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Diverse artworks at Blue Knob



'Magnolias I' by Helen Cooling

The last exhibition for 2017 at Blue Knob Hall Gallery is the annual show called 'The Artist's Choice'.

Blue Knob Hall Gallery runs themed exhibitions throughout the year that inspire and stimulate the artists to work to a certain theme. 'The Artist's Choice' has no theme and often brings new art works out of the artist's collections that make for an interesting and diverse exhibition.

This year is no exception, with an artist named Papillon who is exhibiting for the first time in the area. He has installed a piece that would not normally be found in a gallery.

His pieces are usually installed in the forest where he plans and executes installations from manmade materials that are then photographed to capture the different light and conditions over a period of time. These ephemeral images are often other-worldly, and it is a delight to have this work in the Gallery.

This is an eclectic exhibition with ceramics from some of the Blue Knob Ceramic studio potters, paintings, photographs, fabric and fibre. This exhibition runs through to 4th February.

The Gallery, Cafe and Ceramic Studio will be closed



'Bliss' by Papillon

over the Christmas-New Year period, from Sunday 24th December to Thursday 11th January for a much-earned break for the wonderful volunteers who keep everything going.

The Gallery and Cafe will be open Saturdays only during that period. The Blue Knob Farmers Market will continue throughout the holidays. The Gallery, Cafe and market will be there and open on Saturday 30th December, and Saturday 6th January.

Thank you to all those who continue to support Blue Knob Hall in all its adventures, and we wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday period.

Nimbin Artist Gallery anniversary

by Donna Sharam

It was wonderful to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Nimbin Artists Gallery in November. A lovely thank you lunch was organised for the many helpful volunteers over the past years.

We all enjoyed catching up socially, especially with so many original members in attendance. Thank you everyone for your insights and service to our community at large.

A gift was presented to the fabulous Fay Murray (pictured), our longest serving and hard working volunteer. Thank you Fay.

Also a special mention, and thank

you, to Margaret McLaren, noticeably missing from our gathering due to ill health. Margaret McLaren was a woman of vision and she gave her life to the gallery.

Our final 'celebration' was to offer a \$50 Gallery gift voucher via free tickets to community members. We are pleased to announce that Penny from Snipping Heads is the lucky winner.

The Nimbin Artist's Gallery is open seven days a week from 10am to 5pm, and will be closed only for a couple of the public holidays. Why not treat yourself and give quality gifts made and produced by our local artists?



DAYDREAM BELIEVER

Local artist and co-founder/director of Muse Contemporary Gallery, Amy Blanchard has taken her daydreaming rituals to a whole other level.

While contemplating her future as she approached the end of her Advanced Diploma of Visual Arts at Lismore TAFE, Amy started to explore the pressure that people experience trying to become the person that they are "meant to be".

She has turned her meditative drawings and paintings into a substantial body of work that represents the mental purgatory that many people feel in the process of trying to achieve.

"In today's world of immediacy, it is tremendously hard to find the patience in oneself to

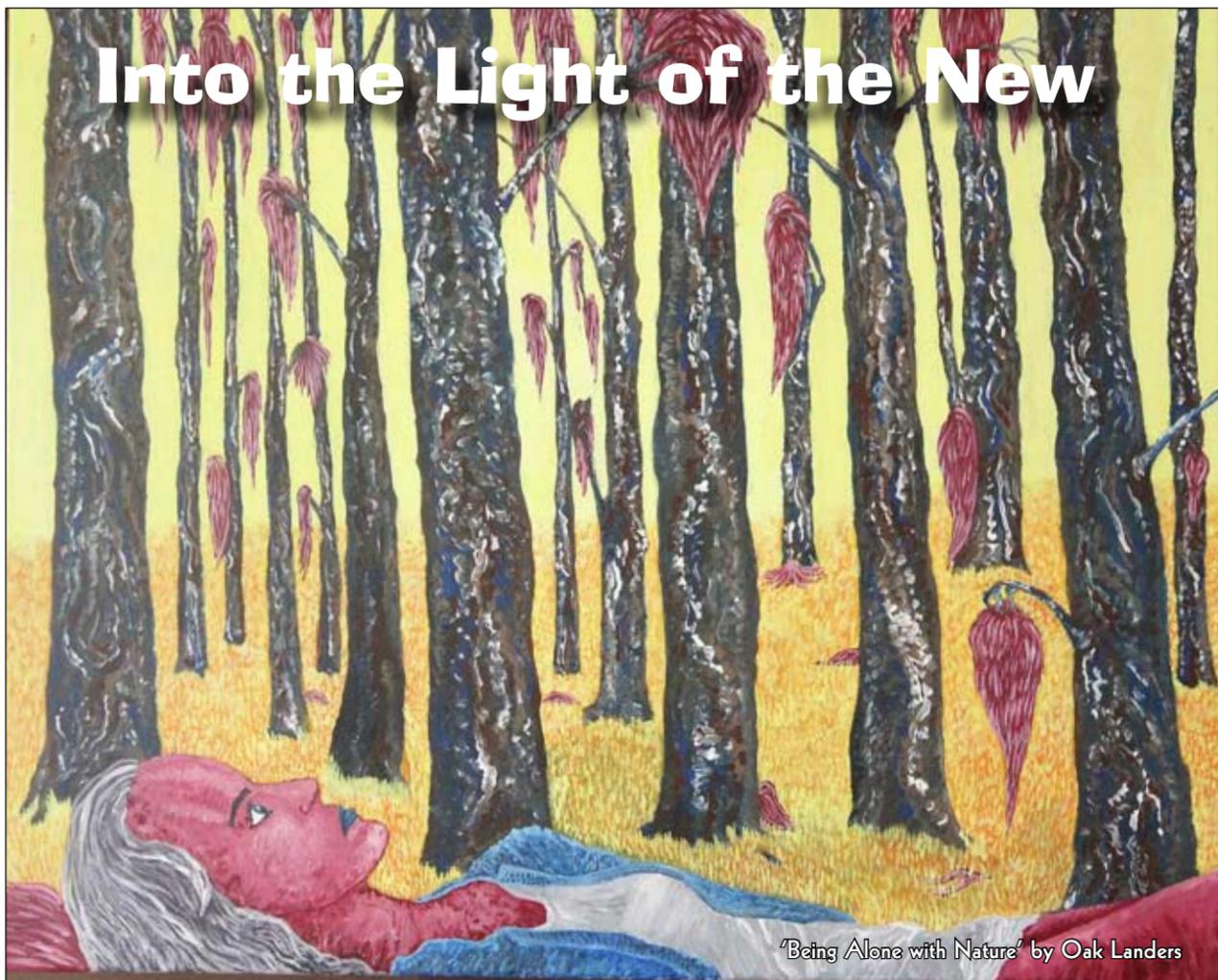
not only learn and grow but to appreciate the small steps we have taken to create the bigger, more beautiful picture," says Amy.

She considers her process as something akin to an internal catharsis. The labour-intensive work, which involves the methodical drawing of thousands of small circles, opens up a dimension of time for personal contemplation in the face of uncertainty of which direction the work should take. It is in this struggle of 'becoming' that allows for an alchemy of the soul.

Amy's first solo exhibition *Between No Longer and Not Yet* will run until 15th December at Muse Contemporary Gallery, upstairs suite 4/131-133 Keen Street, Lismore.



