



to open up parks for logging, grazing and shooting are currently being considered and we have to actively lobby our politicians to ensure this never occurs in our conservation reserves."

NPWS Ranger Andrew Fay explained to the participants, "The National Parks and Wildlife Service is keen to hear from the community regarding their views on the future protection and ongoing management for this spectacular and unique site."

best outcome for Ballina's koalas would be the imposition of a condition requiring the route to avoid the 'Important koala population area' described by Dr Steve Phillips.

The Minister can also publish on the internet his proposed decision and conditions and invite comments in writing on these within 10 business days. There's no indication that he intends exercising that discretionary power.

So what part, if any, does the newly appointed Threatened Species Commissioner, Gregory Andrews, play in all this? He has no regulatory function but he must surely have an interest and some influential capacity. After all the position was created "to help address the growing number of native flora and fauna that are faced with extinction."

At present, the Commissioner's office (like Minister Hunt's) is being bombarded by letters generated by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW's) latest Action Alert on Ballina's koalas. Over 40,000 people have signed IFAW's two petitions and earlier Action Alert. The new Alert will be pushed out internationally during the first week of August. The Commissioner has told IFAW that his office doesn't have capacity to respond to the inundation.

You can write to Minister Hunt and Commissioner Andrews. IFAW makes it easy: www.ifaw.org/australia/get-involved/protect-ballinas-koalasextinction

Information can also be found on Save Ballina's Koalas Facebook page.

To report a koala in trouble, or to register a sighting, please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: 6622-1233. To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat, ring the Office of Environment and Heritage Enviro Line: 131-555.



Parker and his mother were hit on the Nimbin Road near the Old Quarry Road turnoff. The vehicle stopped and the animals were rescued. Mother died of her injuries and Parker is in care.

infrastructure developments.

Of course Ballina's koalas occupy land that is already protected. The Ngunya-Jargoona Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is one of fifty IPAs in the National Reserve System. Declared in February 2013 it stretches over 1,114ha of the Lower Richmond Valley in the traditional homelands of the Bundjalung people of Ballina and Cabbage Tree Island. It's of particular significance to the Nyangbul clan group. Ngunya-Jargoona is the last remaining intact area of heath, woodlands, rainforest and eucalyptus forests on the floodplain and the proposed route will clear and sever the corridors of forest and wetland that connect the IPA with the Blackwall Range and Tuckean Swamp.

No one wants or expects Greg Hunt to reject the upgrade project but he can impose conditions or approve an alternative proposal, if that alternative proposal also formed part of the referral, which of course it did not. The

preaching and let's have some action.

Take your newly purchased cloth bag, your new take-away containers and cups on your way to your favourite coffee or take-away bistro. Harangue your friends and partners about where and how to shop. Create your own, learn to knit, sow, weave, use your innate creativity, inform yourselves, turn your TV off, go for bush walks, join a community group, free yourself of your ego, learn humility, patience and learn to be inclusive for what better way to live than to improve your inner self.

Kick your bad habits—it's not that hard—and learn to live responsibly. We have a big job ahead and it is time to close ranks, work hand in hand, exhibit our humanity and understanding, learn to give and be generous. The time to snatch up the best deals, to distrust each other, to hurt each other is over, only kindness, compassion and true love will get us out of this mess.

We have to consciously reject the values imposed on us, become aware, see through the divisive and manipulative ways of those who pull the levers in society.



We need to go back to basics, rely more on our creativity and sense of respect for all creatures, so we don't unnecessarily impact on their lives.

Rethink, reuse, reduce and recycle. Come check us out at the Nimbin Environment Centre, Cullen Street, Nimbin and be part of the solution.

NIMBIN ENVIRONMENT CENTRE NEWS

by Philippe Dupuy, Retiring President

NEC has now expanded its wings to include Lismore. This expansion is necessary because of the real threats we face not only from Big Business and their mates in government, but also from ourselves and our own behaviour towards the environment.

In the last edition of the NGT we discussed how we are now at NEC stocking items such as reusable containers and coffee cups and compostable bamboo toothbrushes and hair-brushes that will put us on the yellow brick road for a plastic-free Nimbin. Now we need to develop a culture of responsibility, so ordinary people like ourselves get into the habit of reusing, reducing, recycling.

This is only a small effort to cut down on pollution and stop behaving as if nothing

matters except us and our lazy habits, but we just cannot keep on living as if the planet is inexhaustible. The hordes of living things that come to expire on our shores, in our creeks and rivers, on our roads and in our backyards because of our foul habits is well documented. We humans are the creatures causing this great imbalance through our indiscriminate and excessive use of disposable items. Conversely, only us humans can stop this out-of-control behaviour: no other creature can, and that is why we have to act.

