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Feb 5-8 Advanced Design Skills Workshop
March 23-30 Permaculture Teacher Training
April 9 – May 15 Growing Abundance – Organic food production / market garden and food preservation
April 10 Botany Essentials
April 16 Composts and Compost Teas
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Managing your weeds

by Triny Roe

A hot dry January, and our gardens and the weeds have taken a battering. But it's in these hard times that the weeds can get a go on.

Hardy woody weeds can hang on for long periods of drought, biding their time, waiting for the rain, which will come eventually. Lantana sheds its leaves. Others shrivel and shrink. They look dead. Yay! But not dead, just sleeping.

Ambrosia artemisiifolia sounds like it should be a lovely plant, but annual ragweed "is a restricted invasive plant under the Biosecurity Act 2014. It must not be given away, sold or released into the environment without a permit."

Why? Its wind-borne pollen is a major source of hay fever and can trigger asthma attacks. This prolific species distributes itself and doesn't need help from humans.

It is also an environmental weed, establishing on creek banks and flood plains, displacing native species.

It is common on roadside and overgrazed paddocks. Blowing in the breeze it can, and will, turn up anywhere.

Annual ragweed is hardy

and drought resistant, so is loving the current weather pattern.

This annual herbaceous plant hails from North America. Annual ragweed is an important medicinal plant for native Americans. They used it inside and out for a variety of ailments.

Today's pharmaceutical products for hay fever treatment are developed from ragweed pollen, grown for that purpose.

Biological control agents, a moth and a beetle have been released in NSW and have had some impact. Hand weeding too can reduce local infestation. Annual ragweed flowers in summer, so pull now and prevent more seed production.

Wear gloves, long sleeves and pants, as this plant can also irritate the skin. If it's full-on flowering, avoid, especially if you are prone to allergies.

Hand weeding is easier after a bit of rain. When the soil is moist and soft, the roots more easily let go their hold. Use a weeding tool to ensure you don't break off roots.

Many species, especially woody weed species like groundsel and giant devil fig can regrow from root

fragments. Breathe in.

Visualise the roots letting go as you give them a little shake and a tug. Breathe out as you pull the weed up.

The rain will also stimulate a new round of germination. 12-15mm is enough to do this. Let's hope it comes soon (or came while NGT was in production).

Disturbing soil will also stimulate germination. The seed of some species require exposure to light for this to happen. Others are brought close enough to the surface to make their break. After a decent drop of rain, inspect for new arrivals of the pest species kind.

Keep a sharp eye out for groundsel bush, *Baccharis halimifolia*. This noxious woody weed is making a comeback. It only takes one neglected paddock harbouring this prolifically flowering shrub to seed a whole valley.

Around 1.5 million seeds are produced annually by each female plant. About half of these fall near the mother bush, causing thick groves to develop. The rest blow far away, sometimes travelling many kilometres, before finding a new home. The fluffy white hairs on the seed help it float far on the wind.



GDF extensive root system



Annual ragweed

Groundsel bush can germinate in acidic or alkaline soil and is also tolerant of frost, salt spray and water logging.

Easily recognised by its toothy spade-shaped leaves, it is simple to remove at the seedling stage. Slash larger plants and ensure they don't set flowers.

With land ownership comes a responsibility to manage your weeds. Don't wait for the weed officer to visit!

A leap to freedom

Koala Kolumn

by Maria Mathes,

Koala Watch project officer

There are many hotspots along the Pacific Highway construction alignment that are the main areas of koala activity and concern. This is the story of just two of those koalas, Bellamina and her joey Jug, and how Jug finally returned to the wild.

Bellamina is a beautiful alpha female koala who has given us the joy of watching four of her joeys. She lives on the western side of Laws Point (where the new Highway alignment is going through) and has her favourite trees. Unfortunately, several of her food trees were cleared, along with those of the other koalas living as resident koalas in that area.

As predicted, with so many koalas needing the amount of feed they require each day coupled with the dry periods and heatwaves, this put extreme pressure on the remaining food trees with a few in particular being hammered. As soon as there's new growth, it's eaten.

Bellamina had a favourite Forest Red Gum she visited when she had a back young joey. Unfortunately, this tree was collared preventing her access, and was earmarked for clearing. Her tree was still there and she could smell the leaves, but just couldn't get to them. Then the week it was to be cleared, a ringbarked Jacaranda fell into her tree.

That night she was in her tree with her back young joey. We can only guess that she went to her tree every night to try to access it, as the chance that she just happened to go there on the night the Jacaranda fell is remote. I was camping out there at night and for three days she didn't leave her tree.

One night I heard her joey chirping, and I noticed Bellamina had left the joey in her tree while she went off to feed, before returning to it early in the morning. They stayed another day and night, before leaving early in the morning.

Despite what could only be described as pleading and begging on my part, there was no way I could save that tree from ancillary works. The day they left the tree, it was gone, cleared and mulched, and if you didn't know it was once there, you never would.

Bellamina and joey continued to share feeding in the remaining trees, and with the dry and slow growth over winter/early spring, put extra pressure on those feed trees. When around 12 months old, the joey (now named Jug) became independent.

Over the Christmas break, I checked on all the Laws Point koalas. She has a new joey and from all external signs appears to be doing well. Bellamina was still using the remaining feed trees in their area, but had also moved 50-100m into the trees that were once part of the home range of an old male koala that had been found dead at the base of a collared tree.

Jug was actively on her own after she left Bellamina. With regular sightings, they continued to stay close to one another. My first sighting of Jug as an independent koala was very special and she looked very healthy, even posing for a rump check.