Into the Light of the New



'Being Alone with Nature' by Oak Landers

'Into The Light Of The New' is this year's end of year / beginning of new year exhibition at the Roxy Gallery.

From 13th December, visitors to the gallery will have an opportunity to support local and regional artisans by purchasing their works for gifts for the festive season.

This exhibition is a closing of a calendar year of exhibitions and an opening to the planned New Year exhibition calendar. It is always a diverse and vibrant display of artworks produced by the many creatively skilled individuals living in this area.

The Roxy Gallery hopes it also provides the many regular gallery goers the chance to support people's talents through purchasing works.

After the official opening evening of this event on Thursday 14th December from 6 to 8pm, any works purchased can be removed from display to head for the intended gift recipient.

With artists from all walks of life – full time, part

time and occasional – this exhibition is an opportunity for them to exhibit their skills, make a potential sale of their works and know they are sharing their talents, wrapped up in good cheer.

'Into The Light Of The New' will be on display until 30th January 2018, with new and interesting works being installed on a rotation basis.

The Roxy Gallery would like to take this opportunity to extend Season Greetings and Festive Goodwill to all the amazing supporters of the gallery and artists in our region. The talent shines strong with 2018 exhibitions being finalised and the excitement for the diversity of talents the Roxy Gallery gets to support sheds new light into the New Year. Ho Ho Ho the Roxy Gallery will be closed for all Public Holidays during December and January and the Opening hours for the gallery are Tuesday to Friday 10am-4pm and Saturday 9.30am to noon.

Email: roxygallery@kyolgle.nsw.gov.au

Cool tranquility at Serpentine Gallery

by Fiona McConnachie

Since its beginning 10 years ago, the Serpentine Community Art Gallery has held regular members' shows. These exhibitions are themed fairly loosely so as to give participating artists / members as much artistic leeway as possible.

'Azure' is the theme for our last members' exhibition for the year, and the art featured explores all things blue – from the oceans to the sky, a colour of peace and mindfulness during the hectic time at the end of the year. While we interpret "azure" as "sky-blue", historically its definition has encompassed all the shades of blue from aqua to indigo, but its connotations of thoughtfulness, intellect and meditation have remained unchanged throughout the centuries. As a consequence, the gallery has been transformed into a sea of calm and cool tranquility.

As I write this we are setting up for the opening, so not all is tranquil and calm as we frantically organise the gallery for the opening. We have some really beautiful pieces by our community of artist members and we want to make sure that every piece is showcased while maintaining an integrated overall 'look' of peace and contemplation without sacrificing or minimising the impact of each individual art work. Not such an easy job!

The artists involved are all part of the Northern Rivers' art community – some are well known and familiar (Leigh Arnold, Susannah French, Julie DeLorenzo and Jay Manby), while others are emerging and maybe not so well known (Jasmine O'Shea, Tammy Allen, Beryl Stevenson) – but this is part of the Serpentine's manifesto. We are here to provide space for any artist who is enthusiastic and willing to give it a go exhibiting in a professional art space.

The Serpentine Gallery is a not-for-profit organisation started in November 2006 by a small group



Tammy Allen

of local artists, and we are dedicated to promoting the artistic culture of NSW's Northern Rivers region through community arts projects and regional promotion. If you are a visual or performing artist, or create anything that requires an audience, you are welcome to join the Serpentine community and begin to show your work in the gallery.

The arts in Australia historically rely on the generosity of benefactors and sponsors, and the Serpentine performs an important role in the development and support of emerging artists in the Northern Rivers.

Up-coming local band Havoc provided the entertainment for the celebratory opening night, performing dynamic Latin, Gypsy

and Blues music... a wonderful "full stop" for the year!

'Azure' will be on view until 31st December, from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 2pm on Saturdays.

Our next exhibition is called 'Transformation' and is a group show by art therapists Elizabeth Dowling, Kate Naylor and Jo Kelly, running from 23rd January to 5th February. Art workshops will be held at the gallery during the show. Details are still to be announced, so keep your eyes on our Facebook page or call us on (02) 6621-6845.

The Serpentine Community Gallery is located at 17a Bridge Street, North Lismore. For more info, phone (02) 6621-6845, or go to: www.serpentinearts.org



Anouk White



Brigitte Havan

The Maillard reaction

by Thom Culpeper

Does reaction matter? In some cases it does. The change in cooked food character is a perfect example of this notion.

A chemical reaction, between reducing sugars and amino acids is the one that gives the prominent flavour to browned culinary outcomes and some other cooked foods. The French chemist Louis-Camille Maillard (My-yar) first described this reaction in 1912, and the understanding of this reality is named after him.

This reaction is one of prime importance to humanity's utilisation of raw foods. Although this protein-reaction does not necessarily result in browning in all cases, some other foods, seafoods and high protein vegetable resources, will undergo the Maillard reaction as their amino acids and some simple sugars are cooked in a similar way.

The browning of cooked meats results from cooking in a specific way. This outcome is the result of the rearrangement of the amino acids and the sugars in collections of rings that reflect light so as to give meat its brown colour. The flavours and aromas are the prime outcome of this reaction.

The molecules produced by this culinary method are the characteristic potent aromas we experience from roasting, baking and frying foods. These molecules continue to react, thereby producing hundreds of aroma types in very minute quantities.

The types of sugars and the amino acids in a multitude of combinations result in the ever-differing tastes and smells that we experience of baked breads as against fried or roasted foods.

The factors of temperature and



dryness of the cooking food control the Maillard reaction. Cooking speed and high temperature increases the reaction time as does the rate of moisture loss on the food surface. The reaction increases with moisture loss.

Heating needs to be between 140-165°C for the outcome to be achieved, above this temperature range, 180°C+ pyrolysis (burning) occurs.

Alkalinity (pH) affects some foods, especially baked breads. Bakers brush lye on pretzels and bagels and other breads to darken them.

The list of foods dependent on the Maillard reaction is extensive:

- Browning of meats, roasted, grilled and seared;
- Coffee roasting;
- Condensed milk;
- Black garlic;
- French fries;
- Malted barley and grains used in beer and whiskey-making;
- Nut roasting;
- The Umami taste of fried onions;
- Toast;
- Popcorn;
- Toasted seaweed, nori and some wakami;
- Chocolate;
- Peanut butter, and so forth.

In pressure cooking, the reaction can and does occur, though a different method is used, the meats and

vegetables are pre-seared. The pH is changed slightly with the addition of baking soda. Often Oriental cooks coat seafoods and meats with a mixture of egg-white and baking soda.

Parsnip Soup Caramel

Ingredients

- 600 gms parsnips (or alternately, carrots), skinned and cut in to 25 mm pieces
- 100 gms celery
- 2 onions chopped
- 200 gms of butter or an oil of choice
- 1 tblsp honey
- 2 cloves of minced garlic
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp of baking soda
- 200 mls parsnip puree
- 200 mls vegetable juice (think about a Tefal juicer)
- Freshly ground pepper
- 10 gms fresh chopped tarragon
- 100 gms fresh minced ginger
- ½ tsp crushed caraway seeds

Method

Into the pressure cooker put 150 gms of butter or oil, add parsnip pieces and saute until they are just coloured, add salt and baking powder, lid the cooker and cook at 15psi for 10 minutes. Cool, stir to remove caramelised vegetable from the cooker sides.