We have to act because the current system in place and responsible for running the affairs of the country has become corrupt beyond salvage. It is now up to ordinary members of the community to take it upon themselves to go a new way. Small beginnings will bring awareness and dissolve ignorance. But enough

African Tulip Tree

- another environmental weed



by Triny Roe

Resplendent with multiferous vibrant red-orange trumpet flowers, the African Tulip Tree screams tropical paradise. The main island of Fiji, Viti Levu, is covered in it, from top to bottom. Along the roadsides, in the fields, in the gardens, whole hillsides ablaze with a scarlet efflorescence.

Featuring in the list of top 100 most invasive weeds of the world, *Spathodea campanulata*, aka African Tulip Tree, has naturalised around the globe.

The African Tulip Tree was 'discovered' by 18th century European botanical collectors in tropical West Africa. Sought after for its decorative qualities, this tree is hardy and vigorous, making it a popular park and garden specimen.

These days ATT has a

reputation for weediness in a number of tropical regions, including Australia, Christmas Island, Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean Islands.

In Queensland it is a Declared Class 3 environmental weed: illegal to sell or distribute. Control measures can be instigated on properties adjacent to sensitive national parks. It has also naturalised in the Northern Territory.

Considered a 'sleeper weed' (not yet a huge problem) in Northern NSW, this tree has potential to multiply rapidly in favourable conditions. It flowers profusely and continuously for several months of the year. Each pod can produce 500 or more winged seeds, which spread easily by wind and water. Seedlings are frost-tender, which will limit its range to

above the frost line.

The papery seeds are recorded as being edible, as are the leaves. An analysis of young fresh leaves showed 8.2gm protein per 100gm as well as a range of vitamins and minerals, making this a nutritious leafy green vegetable.

The juicy flower buds are enjoyed by children who make water pistols, squirting sap at each other. Warning: the sap can stain hands and clothing. Leaves and flowers can be boiled and used as fabric dye.

Growing 10 – 35 metres tall, it has a shallow root system and brittle timber. There is a tendency to drop branches in storms.

In West Africa, the soft pale wood is used for carving, particularly making drums and blacksmiths' bellows, as it doesn't burn easily. It is also suitable for paper making and toothpicks. In the Phillipines it is grown in plantations for plywood production.

It has also been used as a decoy crop for teak defoliator moth, protecting teak plantations. Considered to have magical properties, the timber is used for witchdoctors' wands in Africa and Haiti.

African tulip tree is important in traditional West African medicine. The bark is used in treatments for a

range of complaints including skin and gastrointestinal conditions while the flowers and leaves treat kidney issues. It is also used in pregnancy and childbirth. (NB: Not intended as medical advice – see your health practitioner)

Pharmacological and phytochemical studies have analysed various plant parts and identified many important beneficial and therapeutic compounds including anti-malarial, anti-HIV agents and anti-inflammatories.

Once considered only a coloniser of old farming land and logged forests, there is dissent in later literature. Some declare ATT a shade-intolerant invader and claim it only inhabits forest margins or disturbed areas. However, researchers in Cuba have found evidence of seedlings germinating in undisturbed mountain forest. Planted originally as shade for coffee, it is now a weed pest in the plantations. Rapid-growing seedlings compete with the coffee. A recent field study in Hawaii recorded seedlings growing in less than 13% light, and at comparable rates to those in full sun.

Local trees with spectacular flowerings include Fire-wheel – *Stenocarpus sinuatus* and Flame tree – *Brachychiton acerifolius*. Consider what and where you plant.

Happy weeding.

Naturalising bamboo

by Geoff Dawe

There is a situation where a roadside batter adjoins a creek. So close is the creek to the road that the batter is approximately 90 degrees. This is an area of road where in flood, the batter has let go, part of the road has been lost, and much Council expense has been involved in making it right again.

Nearby, further along the batter, a running bamboo, rather than a clumping variety, has established itself. It has actually journeyed under a tarred road to establish itself beside the creek.

It is seen to be an aid in holding the extremely sensitive batter. Since in bush regeneration as well as agriculture, the primary responsibility is soil rather than species dwelling on top, the bamboo is not "wrong" in establishing itself where it has.

Nevertheless, in the politics of present Western culture, the fact that the bamboo is involved in aiding maintaining the purity of a creek is not enough to save the plant from being poisoned, and possibly the creek as well. It has committed the heinous crime of establishing itself there, and blocking native regeneration that is said to be better adapted to the site because natives have evolved in this country over aeons of time. The fact that the bamboo has established in place of the natives is not noticed as being the evidence why natives are not more suited to this site than the bamboo.

Moreover, the bamboo has also adapted over aeons of time but in a different land to this one. National borders determined by humans are not what it responds to. Its response is concerned with available niche; finding positions suited to its growth. This is the prerogative of life: that it

moves to where conditions are right for it. The clearing of Australia and the corresponding degradation of its soils with industrialised agriculture, as well as industrialisation itself, has presented a niche for "weeds".