Fast forward six months, now a young juvenile, Jug was observed in one of the virtually leafless trees (a favourite of all koalas in the area). She was sharing the tree with another koala and they climbed around each other without any fuss, but she didn't look well.

I put a trap up to catch them. Jug was reaching for a branch and eating the



Jug back in the wild

last leaf on it, then grabbing another and eating the last couple of leaves on it, climbing to another trunk and going through the process again.

Her little arms couldn't reach the branches with more leaf and over the next few days I watched her eat gumnuts from the end of branches. The day before she was rescued, I watched her go back and forward through the canopy to the adjoining Pink Bloodwood and have a feed each time.

Jug had a fair to poor body condition. Her fur was dry and brown, and she was underweight for a joey of her age, although a full health assessment showed she is chlamydia free.

Over the next three months, Jug was given leaf and supplements to build up her body weight. Apart from a few ups and downs, she improved remarkably and at the time of her release looked like the Jug I first saw and nothing like the koala rescued.

When it was almost time for Jug to return to the wild, the decision of where to put her had to be considered. She was soft-released in the first week of January in a safe place away from roads and disturbance, and seemed happy to be free with access to as much food as she wants... and then she took a huge leap from the soft release and is now back in the wild.

To report a koala in trouble, or a sighting, phone (02) 6622-1233. More info is at: www.friendsofthekoala.org

Sustaining 7 Sibley Street

by Guy Stewart

A huge thank you to the Nimbin Garden Club for their \$500 donation towards the gardens around 7 Sibley Street.

Andrew and Nik presented Guy and Steph with the cheque of funds raised from Garden Club member raffles (see picture below).

We've made more progress in the past month, and now have workshops underway and rainwater tanks connected. Thanks to our awesome volunteers, especially the regulars Steve, Greg and Steph.

Native plants grown from local native seeds are now available for sale at 7 Sibley Street, so please drop in and say hello if you see our door is open.

If you would like to help with a rostered day on, or anything else please send an email to: guy@nnic.org.au

With the dust settled from the build and the big launch, things are changing every day for the better as we begin to put down our roots.

Next big thing... electricity!



Functional arts workshops

February Workshops: Functional arts

\$10/hour unless otherwise specified.

For bookings, text 0475-135-764.

Mondays

- 4th February – **Intro to leatherwork:** understanding tools, leathers and methods. Belt-making demo, with Bob.
- 11th & 12th February – **Summer shoes:** make lightweight, comfy crochet shoes, bookings essential to prepare fitted soles. \$50 for two days.
- 18th February – **Basket-making:** local, natural fibres provided, with Nicole.
- 25th February – **Intro to felt:** rustic

doormat with raw fleece, materials provided, \$20.

Tuesdays

- 5th February – **Intro to loom weaving (inkle loom):** make belts, bag handles, sandal straps, with Steph.
- 12th February – **Day 2 crochet shoes or 1 Day sandals with woven straps,** \$30, bookings only.
- 19th February – **Make gift bags from recycled paper.**
- 26th February – **Intro to felt hat-making:** full-day workshop, materials provided, \$80, bookings only.



RIP 'Shoppy'

by Lesley Clere

Our beloved Nimbin icon, Shoppy the three legged black cat, who has befriended many locals and tourists over the past 10 years or so, departed on 12th January when a huge carpet snake took him. The snake has since been relocated.

We are all devastated, as Shoppy was a regular fixture in Neil's newsagency and my shop, OzKat Clothing. He was a very special soul, a dear heart, and is sorely missed. RIP sweetie.

Plant of the month

Cactus Cactaceae



A rewarding plant for dry environments, Cacti have many adaptations to conserve water and have fleshy parts storing water for this process.

Many people around the Northern Rivers have planted some excellent specimens, and the hot dry conditions are excellent, as not only is Cacti drought hardy, but depending on the species, can love rich well-drained soil and fertiliser, and of course flooding rain!

Some local favourite Cacti include Indian Fig, San Pedro and Dragonfruit.

So diverse in uses, Cacti is helpful with its psychoactive agents, a massive food and beverage resource, and is globally adored as ornamental plants.

So folks, if you're not too cactus this month, get a couple of tasteful ornamental pots and have a crack at a Cactus.

by Richard Burer,
Bush regenerator

Truly, who isn't cactus after this summer weather?

If I wasted my time watering my favourite plantings this summer, I'd be lying if I said I only favoured the species that didn't require much water at all: my friends in the Cactaceae family.

I'm not very knowledgeable about Cacti, but over the years I have taken some pride in having some lovely specimens taking pride of place around the farm.

Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Andrew Barton

Greetings fellow green thumbs... or maybe they're a bit brown at the moment due to the heat!

The Nimbin Garden Club is beginning its season's meets on Saturday 16th February, from 2 to 4pm at 1030 Mountaintop Road, Nimbin.

We have a guest speaker coming to talk to us about some great basic first aid techniques when out and about on a property.

For example, do you know what to do if you are bitten by a snake? How about someone going into anaphylactic shock when bitten by something?

Our first aid trainer, Nancy Casson will be there to give us some insight into what to do, what not to do, and how to get help. It should be a very interesting afternoon.

Visitors and guests are always welcome. We bring a cup, a chair, and a plate to share. It's a lovely social afternoon, so why not come along and join us? Kerry will have a raffle with some wonderful garden related things, so you never



know your luck.

Our raffles throughout the year go to making donations back into the community.