Sweat onions, garlic and celery in oil or butter until very soft, add together with vegetable juice and parsnip puree to the caramelised parsnips. Reheat uncovered, until warm. Add a little more butter or oil and blend until smooth.

Season, bowl up and garnish with tarragon, caraway and ginger.

Due to the 'dry', saba nuts were lost, but they are now available. Those who requested, please re-confirm to: thewholeearthveg@australiainmail.com Culpeper also wishes to obtain an electric bike.

Plant of the month

Rusty Tuckeroo

Cupaniopsis flagelliformis



by Richard Burer, Natural area restoration consultant

As we melt into the summer, our local native species put out their summer growth of tropical splendour. Glorious new leaves revitalise the landscape, enhancing the plants' multitude of colours of the new summer growth.

A real old favourite with attractive toothed leaflets is rusty tuckeroo, sometimes known as brown tuckeroo.

I always love running into this common species

with its habitat quite varied from subtropical rainforest to riparian zones and even dryer forest types such as wet sclerophyll.

In the garden and in my restoration plantings I often try to get one in the ground.

Its modest growth rate is very rewarding and slow enough to keep it at eye height for several years.

Flowering this month with a pink display giving off yellow-brown fruits later in the summer, rusty tuckeroo is easy to propagate.

Food matters

by Neil Amor

New Year's Eve is surrounded by traditions and superstitions that supposedly ward off evil and ensure good luck in the new year. Everything from *Auld Lang Syne* and eating black eyed peas to champagne toasts and the midnight countdown stems from the thought that what you do in the last fateful moments of the year will have a direct effect on the year to come. And just as champagne and kissing at midnight are longstanding rituals in the western world, there are a wide variety of traditions unique to different countries across the globe.

In Spain, for example, one of the oldest and now most widespread traditions is to eat 12 grapes at the stroke of midnight. It started in 1909 as a way to cut down on the grape surplus they'd had that year, but it's now a custom in Portugal, Venezuela, Cuba, Mexico, and Ecuador.

Many countries follow the tradition of hiding a coin or prize inside a dessert, whether it's a whole almond hidden in rice pudding in Sweden or little surprises baked into a ring-shaped cake in Mexico. I recall in my youth the joy of finding a thrupence in the family pudding — the good luck goes to the reveler who finds the hidden item in their slice.

Whether you're the superstitious type or not, there are numerous traditions, and unique and delicious ways, of celebrating the coming of a new year.



The Food Co-op volunteer elves wonder who's been naughty and who's been nice

Goat's cheese, roast capsicum and thyme tarts

These light tarts are ideal party food or plated up with a salad. The dominant colours of white, red and green look great on the table.

1 red capsicum, peeled, de-seeded, finely sliced and roasted

Olive oil to brush moulds and pastry

3 sheets filo pastry

250g goat's cheese

1/4 cup cream

3 eggs, lightly beaten

Salt and pepper

Finely sliced roasted capsicum

Bunch fresh thyme

Preheat oven to 180°C. Lightly brush a one-cup muffin pan with olive oil.

Lay one sheet pastry on dry work surface and brush lightly with oil. Place a second sheet on top and brush with oil. Lay a third sheet on top and cut pastry into 12 squares.

Line each muffin cup with a square of pastry, pressing to fit into the sides. Bake for 3-5 mins or until golden.

Meanwhile, beat goat's cheese and cream in a bowl until smooth. Beat in the eggs and season with salt and pepper.

Divide mixture between tart cases and top with a few slices of roasted capsicum and thyme sprigs. Bake for 8-10 mins or until filling is set and pastry is golden brown.

Thanks to all our members for supporting the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op. Until next year, eat and drink well!

Our community learns to grow



Greg and Eric at the Backyarders Table

A very special series of talks have just occurred at Blue Knob Markets. Knowledge was shared, insight was given into master techniques – and it all began with a seed.

The five-week 'Growing from Seed' lecture series explored the production and care of seedlings, garden preparation for planting out, and many matters beyond.

Speakers included Greg James of Farmers Choice Organic Seedlings, Dolph Cooke the local biochar advocate, local gardening legend Charlie Serchen, and holistic agriculture specialist Nathan Polglase.

Over the weeks, the cyclical nature of gardening became apparent – we learned from the observations of the speakers, and perhaps to be able to make our own observations, making this a valuable series indeed.

Many thanks to our speakers, to Michelle Agioritis for co-ordinating this series, to Jen Harkness for the graphics, Paul and Jeni for filming, and all other who helped.

If you missed this inspiring series, all is not lost. Paul Tait and Jeni Kendall, local award-winning film-makers, captured it on camera, and a DVD is in the works. Look for it at the BackYarders table, and at the gallery.

Upcoming events

On 9th December, the Blue Knob Market will expand into a Christmas craft market. Local artisans of all kinds will help you fill your Christmas shopping list.

It is an excellent excuse to come out for some shopping and to see the latest gallery exhibit, 'Artist's Choice'. For more details check the market's FaceBook page, and Nimbin HookUps.

The Craft Market will be on during Farmers Market hours (8.30am to noon), and the full Farmers Market will be on as well.

And on the 23rd, just in time for the final shop for your holiday celebrations, the market will be on with a raffle of a boxed selection of DVDs – the *Growing from Seed* disc, and all of our recorded festivals, both Fermentation and Fibre. The wooden case was built by Craig Cater, and decorated by local artist Jen Harkness.

Also on the day, CakeStravaganza is our thankyou, with a free piece of cake made by stallholders featuring local flavours, for all shoppers as long as they last. Cake at 10, raffle draw at 11.

The market will be open on the 30th as well, for your New Years celebrations. We are always glad to see you.

Stress, fatigue, anxiety, depression? Check your adrenals

by Trish Clough, herbalist

The adrenals are small glands that sit on top of the kidneys. They produce hormones that are crucial to regulation of fluid, production of sex hormones, and the body's response to stress. One of the important hormones is cortisol, produced on a daily cycle. It affects many other things eg blood pressure regulation, heart function, carbohydrate metabolism and even the immune system.

Prolonged stress (such as job stress, family stresses, chronic illnesses, physical and environmental stresses) can severely disrupt the output of adrenal hormones. Cortisol is increased in response to stress, but it is not a "bad" hormone as such. We need cortisol to function well and to help the body to cope with stress.

Cortisol is highest in the morning (around 6 to 8 am), and gives us the "get up and go" boost. So yes, if you need coffee to get going in the morning, chances are your morning cortisol is a too low.

The natural cortisol cycle then shows a gradual decline by midday, and a further decline through the afternoon and evening. However, some people have a cortisol spike at night, making it difficult to get to sleep. If your cortisol is higher at 10pm than it is at 6pm, you are likely to lie awake.

High cortisol, driven by stress, can cause insomnia and anxiety. The best herbal remedy for excess cortisol is withania, also known as ashwaganda. It is best taken in a powder form. It damps down excess cortisol while gently supporting adrenal function. It can be taken during the day for high stress people, or taken at night for adrenal fatigue with insomnia.

Prolonged stress can lead to eventual collapse in cortisol levels, along with depression, fatigue and anxiety. This is sometimes called adrenal burnout, and



Nature's pharmacy
by Trish Clough, herbalist

paradoxically it can also happen with a cortisol spike at night.