Bamboo is now native in that it grows and reproduces rampantly and therefore belongs. It is the implementation of biodiversity that does not have to do with guarding against the movement of species, but with aiding their movement to available niches worldwide. It may mean koalas occupy Israel and California, and pandas, Australia.

The world with its agriculture-depleted soils, with its civilisation unable to return organic matter to soil, with fresh water threatened and with its air imbalanced with excess greenhouse gases, cannot afford human parochialism of species distribution. In the macrocosm; in the long-term view that only adult humans are privy to, we are not dealing with the well-being of particular species, we are dealing with survival predicated on getting carbon into soil.

Rob Hopkins in his foreword to Martin Crawford's book, *Creating a Forest Garden*, says: "The challenge we need to grapple with is nothing less than this: how do we transform everything we do, including the systems by which we feed ourselves, in such a way that at the end of each day we have locked up more carbon into the ground than we have emitted?"

If there is determination that there will be no niche for bamboo, then there needs to be re-population of rural areas with agricultures that are the response to Jeremy Rifkin in his book *Entropy: Into the Greenhouse World*, where he says "The truth is that [industrialised



farming] is the most inefficient form of farming ever devised by humankind." It is not just industrialised farming that is inefficient. Industrialisation itself is inefficient. It has brought humans to the edge of a dead planet.

It is predominantly thought in civilisation, that to move away from technology dependence is "going back". To measure physical progress of the human species is as irrelevant as measuring any species physical progress. Measurement of human progress has been an obsession of civilisation. It is like the concept of "good" and "bad". It is something humans have made up.

In actuality, in terms of the physical, progress does not exist. Evolutionary biologist, Stephen Jay Gould in his essay *The Pattern of Life's History*' notes, "There is no progress in evolution." Richard Dawkins in his essay, *A Survival Machine*, along with other scientists, concurs: "We all agree that there's no progress."

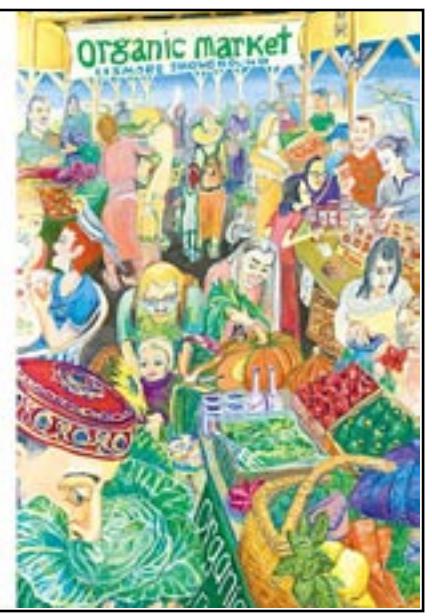
In a post-industrial, sustainable economy where the economic is not given greater preference than the environmental and the social, it will be noticed, as many cultures of the past have noticed: bamboo is a major resource.

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The co-operation ethic

Permaculture Principles
with Anastasia Guise

A rainforest giant, hollowed out by munching insects, covered in vines, perhaps struck by lightning, crashes to the earth, clearing a swath of forest with its fall. For perhaps the first time in a hundred years, light again reaches this part of the forest floor. Dormant seeds sprout and begin their furious ascent towards the sky.

To many, they appear to be competing for light, jostling for a better position in an end-game with limited survivors. But they are not. Permaculture posits that "co-operation, not competition is the very basis of existing life systems and the key to human survival". What these plants are doing is actually co-operating. Earth systems are by nature co-operative and let me show you why.

In the human gut, multiple strains of bacteria work together to digest food and make available nutrients that ensure their host's survival. Their relationship is of mutual assurance. After all, some of these are the same strains of bacteria that can kill you, such as E.Coli and Staphylococcus, but they are all held in check by their fellow bacteria, who ensure that no single strain – unless disrupted by an external factor – becomes over-dominant. A strict co-operative model avoids rampancy, and therefore domination, and therefore collapse of the whole.

Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection promoted "survival of the fittest" – misinterpreted to mean "the one that overpowers the rest" but which should be interpreted to mean this: Species ensure their survival by "fitting" like the pieces of a puzzle. They exist because they occupy a niche suited uniquely to them and in relation to – in co-operation with – all other living things.

So why is our society so competitive? Competitiveness is at the core of our economics, and by association it has dominated workplaces and schools. We have been trained to see relationships in the natural world as competitive and therefore accept it as part of human "nature" too. But it's not natural. As Richard Dawkins points out, our genetics might determine our hair or eye colour, but not our behaviour.

For a recent BBC report on competitiveness, scientists looked at the behaviour of male chimpanzees, whose high levels of testosterone were associated with aggression and competitiveness (genetics). They then travelled to the Masai tribe in Africa, the most patriarchal society on earth, assuming that it must also be a society rife with competitiveness. They gave participants a bucket and a tennis ball. They could choose to: a) throw the ball into



the bucket ten times, and receive \$1 for each successful throw, or b) compete against another person, and if they won, receive three times that amount. (The loser would receive nothing). No prizes for guessing that the participants overwhelmingly chose the latter.