In January, Nik from the Garden Club (pictured) handed over a cheque for \$500 to Guy and Steph at 7 Sibley Street to go towards landscaping this wonderful community project.



by Robin Stein

With so many nines in my birth date and triple Mercury, I frequently feel as though Mercury is retrograde in my life. When it is, my life turns upside down comprehensively. Mercury is the fastest planet, so it goes retrograde about 3-4 times yearly for roughly three weeks. So in some years, this adds to three months.

The very best experience of 2018 was being able to save our gorgeous rescued

Gratitude when life turns upside down

doggie, Guru. We've had him for a year on 13th February and he is a totally different boy from the terrified, brutalised 14-month-old baby who 'knew' he was going to be put down.

Knowing the cruelty of his past, we showered him with unconditional love, respect and understanding. And the way he has responded brings tears to our eyes whenever we think about it. He is the most loving, funny, thoughtful, clever, and brave boy.

By mid-2018, I felt exhausted and contracted a dose of 'flu early in July. My body contends with ageing problems, but it is extremely unusual for me to get sick. I cut back on much of what I'd taken on, even having a break from writing for the *GoodTimes*. Fortunately, I knew the lesson was to rest more and to boost my immune system because the 'flu was followed closely by bronchitis, pneumonia, and pleurisy. Then an abscessed tooth had to be extracted. Each problem has different bacteria, so it was very

unusual to get so many in the space of a few months.

Some lessons are harder to see. As we age, it takes us longer to do everything, yet we don't seem to make allowances until we fall over. And that's what happened.

Pneumonia left me with sepsis of the brain. It was so alarming not being able to put a sentence together that I treated myself for a brain injury. Very gratefully, this helped and I did begin to recover. The lesson was to check my own saliva and basically, to treat myself with my own remedies and tinctures. And this was just as well because the universe hadn't finished with me yet.

Throughout the time I was ill, I hardly had time to recover before the next onslaught. And recovery doesn't feel like much while you still feel deeply chronically fatigued.

One evening, I was standing outside, gazing at the forest while Guru was out on his run. He is attached to it with a long rope and I was oblivious that he had wandered

around me twice. He heard his 'crush' come through the gate and took off to greet her. The rope tightened around my ankles and I became airborne until he stopped running. Then I slammed down hard onto the cement of the car port. I dislocated my shoulder, fractured it and chipped a 2.5cm piece off the joint. Three tendons tore from the bone, and I broke four other bones. Clearly, the lesson was to remain alert about my dog's rope and I failed, with serious consequences. What a reminder to remain in present time! Fortunately, I have kept my bones very strong or I would not have been here to tell the story!

At first, I didn't believe I was going to be able to come back from so much illness and a catastrophic fall. But the human spirit is amazing. Within a few weeks of considering how fortunate I am, my happiness flowed back to me and I knew the rest of the healing would follow. It's happening! I'm still learning. And I remain eternally grateful.



Are you the star?

by Eric Smith

Something has started again at the Blue Knob Market. One of our regular shoppers, Jo Cabalé (pictured) has been giving talks about her passion: wildlife care and rescue.

And she has been magnificent. Informed, enthusiastic, truly engaging with the audience.

While I knew that she was a wildlife carer (she had ordered some snake rescue bags to be made), it was another stallholder who asked her a question about dealing with snakes, and suggested that she give a talk.

This brings to mind the many talks that we have had at the Moore Workshop Space of the Gallery, notably the recent 'Growing From Seed' talks, with local gardening heroes including our amazing seedling seller, Greg James giving out their tips for raising and planting out seedlings that are most suited for our own conditions.

And I thought, we need more of this! So consider this an open casting call to locals who wish to share their knowledge with the local community.

Sustainable life skills come to mind first – do you have suggestions on how to thrive in this unique climate? Gardening, household, or other.

Have you seen agriculture in other areas and want to share your experiences?

Local History – Memories of Aquarius, or after, or before? Memories of someone whose family was here before the First Fleet would be a dream come true.

Other stories, and a bit of humour – let's not take ourselves too seriously.

Talks should be geared to about an hour, so that they work in conjunction with the market. We can supply some audiovisual if required. Please let us know far enough in advance to get the word out.

I look forward to hearing from you. Contact the Market on our FaceBook Page, or email: upsidedownliving@hotmail.com or stop by the Atelier Smith stall, just below the Café steps.

The Blue Knob Market – Farmers, Fermenters and Fibre Artists – happens every Saturday in the grounds of the Blue Knob Hall Gallery, near the corner of Blue Knob and Lillian Rock Road, between 8.30am and noon.

The Year of the Pig - reflecting on Polly

Animal Talk

by Donna Connolly

This month we are saying goodbye to "The Year of the Dog" and welcoming in the "Year of the Pig", beginning 5th February.

Using Chinese Astrology, the year of the Pig brings luck, and overall good fortune. It is a great year to make money, and to invest. A year full of joy.

From a spirit animal perspective, the pig represents the time to face your fears, and resolve them to find peace. Bring closure to what no longer serves your highest purpose.

Stop procrastinating. Now is the time for good fortune, prosperity and great personal growth.

When I think of Pigs, one magical girl comes to mind.

I would like to dedicate this month's article to "Polly" (from Djanbung Permaculture Gardens) with permission from Robyn Francis, Polly's beloved guardian.

I remember when I first knew of Polly. I saw a photo come up on Facebook. Polly (and some of her companion friends) had been brutally attacked and traumatised allegedly by some "out of town" youths who were high on drugs. It was a senseless rampage. I won't go into the details. I reacted by bursting into tears, then vomited



and realised how ashamed I am, at times, to be a part of the human race. I reached out to Robyn to offer my services "in any capacity."

I must admit, I drove to this session with trepidation, sadness and anger for what all those sentient beings had to go through. I also knew from the moment I heard of Polly, I had to assist her in any way I could.

