

# Food Matters

by Neil Amor

All the volunteers at Nimbin Organic Food Co-op appreciate the community support as we endeavour to continue providing fresh organic food.

We are currently operating with reduced hours and volunteer staff, but are dealing with the same weekly turnover. As a result, the hours of trade will continue to evolve as we address changing needs and restrictions. We have customer number restrictions in place, as well as a hygiene station at the door.

We are also supplying our bulk foods in pre-packaging to reduce handling, which has been quite popular.

In an effort to make the most of the situation, over the coming months we will feature recipes that make the most of our resources and are tasty and fun to make.

This month we have two survival recipes that utilise that most humble vegetable, the choko.

But first some facts. A persistent urban legend is that McDonald's apple pies were made of chokos, not apples, to the point that they were compelled to deny it. The rumour probably grew out of the time after World War II, when certain foods were scarce.

Growing up in the sixties in inner Sydney, I was surrounded by the vines in every yard. They were simply steamed and covered in butter, salt and pepper.

Known elsewhere in the world as chayote, they are part of the gourd family and originated in the Americas, and both fruit and seed are rich in amino acids and vitamin C.

One of the more bizarre facts about chokos is due to its purported cell-regenerative properties, it is believed as a contemporary legend that this fruit caused the mummification of people from the Colombian town of San Bernardo who extensively consumed it. The very well preserved skin and flesh can be seen in the mummies today (*this is not a medical recommendation*).



Satisfied co-op member, Helen.

Fresh local chokos will be available at the Nimbin Organic Food Co-op this month.

### Choko Fritters

Choko / parmesan cheese / 1 egg / flour / pinch of bi carb / paprika / salt/ spring onion.

Grate choko, seed included, with mandolin. Salt and let sit for ten minutes. Squeeze out all moisture using tea towel. Add egg, flour, bi carb, paprika, cheese, onion, salt and pepper. Combine. Fry off in pan with oil. Endless alternative possibilities with this recipe.

### Choko pickle

#### Ingredients

800g choko, mandolined or finely sliced  
1 small (100g) onion, mandolined or finely sliced  
1 tablespoon unrefined salt  
1 tablespoon mustard seeds  
160ml white wine vinegar  
½ cup unrefined sugar, eg rapadura (will make pickle darker)  
1¼ teaspoons dried turmeric

#### Method

Place choko, onion and salt in a mixing bowl and combine thoroughly. Place in the fridge for at least six hours or overnight. Rinse choko and onion under

cool water and drain well.

Place drained choko, onion, and mustard seeds in a mixing bowl and combine thoroughly. Stuff gently into a one litre jar.

Place vinegar, sugar and turmeric in a pot and heat gently while stirring until all sugar dissolves. Add to jar, filling to one cm below lip.

Screw on the lid so it is firmly in position without over-tightening (it's not how tight you screw on the lid, but the vacuum created as the jar cools, that forms the seal), and place jar in the deepest pot you have. Fill the pot to within 5cm of the top of the jar, cover and gently heat to 72-80°C. Maintain in this heat range for 40 minutes to pasteurise and seal the jars.

After 40 minutes carefully check that the lid has remained firmly in position and adjust if necessary. You can leave the jar to cool in the water bath, or carefully remove and leave to cool on the bench. Once cooled, the lid should have sucked down. If it hasn't, repeat the water bath process with a new lid.

Will keep for at least a year on the shelf. Open and enjoy when you are ready, and once open store in the fridge. Best eaten from three months onwards. Until next month, eat well.



## Blue Knob Cafe takeaway thrives

by Christine and Heather

In this time of abeyance, it's amazing how much we're all still doing.

Our homes and gardens have become the go-to outlet for a lot of our energy, and hopefully some of us are being creative and we will see a plethora of art to fill all our community gallery spaces again soon.

Blue Knob Cafe has continued to thrive in such a different format that takeaway has become the 'new normal' for Paul Scott (pictured) and Julie Naturel.

Paul's pies are becoming

12pm-3pm with a menu according to availability of ingredients.

Phone orders will be taken from 10am on those days, please call 6689-7449.

The Gallery and Ceramic Studio will remain closed until further notice.