Morning and lunchtime doses of herbs, Siberian ginseng and rhodiola are helpful with burnout. Also Licorice root and rehmannia help by increasing the half-life of cortisol, meaning it stays in your system longer before being cleared. There are also specific nutrients needed for healthy adrenal function. These include Vitamin C, B complex, zinc and tyrosine. These can be found together in some tablet formulas.

Dietary recommendations for healthy adrenals are a moderate protein intake, and avoidance of sugar and starchy carbohydrates, caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and hydrogenated oils. Unfortunately people with 'clapped out' adrenals lean to these substances because they cause a short term mood lift. This is followed by a crash in mood and further cravings for sugar and stimulants. Sound familiar?

Adrenal function can also impact other systems in the body. For example adrenal stress can block the conversion of thyroid hormones into their active

form, leading to low thyroid function (eg fatigue, weight gain, high cholesterol, low iron). Another important adrenal hormone, DHEA, can be depleted with prolonged adrenal stress. This is a precursor to the production of sex hormones in the body. DHEA is one of the important restorative hormones. It improves muscle mass, reduces body fat, and lowers cholesterol. If low, fatigue, depression, insomnia, obesity and low libido are likely.

As well as the adrenal restorative nutrients and dietary recommendations above, the best herbs for promoting DHEA production are Siberian ginseng and tribulus. To contain active levels, tribulus must be Bulgarian (not Chinese or Indian) and must be from the leaf, not the fruit.

So how do we know what our adrenal hormones are doing? Sometimes the symptoms explain the picture, but not always. Adrenal fatigue can be masked by caffeine intake, and both high and low cortisol can cause fatigue and anxiety. The most useful way of testing is a saliva test kit which measures cortisol (4 different times during the day cycle) and DHEA. Particularly for cortisol the test is considered more accurate than a blood test. I can give a referral for the test to my clinic patients. It costs approximately \$120 through the pathology lab. I have found it very useful in my clinic, to help particularly with the appropriate herbal combinations and time of day for dosing.

Trish Clough is a Lismore herbalist who has been practising for more than 30 years. She now conducts her own clinic practice in Club Lane in Lismore after owning "Traditional Medicinals" for 20 years. Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452-219-502 or email: trishclough@internode.net.au The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.

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Yearning for peace throughout 2018

by Robin Stein

There were many examples of the selfishness of the 'Negative' One through 2017. Political leaders showed us their selfishness clearly, along with their desire for self-interest and 'vested' interests. Malcolm Turnbull has a Number One Month and Year Number, so now we know!

When the full vibration of the Number Two Global Year of 2018 takes effect, there will be many changes. At the same time, tolerance levels will drop for those leaders who would prefer to bully us, taking us backwards rather than forwards. But peace is a 'need' for the Two, just like fresh air and food. It is this 'need' that gives me greater hope for the future.

I have called 2018 the year of "Yearning for Peace" because the Double Number Two Global Year will affect every one of us in this way.

Our new year contains the numbers 2+0+1+8. So let's look at these numbers to see the finer details of how each of us will be affected.

2018 begins with a Two as well as adding to Two. Two is an intensely peaceful and intuitive number. It says, "We are!" which is totally different from the selfish "I am" of the One. Peaceful co-operation and companionship are strong desires of the Two.

Two will always attempt to look at both sides of a situation, but doesn't

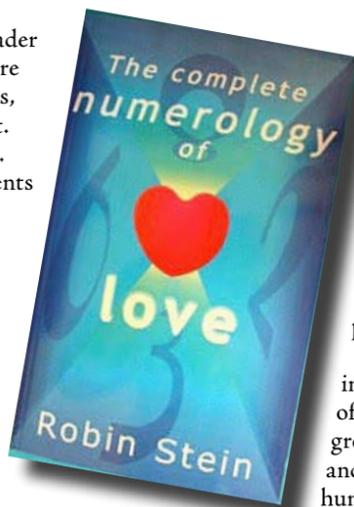
necessarily make a good leader unless they have one or more of the 'Leadership' numbers, which are 1, 5 or 8 to assist. 2018 contains a 1 and an 8.

The Zero in 2018 represents the electromagnetic life-force present within each of us and throughout the universe. This life-force is called the soul and it is what I measure when I do a rebalance for patients. The Zero in its place beside the Two also gives me the hope that a true Leader will emerge who may also have Twos and Zeros in their birthdate. Such a Leader would bring mankind forward with peace and tolerance. Then war would become a thing of the past and both humans and animals would flourish.

The One in 2018 could create a very uplifting year for all of us. There's no room for selfishness or vested interests in 2018 because the double Two and the Zero together have the ability to neutralise negativity. The One will bring us greater independence and strength.

Both One and Eight are strong numbers of leadership. And these numbers will be able to assist the Twos and the Zero to give them greater strength than they would have alone.

This means there is simply no room for selfish groups like Adani, or selfish



Governments such as the one Australia currently suffers. We need to vote them out because their agendas go against 'everything' we want for our families and our planet.

Number Eight in the last position of 2018 will bring greater confidence and independence to humanity. And far less tolerance for those who try to enslave us.

The Eight has a serious side, and a fun loving, humorous side. The Eight also has a negative side creating critical, judgemental, dominating people who have the need to control and bully. However, humanity has really reached saturation with these negative traits and I believe people will fight back vehemently if they feel they are being bullied during 2018.

The Zero and Two in 2018 give me great hope for a more peaceful year that embodies the very best attributes of the Global Number Two, such as altruism, gentleness, diplomacy and understanding.

Happy New Year everybody. May 2018 be everything you need it to be.
robinstein@gmail.com

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Garden plants that go wild

Weed Words

by Triny Roe

This headline in *NewsMail* inspired a vision of a mild mannered ornamental species having a manic episode, rampaging down the road brandishing a machete. Instead the article was about an all-too-common problem of a cultivated species invading bushland, out-competing and displacing native vegetation.

Brazilian cherry, *Eugenia uniflora*, is a native of the east coast of tropical South America. Also known as suriname cherry or pitanga, it's a small bushy tree with glossy green leaves growing up to seven metres. Popular as a hedging plant, in Spring it produces distinctive bright red fruit with eight ribbed segments. There is also a variety with deep purple fruit. These edible fruit can be sweet but sometimes quite tart as there is a lot of genetic variation. The level of ripeness will also affect the taste. Birds love them and spread the seed far and wide.

Brazilian cherry was probably brought to Australia on the First Fleet. *Eugenia* is listed as one of several plants taken on board at Rio de Janeiro. Particularly high in vitamin C (50.56%) it would have been considered an important fruit to ward off scurvy which was prevalent among sailors back in the day.

Now considered an environmental weed in several countries as well as Northern NSW and listed in the top



Grumichama

200 weeds in Queensland, Brazilian cherry is still readily available in nurseries, though this is starting to change. Nurseries Online have removed it from their catalogue, citing its designation as an environmental weed as the reason and its readiness to spread as being a problem. They recommend if you already have one that you net the tree to prevent access to the fruit by birds.

Other nurseries still sell them but with a weediness warning. Another nursery in SE Qld, with a web presence which specialises in 'rare' plants, stocks it with no such disclaimer.

What of other exotic tropical fruits that are becoming more well-known and popular? Could they be sleeper weeds, becoming the next generation of rampant pests invading bushland and creek banks

and competing with existing vegetation? Many are rainforest species and therefore able to germinate in the shade.