Polly was an excellent communicator, and what struck me the most, was how present and peaceful she was. She acknowledged the ancestors and guardians. Polly spoke of her nickname. Her favourite places for pats and was also thankful for her new fencing.

One of the sweetest things that

came through was her want to "go back to work" running tours. And she was also incredibly grateful to everyone who helped her. She said it was "all the love that helped her heal the most".

During our session I allowed her to choose some oils I had brought with me (thanks to Karen). She loved the oils and her Reiki treatment, and spoke of the healing hugs she received from everyone too.

I drove away that day a changed person. Polly showed me the importance of not showing pity or sadness. Instead to acknowledge the bright light that shines within all of us and they will shine even brighter. Seeing the good in people, it always outweighs the

bad. Keep your vibration high, as that is the only way to heal. Accept all the love and assistance that comes your way. You deserve it.

Polly is the epitome of unconditional love and forgiveness. Both her resilience and strength, extraordinary.

Polly, sadly has since passed away, in her own time and in her own way, at the tender age of 13 (which is testament to her wonderful guardians).

She was living evidence that animals are far more evolved than us humans. Her legacy will always live on. As a survivor, pioneer (she helped set up the gardens), permaculture tour guide and remarkable teacher.

Many thanks to Robyn and all the lovely souls who helped Polly.

You can find me at health and wellness expos, where I will be offering Reiki and readings. Also talking to people about upcoming courses and workshops on animal communication, Reiki 1 & 2 and pendulum dousing.

I'll be at Casino RSM Club on Saturday 2/3 and Mullumbimby Ex-Services Club on Sunday 3/3.

In the meantime, if you would like to connect, please email me at: rivergem88@gmail.com

Web: www.rivergem.com.au
Text: 0490-156-038

Golden Condor messenger brings Kambo

by Cameron Storey

Recently the Dharma Centre was fortunate enough to host Peruvian shaman/medicine man, Antarki Qori Kuntur (Golden Condor Messenger), from the Quechua Nation from the Original Peoples of the Sacred Valley of the Incas in Cusco Peru.

Initiated fifteen years ago in the Sacred Ceremony of Offering to Pachamama (Earth-Mother), Native Medicinal Sweat Lodge Ceremony and Energy Cleaning by Quechua and Aymaras Grandparents, Antarki was also trained in Ayurvedic Massage, Usui and Shamanic Reiki, aura cleaning through herbs, and treatments through Indigenous Natural Medicine.

In January, brave initiates drank down three litres of water, received small skin micro-burn points (between 3 and 7) on the upper arm and then the application of the skin secretions of the Giant Green Monkey Tree Frog which were absorbed and transferred through the body via the lymph system. The highly mysterious and profound secretion began to work its magic physical, emotional and intellectual cleansing.

While the Kambo medicine affects each person in very unique ways, a summary for me went something like this: standing up stinging at the application point, heart rate pounding, back of head throbbing, upper back throbbing, kidney area throbbing, sitting down, heat like a fever, sweating, weakness, heaviness, nausea, feeling like I was about to pass out (apologies to other participants for what they were about to experience), lying down, increased nausea, projectile vomiting into a bucket x 10, profuse sweating, symptoms all gradually subsiding and "mostly" recovered thirty minutes later. Survivors' bucket contents were then ranked by vividness of colour.

Short term, Kambo provides an increased state of alertness, enhanced mood, resistance to fatigue, hunger and thirst, better concentration and focus, and a still mind which can last for several days or weeks. Longer term, Kambo empowers the immune system, overcomes fatigue and will generally improve your state of health. In the case



Antarki Qori Kuntur from the Quechua Nation of the Sacred Valley of the Incas

of serious, chronic diseases, long-standing addictions or an overload of accumulated toxins from pharmaceuticals, alcohol or other drugs, it is advisable to use Kambo more regularly. With regular treatments, received over a period of time, the detoxing effects of Kambo will aggregate in your system and further neutralise the areas of weakness.

When harvesting from the frog, some of the secretion must remain in order to ensure its survival in the wild. After the harvest is complete, the frog is returned to its natural habitat unharmed by responsible members of a tribe (ethically harvested), and treated with the utmost care and respect, as the Indians believe that to harm the frog will bring negative consequences.

The great tribes of the Amazon are paid a fair price for their work that assists in the support of their communities and assures the continuity of this great healing tradition and of the people who have protected and gifted us this knowledge.

"The uses of Kambo commonly revolve around lifting Panema – an indigenous term for dark, heavy or negative energies that can include bad

luck, illness, depression, laziness, lack of clarity and simply feeling lost – things that block progress in a person's life. Kambo is also used for Hunting Magic because it enhances vigour, speed and endurance and makes the hunter invisible to their prey by temporarily eliminating the human scent. Kambo's medicinal uses amongst the tribes include treatment for malaria, snake bite, fever, fertility issues, reducing bodily pain and inflammation, and viral and bacterial infections." – Vivien Bonzo

Vittorio Ersamer, University of Rome, concluded that Kambo contains a "fantastic chemical cocktail with potential medical applications, unequalled by any other amphibian". Vittorio focused on opioid peptides which he discovered trigger a variety of beneficial chemical reactions in the human body and has the ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, enabling it to reach deep into the body and bring support to otherwise difficult to treat areas. Human cells open up to the beneficial properties of Kambo unlike any other substances.

Nine peptides have been discovered, some of which are bio-active, performing hormone-like tasks, or provide support to vital cellular processes, or potent effect on the gastrointestinal muscles, gastric and pancreatic secretions, blood circulation, or on the stimulation of the adrenal cortex and the pituitary gland.