But – and here's the interesting part – they next travelled to north-eastern India, to a small society structured by matrilineal inheritance and dominated by women in leadership roles. And here they found, during the same experiment, that these women were as, or more, competitive than the participants from the Masai tribe! What they concluded was that people were more likely to be competitive when they carried high status or a sense of "power" within the society in which they lived.

Not only did this align with the notion that competitiveness is linked more to nurture than nature, it also highlighted that perhaps the Western emphasis on high individual status (over group status) is more likely to produce competitiveness amongst these individuals, creating a powerful feedback loop.

What is wrong with competitiveness, is that it creates (and sees) organisms in isolation. The winner feels good only to the extent that she can maintain her win. The win isolates her from everybody else. A species in competition with the natural world (us) is bound to perish. Even an inability to interact with the natural world makes us less shaped by natural systems and more shaped by our own egomaniacal reflections, and therefore vulnerable to extinction. Co-operatively (just think Bentley) we are much more than just the sum of our parts.

Come see the incredible co-operative world of soil micro-organisms at the next Community Permaculture workshop, Sunday 24th August at Billen Cliffs. See: www.communitypermaculture.com.au

Tunable Kindergarten kids get growing

by Deborah Williams

Children are so inspired, so knowledgeable and sometimes I just have to catch my breath and think: from where was that little gem acquired?

On this 6-month learning journey I have had thus far with my Kindergarten class, I am struck over again at how much they already know. I have experts in my class on bees, flowers, fish, animals and gardening, to name a few subjects. I constantly have to re-learn: old habits die hard. There is a plaintive cry in the classroom: "Not like that, Deborah!"

But, what fills me with hope is how attuned little children in our area are to the natural world. They somehow know it all by osmosis and if they don't know something out there in nature, they need to soak it up as quickly as possible. And so this happens in our outdoor learning environment as the children are beginning to identify plants: the good and not so good and how excited they are to come across the plants they already know.

Not so long ago, during our morning tea break, the children decided to help a father with some gardening outside the classrooms. They were sweeping, raking and weeding, filling up the wheelbarrow. This of course was their morning play, and at lunchtime they rushed out to help again.

It was inevitable that I had to plan their term's learning program around the garden and take advantage of this natural enthusiasm and love of the outdoors. This means that we have



a term packed with gardening: working out where seeds come from, how they travel, how they grow, what a root system looks like, how do roots actually feed a plant, what does the plant need to grow? Oh, the learning is endless! And of course, my little experts will probably know all this but then there's photosynthesis, botanical nomenclature and soil sciences.

This is not to mention the vegetable garden and the learning that takes place there. The most exciting crops are the garlic and potato patches while the children wait and wait for the soil to reveal its treasures. They also wait in anticipation for a visit from Phil Dudman – Local ABC gardening guru – to come and show them how to make compost. Watch this space...

The Tunable Kindergarten class suggests these vegetables and flowers for August planting: aubergine, beans, capsicum, carrot, celery, cucumber, lettuce, parsley, pumpkin, radish, silverbeet, tomato, squash and zucchini.

Flowers: calendula, cornflower, lobelia, marigold, poppy, primula and snapdragon.

Beekeeping news

by Alan Snell

To bee or not to bee, that is the question!

Two out of every three mouthfuls of food you eat, or your children eat, or your lovers eat, or your friends eat, owes its existence either directly or indirectly to bees.

If you choose to let these little guys into your own sphere of existence, the bee will enrich your life in so many ways it is impossible to name them all, but some of them are: more fruit in your orchards and more vegetables in your gardens, and the most beautiful honey in the world [that's your honey!] at a cost of about a dollar a kilo.

My own favourite on this list is the chance to actually share your life with such absolutely beautiful essence-dominated creatures. Bees are such fine bee-ings. To keep bees, you need to remain in present time with them. There's a saying, to be "in front of the game" which means always to know where they are at, for first and foremost the human-bee relationship is symbiotic.

We build them purely artificial homes so they can

live in their collectives out of the bad weather, we protect them from predators like cane toads, we help them deal with invaders like the hive beetle, we protect the colonies from other spores and parasites in various different ways, and in return we harvest some of their honey – and no matter how hard your own personal survival gets, you can eat anything with a spoonful of honey.

In the spring, after the cold will come a flush of warmth, and this will trigger nearly all our hives to swarm. The swarming is just the natural cycle of the existing queen leaving the colony to go out into the world to start a whole new colony. It's part of the overall natural cycle of spring renewal we see everywhere.

In the world of the professional bee-keeper, this swarming is not a good thing, as you can lose more than half your colony in a morning as they follow the already established queen off into the wide blue yonder never to be seen again, at least by you. Professional bee-keepers

often re-queen in spring to stop this. The old queen is disposed of and a new queen introduced, thus solving their potential swarming problem.