A local bush regenerator reported finding seedlings of Japoticaba, *Myrciaria cauliflora*, appearing in bushland. Birds and bats love them and can quickly strip a tree. One day the tree is covered in fruit, the next day the branches are completely bare! The seed is then carried further afield and the spreading begins.

Grumichama, *Eugenia brasiliensis*, also hailing from tropical South America and called colloquially Brazilian cherry, is another tropical fruit tree that could have weed potential. Its fruiting season is only about a week long. If you miss the harvest, the birds will have a feast and the rest of the fruit will fall around the parent plant, germinating in the seasons to come. No doubt some seed could be carried by the birds to new locations in nearby bushland.

These fruit trees and many other species need careful management to prevent problems in the future. Don't plant near watercourses and make sure prunings are disposed of in the green waste or composted on site.

Consider planting native species such as one of the many lilly pillies which also have an edible fruit. *Syzygium australe* will prune up well and make a great hedge. Compact varieties are available in nurseries. *S. smithii* (aka *Acmena smithii*) and *Soleosum*, blue lilly pilly, can also make a good screen or windbreak.

Energy efficiency of secateurs in an evolving food forest

by Geoff Dawe

On a south-facing slope of approximately 30-40 degrees, a food forest of 120cm height canopy is attempted.

The low canopy is necessary to allow light to a poorly-positioned house at the base of the slope and allow sun to food plants over the whole slope.

Lines of *Lomandra longifolia*, (pictured) 20cms apart, have been planted on the contour with the aid of an "A" frame level. They are designed over time to grow into each other and provide a solid vegetative "wall" that inhibits soil and water movement downhill.

Strategy to inhibit weed growth is, in the long-term, to have the whole area planted with preferred perennials so there is reducing room for weeds.

In the short-term, annual "weeds", only when a person is working in their immediate area, are cut low to the ground. Their residue becomes mulch for nearby preferred plants.

Perennial "weeds" such as lantana, camphor laurels and native trees are pruned for their mulch-use growth above 120 cms. In the case of lantana, their growth in the immediate area of work, is cut to provide hedges or lone bushes. No weeds are removed except where they occupy the immediate area of the planting of preferred



Lomandra

plants. Live roots in ground are of utmost importance.

Work at this stage has reduced to feminine energy mainly with secateurs. There are currently no oil-based machines such as whipper snippers used in the "cultivated" areas. This has reduced technology dependence befitting movement to a post-industrial society.

It is light but fiddly work. Secateur use is necessary to have eyes close to ground to watch for natural regeneration of food plants. Sometimes paw-paws or small tamarillo seedlings appear because their seeds from the household are broadcast in positions that might suit them.

A natural regeneration, small-fruited strawberry that is suited to "hard" or uncultivated ground has arrived. The internet suggests it may be *Fragaria vesca*. Its ability to go wild compared to domesticated

strawberry varieties makes it suitable as an infill plant. It is low-growing, so discernment to site them is as necessary as it is for newly sprouting paw-paws and tamarillos among annual "weeds". Secateur-use is noticed to not be so labour intensive after all. In effect, discernment replaces hard labour.

The wild strawberry and the native wild raspberry, fruit in early spring. Along with brazilian cherry, lilly pillies and chokoes they are bland to civilised tastes. Naturopaths are generally saying now that humans need to move away from the excessive fructose in sweet-bred fruits. Steven Gundry in his 2017 book *The Plant Paradox* and one of the top doctors in the US for 21 years running, says the excessive fructose in many modern fruits is dangerous for cancer patients.

Young children avidly seek native raspberries and

Brazilian cherries. Wild fruits are not bland if the civilised are prepared to merge their tastes more toward what nature offers.

M. B. Eldershaw in *Phillip of Australia*, about Australia's first governor, writes that an eyewitness saw an Indigenous Australian eat a native fig "with an apparent relish, and smacked his lips ... to convince us of how good it was..."

If the civilised are willing to reduce their sweet taste, that incidentally doesn't take long, more wild and bush foods become available. This potentially reduces the toil load of the average worker in Australia who has settled rurally on a family, gardening farm.

Gardening farms are designed for greater density of populations in rural areas that feed themselves and near neighbours rather than concentrate on exporting food. Humans are designed to go deeper into nature rather than set themselves apart from it.

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Once upon a misty morning on Rock Valley Road

The first time I see her she is a russet shadow in the dawn light, a little streak of firelight. Full of health, her pelt is thick and glossy, and a shock of white marks the tip of her tail. The red gums fly by out the window, and my kids count cars to keep motion sickness at bay.

The second time I see her she is as still as ice. Eyes once black coals have turned to glass. Her delicate paws are laid one over the other as if folded politely after dinner, her little nose thrust skywards as if testing for Heaven's scent. This is a fox, *Vulpes vulpes*, an introduced predator implicated sorely in the decline of many of Australia's ground-nesting birds, a range of small mammals, and even turtles (by digging out nests and consuming eggs). This is a creature whose death demands at the very least my ambivalence, if not my celebration. But in the cold light of day beside a narrow country road, I can't hate her. She is beautiful. Incredibly soft, smaller up close than I had imagined, and otherworldly in the way you would expect from a creature from the other side of the planet.

I didn't hit her. I've been lucky, and I drive smart. Just once I hit a red-necked wallaby, a little female, who skittered out of shoulder-high *Setaria* grass and under my wheels, even



though I was only going 20 km/hr. She was dazed but still responsive, and I took her home and held her in my arms until she died, and then laid her in the rainforest patch covered in palm leaves. It was better than the other option, which was to have some idiot come out and shoot her because it satisfied a wildlife rescue organisation's response checklist.

You see, just a few kilometres along the road from this little fox is an Eastern Rosella, almost unrecognisable now: killed instantly after being stuck by the driver's-side

mirror of a Toyota Hilux and somersaulted onto the road. The 30 or so cars that have swept past since have paid no heed to her little body on the bitumen, her dazzling array of feathers pounded into tarmac like so much planetary glitter.

A few kilometres after that, fresh-as-a-daisy, lies a young male red-necked wallaby, clearly dead, but with barely a visible injury, like a mini-series hero at the end of his contract.

For a few kilometres after that it's quiet, just wild roses and Devil's Fig, and then come a couple of flattened water dragons and green tree

snakes in quick succession, and then, just before the bridge that takes me home, a little grey flycatcher, its wings akimbo, its spirit flown.

It's just another morning on Rock Valley Road.

It's estimated that half a million native animals are killed on Australian roads every year. Infamously, Tasmania is the road-kill capital of the world, responsible for an estimated 300,000 of these. While road casualties have been shown to have no serious impacts on populations of some species (such as red-necked wallabies) for others it has been shown to be directly linked to the

survival (or not) of some populations. Tree kangaroos and Cassowaries are just two threatened species for whom road accidents may prove the difference between survival and extinction. Billions of dollars have been invested in halting the decline of the Tasmanian devil, but 3000 of them are still killed yearly on Tasmanian roads.

Road kill has become so ubiquitous, so normalised, that the anthropocentrism and callousness which lies at the centre of our inaction around it is barely recognised. For many visitors to Australia, road-kill is often their first sighting of a native animal, and it is as shocking to them as it should be to us. Apathy, poor planning, and speed all play a role in these thousands of animals not only struck by cars on our roads every year, but left there to be pounded into mutilated smears of skin and bone.