Kambo also contains neuropeptides (protein-like molecules) used by the neurons to communicate with each other. These neuronal signalling molecules are involved in a range of brain functions including: analgesia, reward, food intake, metabolism, reproduction, social behaviours, learning, and memory.

While in Australia, Antarki attended a claim ceremony 'Wanawana Yira' from tribal Githabul Ngarakbul and continued his purpose of remembering Essence, healing people, connecting with indigenous communities and taking care of Earth-Mother and sacred places.

Antarki hopefully will return later this year to run sweat lodges and other ceremonies incorporating more of his vast knowledge of traditional healing medicines. Phone (02) 6689-7120 or FB: Dharma Centre – Lillifield

Soothing your itchy horse

by Les Rees, Equine naturopath

It's that time of year again when those nasty midges are causing a nuisance for a number of horses and for some people that means allocating more time for applying topical creams, sprays and rugging with the added concern as to what condition they'll find their horses in each morning.

I have three hypersensitive horses who have suffered in the past so I thought that I'd share some ideas that may be of interest.

Firstly, it's important to know what you are dealing with. The itch problem is caused by the *Culicoides* midge. It pierces the skin injecting protein rich saliva containing vasodilators, anticoagulants and pro-inflammatory mediators.

In other words, it causes the blood to flow without coagulating allowing the midge to take what it needs and there is nothing a hypersensitive horse can do about it.

As the onslaught continues, the horse's defence system sends antibodies, histamine and inflammatory mediators to restrict blood flow to the site but they are rendered useless against the midge's counter signal that inhibits this process.

Unfortunately, it can cause extreme reactions when damaged areas of skin become inflamed causing subsequent itchiness and potential infection resulting from the horse's constant rubbing in an attempt to gain some relief.

Without intervention, the horse can develop broken hair and subsequent alopecia, skin erosion and ulceration which can be extremely painful; and in the chronic stages hyperkeratosis, lichenification (thick leathery patches) and scaling can develop.



I tend to think in terms of prevention since so far there is no cure. Therefore, understanding something of the nature of the problem is very important.

The *Culicoides* midge tends to feed around dusk and dawn, and seems to be particularly attracted by the smell of sweat.

There are a few tactics I use which are working for me:

- Keeping the horses away from water sources overnight;
- Washing the horses in the evenings and scraping off the excess water to remove any salty residue, and sponging over their faces;
- Spraying them with Zap-itch which is a spray I make from mixed essential oils;
- Putting on light weight rugs at night and removing them during the day. It's also important to ensure that the rugs are washed regularly otherwise they will not only be dirty, they may smell of sweat;
- Feeding herbs to aid immune function and seasonal allergies; and
- Supplementing with seaweed, calcium, cider apple vinegar and rock salt

separately, a must to replace losses during the sweating process. Sodium, potassium, calcium and chlorine are lost in urine and sweat; if they're not replaced it will cause metabolic problems, and subsequent lack of interest in eating and drinking.

It's not uncommon to find salty layers over their backs, a clear demonstration of the amount of electrolyte loss.

For equines, sweating accounts for two thirds of heat dissipation and therefore plays an important role in thermoregulation. However, high temperatures and humid conditions can have devastating effects on sweat evaporation. The high moisture content of a humid environment slows down the evaporation process as increased sweat forms an insulating layer on the body reducing heat dissipation.

As a consequence, sweat glands release more water to speed up the process which ultimately causes dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and failure to reduce core body heat.

I've spent two years working on ways to help my horses and have few flare-ups these days so I'm happy with that.

When they occur, I adjust the herbal medication which consists of herbal teas added to the feed, to tinctures which allow me a wider choice of herbs to choose from.

Horses react extremely well to herbal medications which are safe to use providing that you stay in the safe parameters of dosing and you check for contraindications.

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The theory behind positive reinforcement

by Suzy Maloney

Many people use positive reinforcement with horses, instead of or as well as other forms of training (negative reinforcement, habituation, desensitisation, shaping, classical conditioning). As with all horse training, it helps to understand the theory behind the method.

Research indicates that positive reinforcement may be more effective than negative reinforcement, and holds many benefits for equine well-being. Horses learn quicker, retain the learned tasks longer, experience less stress, react to humans more positively, and are able to generalize this training across trainers, novel tasks, and over long periods of time (Sankey, 2010). The benefits of positive reinforcement training can be huge, especially with horses suffering from trauma or deep mistrust of humans.

Horses are extremely motivated by food. Their brains are hard-wired for eating so it's a HUGE motivator. So when using food rewards in training you must know how to do it or the horse may start pushing you around and trying to take the food. This is not a bad horse, just a very food motivated animal. There



exists a misconception that feeding horses treats by hand will make them aggressive. However, if the horse is never reinforced for nuzzling or grabbing for treats, positive reinforcement can eliminate nippiness rather than induce it.

We can make a previously neutral stimulus such as 'good girl' or click (a secondary reinforcer) positive, by consistently pairing it with something intrinsically rewarding, food (a primary reinforcer). This is called classical conditioning. Establishing this association is always the first lesson in positive reinforcement training. The first thing you teach the horse is that to get the reward they must have their head turned away from you. Stand beside your horse and wait until they are calm with the head straight or turned away, give an audio cue such as 'good girl/boy, click or whatever you want to use, then give the reward.

Chances are your horse will immediately try and get more food. Again, wait until the head is turned away (you can help them find this with the lead rope if it takes a long time), give the audio cue then reward. Repeat until your horse has completely stopped trying to take the reward from you.