Now, what is a problem for them is in fact a great opportunity for us, in this window of opportunity that will happen in 5 to 10 weeks' time. We have an opportunity to make almost as many new colonies (hives) as we want to. Just working on my own, I have made about 25 to 28 in the last 31/2 years, mostly for other people and all for free. Well, the bees are free, the boxes and frames etc. you need to buy.

Hive-making Workshop

The Nimbin Natural Beekeepers group is throwing open the next meeting, on Sunday 10th August, to everybody, and invite you all along to put together the beginnings of your very own bee hive. We are planning on having at least 10 brand new starter kits on sale for about \$70, with all the bits you need to start your own brood colony, and we will help you put it all together on the day. The idea is to get ready now for the spring divisions. The kit includes absolutely everything except the paint, so you may feel absolutely

free to really go for it with artistic creativity in any way you see fit – the bees won't mind what you do, as long as the paint is not unhealthy.

If you were to buy a colony of bees for your hive it would cost you about \$80 plus postage etc., but all our kits to new beekeepers come with free bees. You just have to take your box to one of our bee donors and they will give you a beginning colony for free. (If you want to be a bee donor, let me know and I will add your name to the other noble beings on that list.)

We will also explain anything and everything you need to know to become a successful bee-keeper.

The biggest single downfall of all new bee-keepers is that something happens: you go on holiday, you go to look after a sick relative and/or help a friend, or you just happen to go around a corner on your and fall off your postie bike, and before you can say good morning, your bees are on their own.

So you will bee much more successful if you join together with a friend or friends or neighbours. Maybe your hamlet can get together and form a group, maybe your road or street, maybe your entire community would



like to do this, and if you get together and talk about it, I have no doubt you will come to the conclusion that this is a really great thing to do.

The ideal amateur set-up is two hives, which once established will provide you with approximately 100 to 150 kilos of honey a year, more than enough to go round.

This special meeting of the Nimbin Natural Beekeepers will be held on Sunday 10th August at 10am (but you're welcome to turn up any time after 9am for a cuppa and to help set up), at my place on Nmbngee Co-Operative Community, about 4km along Gabal Road off Lillian Rock Road, just follow the signs.

Bring a USB stick to download a movie or one of many bee books from our

computer. Bring some heavy clothing, boots and gloves for a look in a hive. We will have some bee suits to wear. Also bring something to share for lunch, and a cup and plate.

Because demand could exceed supply, if you are certain you would like a kit, reserve one by emailing me at: alansnell3@gmail.com

For hundreds of years the very best people have been shown with a golden circle of light around and above their heads, in the Christian tradition these people were called saints. If you go back not hundreds, but thousands of years, the golden circle of light was in fact a golden circle of bees flying together with themselves in a circle above a chosen being.

It is such a fine thing to live with bees.

Imitation, play and imagination at Rainbow Ridge Steiner school

by Cristina Rubsamen,
facilitator

The curriculum for a Steiner Kindergarten is based on the understanding that the young child learns through imitation, play and imagination. Through imitation and repetition the child acquires all the skills and develops creative and musical capacities. The openness of the young child, the curiosity and ability to absorb every nuance of what is experienced, allows an ongoing deep learning to occur.

In their play children imitate the experiences

and environment that they encounter in everyday life. Kindergarten teachers therefore try to imbue everything they do with an intentional deep care. If the adult approaches common life tasks, eg cooking or cleaning with such an attitude, the children will develop a deep respect for work and for the world around them.

Through self-initiated creative play the children imitate and make the world their own. They do not reflect or conceptualise but take in the impressions and gestures, and through their own will express this in play. The two



developmental forces the young child brings are the capacity to imitate and also their own inner impulses to engage with the world in a unique, imaginative and potent way. It is this free nature of self-directed play that fosters wellbeing and creativity.

Rhythm brings reassurance and continuity as well as trust and security in the unfolding of life. Children's healthy habits are supported by repetition of authentic

tasks. A sense that there is time to do things beautifully is also cultivated in the Steiner Kindergarten. The daily rhythm usually includes Circle Time with singing, speech and movement; indoor self-directed creative play; stories; home activities such as cooking, baking, gardening etc; artistic work like painting, beeswax modelling and other crafts; outdoor play in nature.

The school's curriculum is interwoven in these activities in a natural way.

How does our garden grow?

by Leanne Logan

It was the start of the year. Our vegie gardens at Cawongla Playhouse were telling us a story – and it wasn't a pretty one. Weeds poked up through the scarce mulch. Last year's vegies had all but gone. And the hard soil felt like no earthworm had passed this way in weeks. It was a tale of summer holiday neglect.

We surveyed the scene with the children.

"It's too hot," said Georgia.

"It's hard as a rock," Francis commented.