Our inability to design our roads around wildlife, nor to change our driving habits, is simply obnoxious. We modify our driving around school zones, for example, because society says that kids splattered all over the pavement is unacceptable. We can do so much better for wildlife, too.

Tunnels, overpasses, and skyways are all beginning to be employed in major road construction projects, but we're a long way behind



by Anastasia Guise

the rest of the world: while Australia has just a handful of major wildlife overpasses, France has hundreds. To facilitate movement of fauna across major roadways not only increases genetic diversity – and therefore resilience – but allows for movements of populations in emergencies such as bushfire. With so many other pressures on native wildlife, this is an essential component for many species' ultimate survival.

The third time I see her, she is just leather and bone. Traces of ginger hair remain, and a necklace of milky teeth mark the place where she literally bit the dust.

Anastasia is an author and environmentalist, writing on ecology, science and humanity. Facebook: [anastasiaguiseauthor](#)

Koala Kolumn

by Lorraine Vass

The old management adage, 'you can't manage what you don't measure' is as applicable to koala management as any other management enterprise. Unless we measure something we don't know if it is getting better or worse. In other words, we can't manage for improvement if we don't measure to see what is getting better and what isn't.

In general terms the comprehensive koala plans of management (CKPoMs) developed by Lismore, Ballina, Byron and Tweed councils are frameworks for doing just that but whereas the plans prepared by Ballina, Byron and Tweed were all informed by field surveys to assess koala habitat and population attributes, Lismore's earlier plan missed out. The size of the koala population being managed by Lismore's 2013 CKPoM was unknown, although those of us working on the ground had our ideas.

A week or so ago Lismore councillors heard the results of a study recently undertaken by Dr Steve Phillips and his team. The headline news is that we are custodians of the welfare and conservation of some 1,800 koalas in an area of approximately 20,870ha in the south-east of the local government area (i.e. the CKPoM study area). A local source population or 'hub' in current parlance is identified in the Monaltrie, Wyrallah, Tregeagle locality, which covers about 1,600 ha. and was formally known as the Critical Koala Precinct.

While field confirmation of an apparently demographically robust koala population is exciting, its ongoing survival is by no means guaranteed. We know, for example, that koalas in the Lismore area have arguably the highest disease mediated mortality rate in the country, accounting for between 60 and 70% of mortalities recorded by Friends of the Koala from across the Northern Rivers. We also know mortalities from vehicle strike and domestic dog attack are on the rise. Then



too, the available habitat in the study area, around 3,500 ha., is lower than the area required by the number of animals. Their high density is a threat in itself, making the population within the CKPoM area (much of which is highly fragmented floodplain dotted with paddock food trees), more prone to impacts from modification and tree loss.

The report's findings and nine recommendations will undoubtedly shape the CKPoM's first review due next year. They should also serve to focus state government attention on Lismore as an area of regional koala significance (ARKS) and therefore targeted for conservation actions including Saving our Species investment in koala conservation. We certainly hope so because there are still too many unknowns about this population and why it is apparently bucking the trend in eastern Australia of declining koala numbers.

Now to the research project that I mentioned in last month's Kolumn. You'll recall that a team drawn from the University of Queensland, Southern Cross University and the University of Sydney are conducting the "NSW North Coast Koala" study which is focussed on the Lismore, Ballina, Byron and Tweed local government areas. It aims to understand community attitudes and opinions towards koalas and how to best manage them. The study website and community survey are now ready to go. The survey has two parts. The first involves dragging small icons onto a map of the NSW North Coast Region to mark where you have seen koalas, where you would like to see koalas in the future, and your preferences for future land use that may affect koala conservation. The second part is a simple questionnaire. As a thank you for participating you can choose to enter a prize draw.

This social science component is the project's most innovative aspect as it will link community attitudes and willingness to engage in conservation activities with ecological understanding in a spatially explicit way, determining perhaps where and how conservation activities can be most effectively undertaken. This in turn will have broader significance for enhancing koala conservation programs elsewhere and for programs for other

species of concern.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting (live or dead), please ring Friends of the Koala's 24/7 Rescue Hotline: (02) 6622-1233 or use our online sighting tool at: [www.friendsofthekoala.org](#) The website also provides information about koalas, their food trees, how you can assist koala conservation, and a whole lot more. You can also email us: [info@friendsofthekoala.org](#) phone: (02) 6622-1233, and follow on Facebook. If you would like to book a tour through the holidays, please ring 6621-4664.

To report environmental incidents, including removal of koala habitat, phone the 24/7 Office of Environment & Heritage Enviro Line: 13-15-55.

Until next time, Season's Greetings and happy koala spotting.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT KOALAS? TELL US AND WIN!

When was the last time you saw a koala?

We are interested in both your observations and your thoughts on koalas. We are collecting information about sightings of koalas as well as attitudes toward koalas in your community.

Your responses will provide valuable information about how community land could be best managed to help koalas living there.

On completing the survey, you can go into a prize draw for your choice of a two-day break at The Byron five-star resort or a 2017 iPad Pro.

Go online and make your opinion count!
[www.northcoastkoala.net](#)

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Heart attack or heart attack proof?

by Cameron Storey

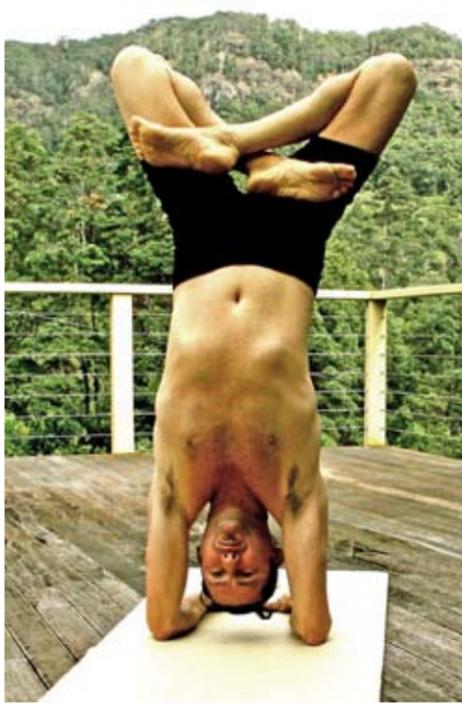
One in two males will succumb to coronary heart disease (CHD) in their lifetime and one in three females – although female stats are fast approaching the men's. This equates to around 50,000 preventable deaths per year in Australia or 7.4 million world-wide in 2015.

Research suggests that coronary heart disease inception initiates when certain factors accumulate progressive damage to the epithelial layer of our arteries by increasing inflammatory oxidative stress, decreasing nitric oxide production, foam cell formation, diminished endothelial progenitor cell production and finally atherosclerosis or the accumulation of plaque (fatty substance).

These factors include: obesity, high blood pressure, smoking, high levels of fats and high LDL (low density lipo-protein) cholesterol and low HDL (high density lipo-protein) cholesterol, and high levels of sugar in the blood. 95% of coronary heart disease patients had at least one risk factor.

Plaque can then begin to accumulate where the arteries are damaged. One of the culprits of this plaque build-up is SAD or the Standard American/Australian Diet which often begins the damage in early childhood – as early as three years.

"By age 10, nearly 100% of children have atherosclerotic plaque formations." – Dr L. Carney.