Now you can ask the horse to do something, when they do it give the audio cue then food reward when the head turns away. Never give the horse a reward when they ask for it. Never give the horse a reward for no reason. You ask them to do something; they do it, turn the head away, and get rewarded. Give the audio signal exactly on the behaviour you want to train, follow up with the food.

Make it easy for the horse to succeed. This provides more opportunities for reinforcing the desired response, minimizes confusion by reducing or eliminating the wrong response, and reliably

establishes the new behaviour more efficiently.

Shape the behaviour you want in small increments. For example, if you want the horse to pick up a hoof - initially reward them for letting you touch the leg, then the foot, then lifting the hoof for two seconds, then ten seconds, then holding it up while you tap it, then holding it up while you clean it out. This is called shaping, we start with something the horse can achieve and gradually add on until we reach the behaviour we desire.

You will quickly see your horse anticipate their work eagerly and respond enthusiastically as you develop a stronger relationship with them and connect at an ever deeper level. Many people turn to positive reinforcement when they get 'that horse' that doesn't respond to normal training methods or who is suffering from extreme trauma. But in reality all horses can benefit from having positive reinforcement training as part of their repertoire, and there is much to be learned by the human in the process too.

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Diving down exposes dreams

I've ordered a full length, upper and lower body rashie for snorkelling and diving purposes.

It had to be bought online because I couldn't find anyone locally who sells them. I have a wetsuit for scuba, but find it cumbersome and too warm for comfort for shallow dives and hovering around on the surface of water.

This purchase comes hard on the heels of my January birthday and the confirmation to self that, beside the work I do as a psychotherapist, snorkelling and diving are my favourite activities, along with music, and I want to do a lot more of those.

As I muse upon these things, I am reminded again of an account told to me by my diving instructor from ten years ago, which in turn triggers a realization that what occurred in that incident, exposes the nature of dreams in a curiously similar fashion, though without the same conditions.

My diving instructor and his girlfriend did a dive in the Truk (Chuuk) Lagoon in Micronesia and the girlfriend suffered nitrogen narcosis (also called the "martini effect") where she

lost her entire memory of the dive. Nitrogen narcosis is a temporary condition caused by the effect of gases breathed in under pressure. She couldn't recall anything of the dive at all.

Then one day, eight months later, she said she'd had a dream and she related everything they'd seen together on the Truk dive. Her memory of the dive had returned.

To me, this account shows the stratospheres of the mind and the usefulness of dreams in bringing knowledge that is not readily accessible by ordinary means but which can be useful in ordinary and therapeutic life.

I usually ask my clients about their dreams, not only because they prove useful tools in the therapy itself, but they allow me entrance into the unconscious of the person, and their inner truth. (As I write this, I am entranced by the word "en-trance" and its seductive suggestion that the dream draws us both in to a trance state, which feels just about right.)

Dream interpretation should arise from the dreamer, and not be imposed by dictionaries of dream



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

interpretation, nor from the therapist. The image of a snake may have nothing to do with sexuality, even though a dictionary might say otherwise.

It might suggest, or not, the healing powers of injury and suffering, as the symbol of the entwined snakes on the staff, the caduceus (the staff of Hermes), or anything else more relevant for the dreamer.

"The dream," as Jung puts it, "shows the inner truth and reality of the patient as it really is: not as I conjecture it to be, and not as he would like it to be, but as it is." (1934)

I reveal myself when I write of diving down as entering the unconscious, but that interpretation would mean nothing to someone who does not dive or who has no associations in this way.

My way of thinking is not universal, and likewise for you.

Because I both dive and interpret dreams and because I've made the association myself, diving down is rich and redolent with meaning for me. Because I operate this way, I'm attracted to certain therapeutic ideas over other ones that speak to me.

I am attracted to psychodynamic psychotherapy, and always have been. My first training was in Jungian psychology in the 1970s. C. G. Jung's ideas resonated with me and so I engage with him, and others similarly inclined, and continue to think and learn and mull and dive.

I have colleagues who do not work with dreams at all and see no point in them, seeing the dream as silly and absurd. To those I say, why would we dream, if not to have this as a resource for possible discovery? We all dream and there are inklings of meaning to be had in exploring them.

But, whatever each of us seeks, so that should be the point of any counselling.

I seek the healing of the whole person, and so diving is what I do.

Oxytocin will help you love your birth

Doula Wisdom

by Kirrah Stewart

You may have heard of oxytocin by its more common name 'the love hormone'. If you're about to have a baby, it's essential to have an understanding of this incredible hormone.

Oxytocin is responsible for the loving feeling we get when cuddled. It is involved with love-making, childbirth, breastfeeding and bonding. In childbirth, oxytocin helps the uterus to contract to help dilate the cervix. It also helps with the safe birth of the placenta.

It is a fundamental part of giving birth. So much so, that doctors have created a synthetic version called syntocinon or pitocin. If a woman isn't producing enough natural oxytocin, it may be given in labour to either initiate things (induction) or to get things moving along quicker (augmentation).

Synthetic oxytocin is commonly given in the third stage of labour to help with the delivery of the placenta. Although, just to be clear, it is not essential to have. If a woman feels safe and the birth has progressed normally, she will release her own natural oxytocin which will assist the safe delivery of the placenta.

In postpartum, oxytocin helps with bonding with the baby and the milk 'let-down' reflex in breastfeeding. It helps mothers have more emotional sensitivity, be able to read non-verbal cues better and it helps with multi-tasking.

Oxytocin also plays a role in helping us connect with others. A great asset to have, particularly as you'll need to ask for help more in the first six weeks after birth.