"It didn't have any water," Lilly observed.

The children recorded the vegie garden in this state. Francis' drawing of a blue man took centre stage. "It's a sad man

because it's a sad garden," he concluded. We stuck their poster up on the wall – a reminder of what we didn't want – and moved on.

"What does our garden need?" we asked.

"More plants and a big pool with water in it," Poppy suggested. "Then we put the water on the plants and they will be cool."

So we followed these instructions and many more and, six months on, our garden is telling a very different tale.

"It looks happy," Eva stated as she stood at an easel in the midst of the garden, painting vibrant marigolds. Lilly and Poppy raked leaves for mulch. Max and Sora investigated the compost. And Harlow, Jazper and Samson fed banana peels to our resident earthworms.



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Raising the status of gardening not only supports the growth of our vegie gardens, but our children too.

has her diploma in early childcare, first aid and asthma and anaphylaxis training. Annalyce and Wendy both have their Certificate 3 in childcare and both love working at the centre.

We are now taking enrolments, and our under two years group is filling up fast.

Please feel free to come along to our activity mornings each Wednesday 10am – 11.30am.

For more information, drop in at 81 Cullen Street, Nimbin or call us on 6689-0142.



children are very excited for the upgrade and it is due to start soon.

Elissa Henderson has taken over the position of director at the centre. Elissa



Kiyan: They eat icy poles and ice-creams.

Draven: And lollies and chocolate.

Cameron: They have yellow drink and chips in a packet.

Draven: Sometimes they eat fruit and sandwiches and Macca's.

Diane: What is Macca's?

Draven: From McDonalds. It's chips and nuggets and gravy, but you have to get it at Lismore.

Kiyan: They need toys too.

Superheroes have toys at home.

Draven: No they don't.

Superheroes don't play. They fight the baddies because they are happy.

Cameron: Me too.

Diane: What else do they need?

Cameron: Big money. They need money.

Diane: What for?

Draven: To buy things!

Diane: Do they eat food like us?

Cameron: Of course they do silly!

Up-grade soon!

by Elissa Henderson

Nimbin Early Learning Centre has been approved for a huge upgrade.

The centre will completely change, with a new outdoor area, new fence, huge new veranda, more windows inside and at the children's height so they can see out. More space for the children to explore and learn, new bathroom, kitchen and new paint. All the staff and

Superheroes are us

Children at Nimbin Preschool have been looking more closely at superheroes.

At first we assumed that the investigation would help us to clarify children's fascination with superheroes.

However, in the process of uncovering the thoughts of these children, we have come to understand that the needs of superheroes are similar to ours.

This is their conversation:

Diane: I want to know what superheroes need?

Cameron: Beds! They need beds.

Draven: And pillows!

Kiyan: They need blankets.

Draven: They need a house with a floor.

Kiyan: And a roof.

Diane: I have a bed. I sleep in my bed. Is that what superheroes do too?

Cameron: Yes. They sleep in their beds.

Kiyan: My beds are on the roof. My superheroes sleep on the roof.

Draven: But the superheroes need chairs.

Diane: We could draw the chairs?

Draven: I don't know how to draw chairs.

Kiyan: I can draw them.

Young athletes

by Marc Everingham

The Terania District Athletics Carnival, held over two days in July, was just another forum for the primary students from Nimbin Central School to showcase

their talents. The day began with 11-year old Joey taking first in the 200m with a convincing win.

Joey went on to take first place in every event for her age – 100m, 200m, high jump, long jump, discus, shot put and 800m. She is an outstanding athlete and took out the title of carnival champion.

Every other student put in a major effort, and placegetters included Victor:

first in shot put and discus, Uriah: second in shot put and discus, Zaydn: first in high jump, first 800 m, second in long jump, Sebastian: first in long jump, Lauren: third in discus, Zoe: first in shot put, Molokai: first in long jump, second in discus, second 800m. The senior boys relay also took out a convincing first place, and Tyson came second in 100m, third in 800m.

Nimbin Community Preschool



Competent Collaborative Community

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Raising the status of gardening not only

CHAKRAS AND YOUR HEALTH PART 4: THE HIGHER CHAKRAS

by Zuela Christie

Chakras are the governing energy centres of human life and intelligence. When they are out of balance, the whole person is affected.

The Third Eye

The third eye at the brow centre is the gateway to the heavenly realm – the realm of patterns and blueprints. The aim of all healing and spiritual practices is to balance the energies in the body and to free the mind to hold steady at the third eye. We then have choice and free will, and are able to respond in love and understanding, no longer bound in reaction.

Here, we learn to control and still the mind – then the mind can attune to the higher self and life can be lived consciously and in accord with the purpose of the soul. The Hindu word for this centre is *ajna*, which means ‘to command’. The five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth are the servants of the creating mind. They implement and manifest mind pattern energies.

Element: Light/mind pattern.