The atherosclerotic formation will usually progress in many people through their teens into adulthood. Translation: nearly 100% of people reading this article have plaque in their arteries.

Over time, plaque can harden and/or rupture. Hardened plaque narrows the coronary arteries and reduces the flow of

oxygenated blood to the heart. This can cause angina (chest pain).

If the plaque ruptures, blood cell fragments called platelets clot to the injury site to form blood clots. Blood clots can further narrow the coronary arteries and can worsen angina. If a clot becomes enlarged, it can mostly or completely block a coronary artery and cause a heart attack.

Plaque may cause no symptoms and over 50% of heart attacks occur in those patients who have never had any previous heart trouble. Out of these, over 30% are fatal, making their first symptom their last.

Examination of the arteries of Korean and Vietnam veterans, average age 20 years, showed that there was gross evidence of coronary disease in 80%, all of whom had completely no idea of the disease accumulation process.

There are certain regions of the world where people thrive and the incidence of coronary heart disease is notably absent: rural Chinese, Papuan Highlanders, Central Africans and the Tarahumara Indians of Northern Mexico. It is not their genes that rule out heart disease but their nutritional intake.

The common element in all these areas of non-existent heart disease is that the people live on whole food plant based nutrition (WFPBN) with minimal intake of animal products. Animal proteins increase blood cholesterol; plant proteins decrease blood

cholesterol (Gibney and Kritchevsky, 1983; Mc Curry, 1998; Key, 1994).

At present the medical system is finding more and more sophisticated ways of performing heart by-passes, angioplasties and inserting stents, but there is a significant mortality (1% with stents and 3% bypass surgery) with the procedures and health costs to the society are astronomical.

"Current palliative cardiovascular medicine consisting of drugs, stents, and bypass surgery cannot cure or halt the vascular disease epidemic and is financially unsustainable. Whole Food Plant Based Nutrition can restore the ability of endothelial cells to produce nitric oxide, which can halt and reverse (cardiovascular) disease without morbidity, mortality, or added expense ... it is unconscionable not to inform the cardiovascular disease patient of this option for disease resolution. To begin to eliminate chronic illness, the public needs to be made aware that a pathway to this goal is through Whole Food Plant Based Nutrition." – Dr Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr, Journal of Geriatric Cardiology, 2017.

The therapeutic treatment of heart disease through yoga practice will be covered in a separate article.

Starting from Friday 1st December, 9.30-11am Mixed Level Yoga class will be held at Birth and Beyond and taught by Cameron. FB: Dharma Centre – Lillifield 02 6689-7120.

The heart that gives, gathers

Generosity is an essential ingredient for a life filled with happiness.

Think of any truly generous person you have encountered and recall their beauty, soft facial features, balanced physical movement as well as the pleasant way they conduct themselves.

This is a reminder to foster the most satisfying qualities in life so we can face the end without regrets one day. Generosity isn't an act, but a way of life. It stems from the heart, lives in the heart and leads from the heart.

Generosity of heart is a priceless asset compared to material investments or life insurances.

While there is nothing wrong with planning ahead, growing old with a generous heart turns life into a fiesta of sharing, a purposeful life beyond functionality.

Grant yourself open-hearted attention. It's a great way to start. Truly care for and forgive yourself, unconditionally. In doing so, you generate vibrations of love that permeate far into your environment. And as it happens, the heart that gives, gathers vibes that are in resonance with its own qualities.

Strengthened like this, I can allow myself to care deeply. I care for myself and I care for others. Attention towards my emotions will keep me from acting them out blindly.

Open hearted attention provides space between trigger and response. It brings about response-ability and true well-being.

It's terribly easy these days to opt for superficial entertainment and instant gratification. Whether it's



by Betti Wille

taking a substance for an immediate high or buying a new gadget that keeps me 'happy' for a day or two, it's like continuously filling a leaky bucket.

When trapped in a momentum of lack, gratitude and generosity are lost.

By nurturing my heart's inherent qualities I can overcome the sense of separation that leads me astray to seek fulfilment in a leaky bucket.

Ask: "How can I be of service?" Take a few deep breaths and feel into your body while considering this question.

For any strong emotion that comes my way I find it extremely helpful to be aware of my sensory apparatus. What body sensations do I feel? By becoming the observer of an emotion, I break the habit of identifying with it.

If there is a tightening in my stomach, I can watch it as such. Every emotion is a biochemical impulse that doesn't last any longer than 90 seconds. If it serves my subconscious tendencies though, I tend to hold on to it.

To become a good observer

I need to calm my frantic ego-mind and begin to listen – listen properly, listen way beyond my own mind chatter.

Listen to the flow of your breath. Listen to the sensations in different parts of the body.

Try it at least for a minute or two. Just before going to sleep or directly after waking up are powerful moments for this practice. When I listen to my body, I nurture the vital connection to my mastermind: the subconscious.

This next exercise speaks to the heart directly: When listening to something or somebody, simultaneously be aware of the palms of your hands... What do you notice?

Our hands are closely connected to the heart. The heart meridian runs between hands and heart. Also, our palms and fingers remember the close relationship during early stages of embryonic development when hands on heart were factual for a stretch of many weeks.

What does it mean to you to put a hand on your heart these days? You might want to do it right now and take a moment to tune into your feelings.

In unison with a generously learned human heart (not intellect) all greed and neediness dissolves into thin air. A giant step towards peace, internally or externally – it has the same roots.

If you find these words resonate with your heart, you may want to write down the questions and exercises. If you feel like sharing your experience and there's no one suitable around, drop me a line: biodynamic.touch@gmail.com

A happy and attentive holiday season and new year to everyone.

Recreation, medication, addiction



by David Ward

In true recreational cannabis use, the focus needs to be placed on a low tolerance, allowing blood THC levels to fall to a minimum. The lower the levels, the more pronounced the experienced recreational effect and the smaller the required dose.

Limiting it to once a day, or even once every five hours is a great help, an achievable start to getting back to the dream of controlled use and full effect, where we all started out. The five-hour plan in my experience with cannabis allows the minimum time required for the noticeable effects of the last dose to have subsided.

Care needs to be taken here with the interaction of other substances, most notably alcohol. As cannabis intake is reduced and the effects become more pronounced we can potentially be left vulnerable to a negative reaction when mixing these two substances, another pitfall reminiscent for some of us. So when reducing cannabis use, it is advisable to also reduce alcohol intake proportionally.

Using specific methods such as the application of a daily yoga practice to bring some discipline and sustainability into the equation, this time lapse can be stretched to from one to two weeks, the 10-day plan being ideal in my experience. This brings many benefits, not the least of which being a fuller appreciation of our chosen substance.

Dosage rates can be measured in milligrams rather than grams, conserving precious supplies. This

same discipline can also be effectively used to cut down or eliminate our associated multi-drug use.

Life-enhancing practices such as yoga provide the rewards and incentives to let go of the less desirable "maintenance" substances such as nicotine, caffeine and sugar, the practice replaces the need while encouraging us to make wiser choices.

The recreational high is an elusive thing, as soon as we begin to chase it, it slips further and further out of reach, eventually becoming lost to us altogether as it simply morphs into our alternate normality. We've now crossed over into the field of addiction and the emphasis is reversed, here our mission becomes that of ensuring our blood THC levels stay high, never dropping below a certain level. Our sustainability status is lost as we burn ever increasing amounts of energy purely to maintain this adjusted reality, further backing things up with those maintenance substances.