During labour, here are some ways to help boost oxytocin levels:

- Creating a private, safe, warm and dimly lit space;
- Massage and loving touch;



- Nipple stimulation; and
 - Loving words.
- In Postpartum, here are some ideas to help boost oxytocin levels:
- Massage;
 - Comfort food;
 - Rest;
 - Support from others; and
 - Self-nurturing activities like having a bath or reading a book.

It's good to be aware that some things may inhibit the release of oxytocin. Try to minimise the following: stress, fear/anxiety, too much rational thinking and being hungry or cold.

I want to share with you a story about a woman I supported many years ago. The mother was in the midst of labour and in a really good rhythm. It was obvious she was progressing well and contractions were coming every few minutes. The environment was dimly lit and she was vocalising a little to help cope with the strong sensations.

An unknown obstetrician walked in to the bathroom to observe her progress. All of a sudden her labour slowed down to the point where contractions stopped coming. This was one of the first times I saw how sensitive oxytocin is.

The mere presence of a stranger observing sent a little wave of adrenalin into the mother's blood stream and her

body felt it was no longer a safe place to birth. So, labour stopped.

It was incredible to watch. I was surprised what a difference it made. Privacy and the feeling of safety are paramount when it comes to giving birth.

Even though logically, the mother probably knew she was still safe. Her body felt otherwise.

This is a great example of why not disturbing the birthing woman is essential. She needs to feel safe in order for birth to flow.

So, I encourage you to take these things into consideration when creating your birth space. Set up a place that feels safe and secure, has warmth and minimal lighting. Make sure the people supporting you are aware of how to increase oxytocin naturally.

And get a plan in place for after you have your baby so you can continue to enjoy the benefits of feeling loved and nurtured.

If you want to feel more confident about birth and postpartum, please get in contact to receive your natural birth checklist which will help you feel more prepared. Visit: www.doulawisdom.com/natural-birth-checklist or contact Kirrah on 0429-308-851, or email: kirrah@doulawisdom.com

Year of the monastary pig bodes good fortune

The Year of the Pig begins February 5th, more specifically this is the year of the yin earth pig or monastary pig.

People born this year, or between 8 Jan 1959 and 27 January 1960 are monastary pigs. They are said to be very fortunate, being born in the right time and place. They are likely to have fortunate lives, in the same way that a pig living in a monastery will be be cared for and not slaughtered as most pigs are.

The fortunes of the coming year look to be mixed. On an individual level it depends on your individual zodiac sign.

More generally this is said to be a good year for setting the scene for international relations, so that better times will appear on the horizon. Although the international financial situation may not be so good.

Generally, there is likely to be some sorting of the wheat from the chaff. Friends or work acquaintances may be lost, but long-term this is



by Brigid Beckett

likely to be a good thing, as the deck is cleared for necessary change.

The time of year associated with this part of the zodiac is late autumn/early winter. It is a time between death and rebirth, with the theme of preparing for change.

The associated organ is the triple burner, also known as san jiao or the triple heater. It is not an organ as such, but is more elusive. It is divided into the upper, middle and lower

burner. It has the important role of connecting the essence that we are born with, with the post heaven qi that is produced from food and breathing, and allowing this energy to be used by different organs or circulate in connecting channels.

Another function is to direct energy in the appropriate direction, e.g. the spleen energy rises while stomach energy descends. The liver also has this function, however the triple burner also moves energy throughout the whole body rather than just the meridians, involving joints,

body cavities and muscles, the term associated with this movement is free passage.

The third role is to control water passages. One description is the official in charge of irrigation, allowing the free flow of water whether in sweat, blood or urine. In this role it also transforms, removing the clear from the turbid, removing dirt and debris. This Way of Water is an appropriate way to look at the triple burner, in some ways not physical but present in the world, and essential. It is connected to the source – original essence – and therefore has implied connection to the feminine principle being a supporter or networker, which may be appropriate for the preparatory work occurring this year.

The last year of the monastary pig was 1959. International events occurring that year included:

In Cuba, Che Guevara leads rebel troops to Havana. Fidel Castro's government is formed and recognised by the US. The Tibetan uprising occurs and the Dalai Lama escapes to Tibet to establish a government in exile. A referendum in Switzerland votes down female

suffrage, Cyprus becomes independent from the UK. Crown Prince Akito of Japan marries a commoner. Liu Shaoqi becomes Chairman of the People Republic of China, replacing Mao Zedong. Monkeys are sent into space and make it back alive. In Rome the second Vatican Council is announced. Nixon and Krushchev engage in a "kitchen debate" and Krushchev visits the US. The first major unit action of the Vietnam war occurs. Hawaii becomes the fiftieth state of the US. The Antarctic Treaty protects Antarctica from military activity. The Princess of Tasmania makes her maiden voyage across Bass Strait. The Henney Kilowatt is the first mass produced car in three decades, the Boeing 707 goes into service, the first pantyhose are produced as is the first Barbie doll, and the xerox 919 is the first paper copier available to the public.

Make what you want to of that lot.

I wish everyone a very happy Year of the Pig.

Brigid Beckett is a fully registered practitioner working at Lismore Community Acupuncture. Phone 0431-702-560.

The poo valve, creator of good and evil

Thanks to the ad on commercial tele about a new product called 'V.I.Poo', which assures the concert pianist, ballet dancer and film star that their stinky secret is safe from prying noses forevermore, I can now write about poo without fear of being incarcerated for my filthy mouth.

The task of the poo valve, or illeocecal valve as it is named by them what knows, is to open to allow the waste from the small intestine to be deposited into the large intestine and then close again.