Ruling Planets: Jupiter and Neptune.

Affirmation: I know.

Brings the right: To see and to know.

Self development: Mastery of the mind.

Intelligence. Wisdom. Intuition. Soul purpose. Universal consciousness. Psychic development. Prophecy.

Emotions: When in balance, it gives rise to inspiration, self-motivation and trust. Out of balance, it causes doubt, lack of imagination and inability to take initiative.

Physically governs: Head, brain, eyes and skull. Central nervous system and Cerebro spinal fluid (CSF). Pituitary and pineal glands. Choroid nerve plexus, which secretes CSF.

Stressors: Visions, dreams, ideas, imagination, creativity and spiritual experiences suppressed or dishonoured.

Excess or deprivation of mental and sensory stimulation. Knowledge restrictions.

Malfunctions: Physical – Poor sensory and motor communication. Brain disorders and tumors. Disruption to the nervous system, e.g. multiple sclerosis, dyslexia, headaches and blindness.

Emotional – Mind disconnected from body and heart.

Mental – Exclusive mental dominance.

Disorientation and dissociation. Fragmented

and scattered.

Behavioural – Schizophrenia and anti-social behaviour. Nightmares and hallucinations. Aimless – no goals or direction.

Spiritual – Psychic disturbances and negative influences from other levels.

The Crown Chakra

The thousand-petalled lotus of the crown chakra represents the dimension-less realm – the realm of infinite possibilities. It is through it that the incoming and outgoing energies of the soul enter and leave the physical plane. It is the source of human life and powers all the chakras below it – as it is powered by the source of life above it. It is a vortex of energies like all the chakras – its energies spiral from above to below. The chakras from the third eye to the base chakra spiral outwards for the expression of the soul through the mind and senses.

Element: Pure consciousness – it is unlimited and one with the cosmic and universal mind.

Ruling planets: Uranus and Pluto.

Brings the right: To exist.

Affirmation: I am all that I am.

Self development: Humility. Knowledge and experience used wisely. Become a source of

inspiration and spiritual guidance for Seekers of Truth.

Inner quality: SAT CHIT ANAND – Truth, consciousness, bliss.

Governs: Incoming and outgoing energies of the soul. Past life imprints. Receiving the divine influx.

Stressors: Individual rights of the soul not recognised. Spiritual abuse.

Malfunctions: Splitting from current reality. Schizophrenia. Body/mind/soul disintegrated. Purposeless.

The ultimate form of healing is self-realisation. This is the completion of the cycle of human life – it is creation’s ultimate goal and final destination.

“The Soul is a single drop of the ocean of Eternal Spirit which is the dweller in the body as the knower, seer, doer; it experiences all sensations and action. It alone is the power in the body which reacts to any mode of application of therapy or action. Consciousness and intelligence reside within the Soul”.

– Dr Randolph Stone, founder polarity therapy.

Zuela Christie works locally as a Polarity Energy Balancer and Healer. She can be contacted on 0429-501-387.

ASTRO FORECASTS

by Tina Mews

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HEAVENS?

August

At the moment the Sun passes through Leo, the sign that feels most at ease with the fiery and life giving solar energies. Leo is the sign of the Sun, the central heart of the solar system. Ancient wisdom teaches that the impulse to develop an independent ego entered our earthly plane many thousand years ago in the age of Leo. People then started shifting from venerating lunar goddesses and the life-sustaining energies of the archetypal feminine (Cancer) to the worship of solar gods which initiated the emergence of ‘god-kings’. Tribal unity consciousness was superseded with the early developments of solar consciousness. Over time a new pattern was perceived that placed the Sun as the predictable source of light and life at the centre of the solar system around which all the planets revolved.

Individuals with a strong Leo signature in their chart function best when they feel at centre stage and can radiate their unique life force for the benefit of all. Leo rules the heart and also the solar plexus, the domain of the ‘old brain’, the fire in the belly and seat of our impulses, desires and passions. Leos are destined to use their emotional strength and apply it unconditionally for the good of all, connecting this sign symbolically to the archetype of the noble ruler who is generous and kind and is able to serve others. On the downside, Leos can be stubborn, tyrannical and self-obsessed.