Maybe general medicinal use could be said to lie somewhere between the two points of recreation and addiction, the emphasis now being on the interaction between substance and our particular conditions. Dosages of once or twice daily, a consistent amount and quality at a regular time, just enough to manage our symptoms.

The only drawback to medicating for psychological issues with cannabis or any other drug, is that it tends to deactivate our innate ability to manage the symptoms ourselves, locking us into our condition and creating dependence on the medication.

Using a home yoga and meditation practice, along with an organised nutritional program and cessation of stimulants will supercharge that innate ability to find our freedom, leaving the cannabis or alcohol as a wonderful occasional recreational reward whenever we are ready, if that is our choice.

The Vital Choices Program offers proven strategies to end all addictions. Phone David on 0447-820-510.

Skin conditions in horses

by Les Rees, equine naturopath

As nice as it is to get some rain, it can cause skin disorders for sensitive horses. I've seen a few recently who are suffering from some particularly distressing conditions that, if left untreated, can cause serious damage.

The skin is the largest organ in the body and is responsible for protecting the inner structures of the horse's body from the external environment. It provides insulation, protection from ultraviolet light, aids thermal regulation and acts as a means of communication with the rest of the body, playing an important role in sensory perception.

Some horses are particularly sensitive to biting insects and bacterial infections so it's important to be aware of any problems that may be developing, although skin conditions can arise either from parasitic invasion or from other factors such as allergies or weakened immunity. Causes of infection can come from irritants, allergens, photosensitivity, trauma, viral, parasitic, or fungal sources, or may be part of other diseases that the horse may be suffering from.

Common signs are seen when the horse is rubbing against anything that will provide a good scratching post to alleviate the irritation. If left unattended the skin will redden and become sore and open to further invasion of pathogens that perpetuate the irritation. Horses will rub out their manes and tails and continually rub until the skin develops open sores or becomes lumpy and leathery so it is important to define the cause of the problem before tackling it.

If the skin is damaged this will affect its capacity to do its job properly and can

ultimately weaken the immune system if left untreated. Imagine what it is like to be constantly scratching or have painful sores from sunburn or abrasions. This can make their lives miserable and can also be a contributing factor in behavioural problems.

Skin diseases

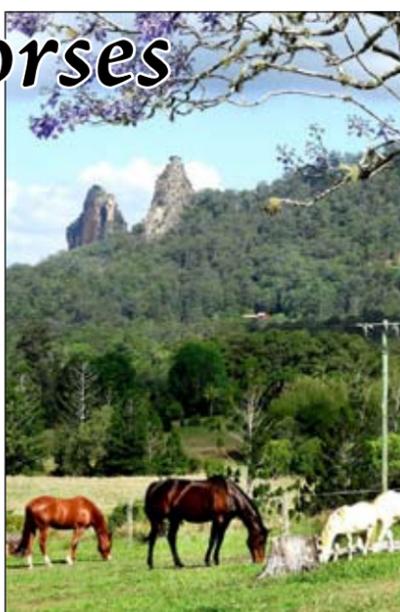
Ringworm – This is a highly infectious fungal condition that causes hair to fall out exposing the scaly skin beneath.

It spreads from horse to horse and via common use of grooming brushes, tack or shared rugs and from fences and floats. The incubation period after the fungal invasion into the body can be as short as four days so it's important to act rapidly before you have a catastrophe on your hands. Horses with ringworm need to be isolated immediately and everything that it has come into contact with needs to be disinfected.

Rain Scald/Mud Fever/Greasy Heel

– These are all caused by the same bacterium, *Dermatophilus congolensis*, which causes hair to matt and form pussy scabs, and subsequent secondary infection from bacteria such as staphylococci. These diseases are very common in humid wet climates. Rain scald occurs over the top line, whilst mud fever and greasy heel occur on the lower legs. If not caught early, chronic mud fever can cause inflammation and subsequent lymphangitis affecting the whole leg. It's important to move horses to dry sheltered areas during wet humid conditions.

Dermatitis – This is an inflammatory condition in sensitive horses caused by irritation from washes, shampoos and repellents etc.



Allergic reactions – These can be caused by a number of things such as insect bites, vaccines, proteins in grasses and some feed concentrates.

Mange – This is a contagious skin disease caused by mites and is transmitted when larvae, nymphs, or fertilized females are transferred to a susceptible host. Mange can be transmitted directly between horses or indirectly through contaminated objects or contaminated stabling areas. Mange causes hair loss, itching and skin irritation.

Sunburn – Protection from the sun is extremely important for horses with pink skin and white areas, particularly around the face and easily done using zinc cream during daylight hours or by using masks. Herbal medicine can be very effective for skin conditions when combining both external and internal preparations.

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The conversation

by Suzy Maloney B.Eq.Sc.

When I meet a new horse we often go through what I call 'the conversation'. This is where we check each other out and decide how we're going to progress from that point. To someone looking on not a lot is happening but between the horse and myself there's HEAPS going on. The best way to explain it is by describing an encounter I had a few days ago.

I met a lovely filly for the first time after being called in to assist her new owner. I asked if I could hold her while we stood in the round-yard talking about what had been happening so far. As I stood there the filly tried to push her head into my space so I raised my hand to block her and her head went straight again. I reached out and rubbed her on the forehead then resumed talking to her owner. She tried it again and I blocked her and rewarded her when she stood calmly with her head facing forward. Then she tried turning away from me and tuning me out so I gently brought her head back to the centre. She did this a few times then decided to walk forward. I let her walk but only in tiny circles around me while I rotated on the

spot. She did a few laps then decided to stop, at which point I released pressure on the rope and rubbed her forehead. She walked off again and I let her but this time she decided to stop a lot sooner. Within a few minutes she was standing there calmly, not trying to barge into my space, not trying to tune me out and not trying to walk off. She had her head forward, a relaxed neck and a soft eye.

Her owner was astounded as she was a flighty thing and was always barging into his space and never standing still. I'd explained to the filly that I have personal body space which she can't push into uninvited and that to be with me was the easiest thing to do. Because I let her decide when to stop moving forward, she'd had a thought process, had made a decision, which is very different to making her stand still, it sticks better. I didn't give her a hard time about anything, just showed her where it was comfortable, with me. When I walked off, she then followed me effortlessly, because she had chosen to be with me. I didn't send her around in circles so she would join up with me, I just had a conversation with her.

I asked the owner to repeat what I'd done. Immediately he stood very close, almost



Rumpy in bitless bridle with Suzy

under her neck, and she started playing with him, pushing into his space and both fussing with the other. I asked him to respect the horse's body space, 'the bubble'; we're asking the horse to respect our space, but it has to be a two way thing.

When he did, the horse swung her head into his space again, but now it was easy to block with his arm. She stood there then tried it again, another block. She tried all her usual tricks: she walked off, turned away, fussed and fidgeted but he didn't play her game. He stood there calmly and clearly showed her he wasn't playing any more.

After a while she was being

as respectful with her owner as she had been with me, the dynamics of their relationship set on a clearer and safer path.

I find most horses will ask similar questions when they first meet a human. The trick is to give them good answers. This is not about making the horse do anything, it's about giving answers that the horse can understand and respect. If you have this conversation right at the beginning it saves a lot of time and work later.

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