Unfortunately, similar to the rest of the physical body, the poo valve is not infallible and may get stuck open or stuck closed. This can happen because of accident or injury, shock, chronic stress, medication, the inhaling of chemicals, parasites, hypoglycaemia, a disobedient iliopsoas muscle or misaligned vertebrae in the lower spine.

So if your back is out, it may well have taken the poo

valve along for company, and the results can be diabolical. Some recognised symptoms of a dysfunctional illeocecal valve are:

- Shoulder pain;
- Sudden lower back pain;
- Pain around the heart;
- Dizziness;
- Tinnitus;
- Bowel disturbances;
- Headache;
- Bursitis;
- Nausea;
- Allergies;
- Bad breath;
- Body Odour;
- Excess flatulence;
- Dark circles under eyes;
- Lethargy; and
- Colic in babies.

I remember well a 19-year old girl who for four years had been vomiting after eating. She had seen doctors, specialists and a psychiatrist, because they thought it might be bulimia (insatiable overeating). Nothing was found. It turned out to be a malfunctioning illeocecal valve, which is relatively easy to sort, if one knows how.



by Tonia Haynes
Bowen therapist, masseuse, pranic healer

She had two treatments with me and the vomiting symptoms disappeared.

If the psoas muscle is dysfunctional (that's the muscle that lifts our leg), one will definitely be feeling sore in the back, because the psoas begins at the middle spine, runs diagonally through the stomach muscles and attaches to the top of the thigh. It also rides over the top of the illeocecal valve, so if the psoas is not repositioned back to normal function, it is likely that the

poo valve will continue to give problems.

Actually the whole planet is a bit pooey at the moment, so I've decided this year to shallow out and have fun. Instead of concentrating on the bad things that are happening, (albeit they make for interesting dinner conversation and show others how intelligent and informed we are) I'm going to concentrate on the good things. And there are plenty of those still left in this beautiful country of Northern NSW.

If you are suffering from back, neck, shoulder, limb pain or any of the above listed symptoms, give me a call and make an appointment. I use a mix of massage, kinesiology, Bowen therapy and spinal realignment to rectify the problem. I also have a few techniques that will help you feel better emotionally, and I am an excellent listener.

Love, light and giggles.

Make an appointment by phoning 0439-794-420.

NATURAL LAW

by Helene Collard

For many, January has felt like an extension of the challenges that arose in 2018, rather than a fresh start.

In truth, it has been more like a review to highlight what still needs to clear.

February is where we can feel a greater alignment. Perhaps it's the source of tension that falls away, leaving an incredible sense of harmony – bring it on! The second and third weeks of February are amplified energy portals, so tune in and go with the flow. Important news, events, meetings, ideas, imprints, realisations and moments will occur.

Embrace the expansive and aligning energies of February and allow them to nourish and propel you out of whatever challenges you've been experiencing.

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Contact Helene on 0405-656-797 or email: yemayacentre@gmail.com

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Helene has a Bachelor of Trauma & Healing (Law & Justice), is a Reiki Master and the founder of the Yemaya Centre for Reiki & Wellbeing in Lismore. Helene practices and teaches Reiki in Lismore. Helene is also employed as a facilitator with We Al-li, delivering their Culturally Informed Trauma Integrated Healing Approach (CITIHA) around Australia. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: www.yemayacentre.com.au or phone 0405-656-797.



by Therese Hedwards

If you feel inclined to give yoga a try, I invite you to come along to Saturday morning yoga, 9.30 to 11am at Birth and Beyond, Nimbin.

I was thinking about yoga the other day (most days really) and realised that yoga is like a romantic relationship. We have a first

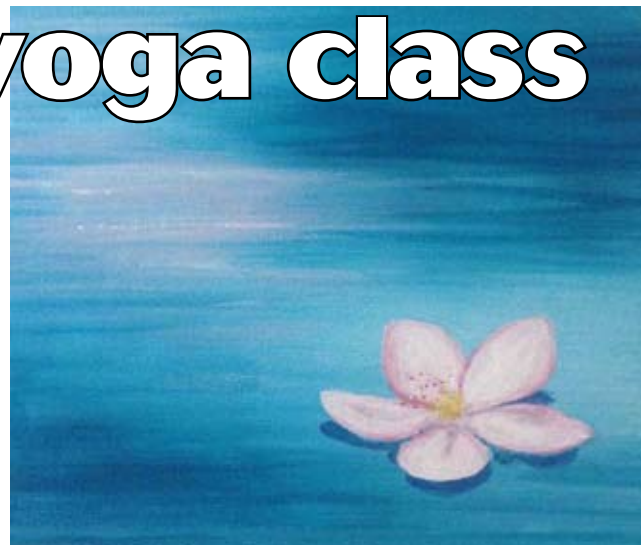
New yoga class

date, and sometimes that's enough; yoga is not for us, and we move on.

Other times we fall in love and spend many years, even a lifetime together. Then there's a myriad of different relationships in between as we flow in and out of love (or like) with our practice.

My own relationship with yoga began with Sam Trueman at Birth and Beyond back in 2009, so it's at the "fall in love" end of the spectrum.

I completed my teacher training two years ago and I continue to practise with and learn from my current teacher, Cam Storey. I also teach on Monday afternoons at Cam's studio, The



Dharma Centre on Lillifield Community.

Saturday morning classes are a gentle flow-based practise designed to ease us into the weekend by calming and grounding the nervous system whilst moving,

strengthening and stretching the body.

It's a class that caters for the beginner through to the more experienced yogis, so everyone is welcome to come along. Hope to see you on the mat soon.