The New Moon in Leo (July 27) was conjoined the ‘big picture’ planet Jupiter, also in Leo until August 2015, promising excitement, expansion and growth for most of this month. Those who resonate with this outgoing and spirited energy could gain in creative self-expression, optimism and enterprise. On the down side we could witness problems with over-inflation, over-optimistic investments and the urge to fly off on ventures that might prove unmanageable down the track. Too much pride might be another short coming of this exuberant influx, especially during the early days of the month when Jupiter is in a tense square with action planet Mars (until August 5). We are destined to make great progress towards accomplishing far reaching goals, if courage and action (Mars) meet up with vision and wisdom (Jupiter). The Full Moon on August 10-11 falls in Aquarius, reminding us that equal participation and



sharing have to go alongside Leo’s love for leadership, recognition and self-actualisation. Leading becomes meaningful when it serves the whole. The Full Moon’s opposition to the Leo Sun is constellated with Uranus, planet ruling the unexpected, and in square to Saturn. It might highlight the sudden eruption of conflict in our relationships and alliances. Uranus de-conditions encouraging innovation, spontaneity and creative problem-solving while

Saturn correlates with the status quo and the approved structures of any system. Saturn still is in Scorpio until the end of December, indicating that secrets might be revealed which could lead to feelings of betrayal and rejection. Let’s keep in mind that the Full Moon is not the best time to work through issues as emotions might run high. According to Albert Einstein, we cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them. Mars, the warrior planet, entered Scorpio on July 26 (until September 14) and is in conjunction with Saturn during August 23 -27. Saturn is the planet associated with limitations and restrictions, in the sign of control and shared resources (Scorpio). A conjunction symbolises a new beginning; the start of this new 2 year Mars-Saturn cycle gives birth to a fresh impulse concerning the theme of power and disempowerment, authority and control, laws and social taboos. Mars in Scorpio requires the understanding of our emotional dynamics, of our personal power and to use it properly without manipulating others. Mars-Saturn energy delays straight-forward activities but is helpful for getting things organised, for exerting self-discipline and working slowly but surely towards a worthwhile goal. However, we also have to live through some kind of disappointment as the New Moon on August 26 in Virgo opposes Neptune in Pisces until the end of the month. Collectively and personally our most cherished illusions might be confronted with actual reality. The invitation is to disengage, move inward and listen.

For Personal Astrology Consultation contact Tina on 6689-7413 or 0457-903-957, email: star-loom@hotmail.com webpage: <http://nimbin-starloom.com.au>

Astrology at the Lillifield Community Centre: Wednesdays: “Planetary Cycles”, 10am – 1 pm; 1-day workshop: Jupiter in Leo: ‘Igniting the Fires of Consciousness’ Thursday 11th September, 9.30am – 4pm

Aries

Right now it is important to have fun and enjoy life, be creative and play. Nevertheless, you might be facing confrontations with others about shared resources. Exert patience and self-discipline to work things out in a calm and mindful manner. Reflect upon your own emotional dynamics.

Taurus

Your home and family play a key role in your life and you enjoy sharing your creative talents with those close to you. Nevertheless, you might have to address conflicts in your relationships and alliances while Mars journeys through Scorpio (July 26 – September 14) upsetting your need for stability and peace. Reflect upon your own emotional dynamics.

Gemini

At present openness and receptiveness is essential in your communications with others. The answers to your questions emerge when you can let go of fixed opinions and allow new inspiration to enter your mind. Take responsibility for your own feelings and focus on how you can be of service to others.

Cancer

You might experience a boost in confidence at the moment and may even feel inspired to do those things that you always wanted to do but have not yet done. Now is not the time to hold back even if moving out of your secure shell provokes some anxiety. Challenge yourself, dare to be creative and live your truth!

Leo

It is an excellent time for engaging in new activities or making new discoveries about yourself and the world around you. However, the Full Moon period (August 8-11) might prove stressful because unfinished business from the past demands your attention and could hinder your urge of exploring the unknown.

Virgo

An old cycle is ending soon and you might want to spend some time reflecting on the last 12 months. What has worked well and can be carried over to your next solar year and what needs to end now? It is important to pay attention to the kind of seeds you want to sow.

Libra

Your focus is on friendships and team work. You even might be called to use your diplomatic talents for mediating between different groups and their conflicting points of view. On the other hand this is a great moment in time for making new connections, both personally and business wise.

Scorpio

On July 26, Mars, the planet of action, entered your sun sign (until September 14) boosting your energy level and emotional intensity. It could well be that others find you more demanding now; therefore you might prefer working independently during this period. Try to understand the natural limitations relative to what is and what is not possible.

Sagittarius

Jupiter’s journey through Leo (until August 2015) has kindled your natural urge for knowledge, philosophy and travel in search for the greater truth. However, you still need to clear the decks and finish current projects before you really can take off to new horizons.

Capricorn

It is your time for re-orientation and re-generation. You might need to free yourself from convictions that do not fit the present moment anymore; instead allow for new inspirations to emerge. Create a working balance between your own ambitions and the wishes of others.

Aquarius

Partners and partnerships are important now, and it is an ideal time to receive help through the efforts of others. The challenge is to go with the flow and not against it. Saturn’s close involvement with this month’s Full Moon in Aquarius (10-11 August) might limit your options if you are too fixed and resistant.

Pisces

Paying attention to details seems to be more important now. However, how hard you may work or how good your performance may be it might never satisfy your ‘inner critic’. This Full Moon (August 10-11) could bring about the opportunity to change your beliefs in regards to your own worth and achievements. Give yourself full recognition.