Blue Knob Community Market is continuing on Saturdays from 8.30am to 12pm, so come along and see what's on offer.

This recent artwork by Linnie Lambrechtsen says it all... we wish you all the best over this time, to continue to look after each other and to cherish what we have.



## Earth shudders, opens and takes in again 'The Seeds of Change'

by Thom Culpepper

Many of you will have noticed the dearth of seed material available at the various retailers. The hoarders have struck again.

The big box-mob had been stripped, as had some smaller specialist sources, such as the local oriental ingredient sources. All stripped! As have most of the supplies of potting and propagation mediums.

On fact-checking, I find the seed world is in a tither. Many of the regulars are trying to go on line; others have thrown in the towel. Having been shunted badly and monstereed by Bunnings and Co, who is left?

Now that people have squillions of seeds, it occurred to me that I may save a plethora of waste by helping with a few pointers on getting something out of the seeding effort. Seedlings would be generally, the better way for the 'new' gardeners. The seeds are another matter.

The seed sources of the nurserymen are generally 'certified' as to their germination reliability. Their suppliers are 'true' seed-men. Retail seeds are a consumer commodity, that are not required to perform under 'tight' propagation and harvest times. Try taking back your 'failed' seeds to Bunnings! Seed-men have to guarantee their material.

The counter-jumper citizens, serving in



product walkways, know as much about seed propagation as they know about photosynthesis or oxygen evolution, which is very little or nothing.

"Overcoming seed coats (scarification)", WTF is that? "Etiolation (lanky-stem)", WTF is that? "Damping-Off", Daylight-night-length-light, measured in wavelengths, WTF is that? Mycology and plant nutrition,

Ph, Acid<>Alkali, WTF number?

### Seed germination mediums

The John Innes Centre, England developed in the 1930s what has become accepted as the three basic soil mixtures for propagation of seed and potting on.

**No 1:** Seed mixture: By part, 2 of balanced loam, 1 of peat moss or 'wetted' Coir-Peat and 1 of clean river sand. To each cubic metre add 1.5 kilos of ground limestone, 4 kilo of organic pelletised fertiliser.

**No 2:** Potting Compost: 7 of balanced loam, 3 of peat moss or 'wetted' Coir-Peat and 2 of clean river sand. To each cubic metre add 4 kilos of organic palletised fertiliser and 1.5 kilos of ground limestone.

**No 3:** Growing Compost: Same as No 2, but 50% more ground limestone and 50% more palletised fertiliser. To all may be added water retention crystals at maker's recommended %.

*Tip:* Borrow or obtain a small cement mixer and use it, though shovelling and turning on a clean surface will do. Let it age for a week or so. This mix will continue to compost for six months or so; keep the mix lightly damp and turn over regularly.

Use foam or coated used coffee cups for seed work, or use peat or fibre blocks. Hoard used foam vegetable boxes for growing out, they vary in depth and it's easier to move the

plant into a more favourable environment and to manage pests effectively.

Protect the foam containers from the chooks, they seem to love the stuff. Ducks are great, they concentrate on the pests! The styrofoam is not dangerous, just beware of breathing the stuff in. By the way, use a mask and gloves when working with ANY composts.

If you have bought loads of seed, protect them. Do not let them be exposed to light, or elevated temperatures; in fact, depending on species, moisture content is critical in seed storage. Svalbard, in northern Norway is where one of the world seed vaults is located deep under perma-frost in an exhausted coal mine.

Check them, they are wizards at conserving the genetics of plants, as is the Vavilov Institute, Moscow, a story in itself, as was Aleppo in Syria before the maniacs of the beltway, Washington, bombed it into history.

This subject will be one of the main discussions for the New world, and the next issue of the NGT. Food is in mortal danger! Big-Ag has fucked it all.

"To home, to soil, to plant, to live, to dream." Keep well.

Contact: [thewholeearthveg@gardener.com](mailto:thewholeearthveg@gardener.com) for 'Quell' hand-scrub and 'Veg-Aid' organic yeast-remnant fertiliser.



# Drought hasn't stopped the weeds

**Weed Words**  
by Triny Roe

The weeds are still flourishing, despite a fairly dry autumn. The drought hasn't stopped groundsel bush, *Baccharis halimifolia*, from flowering. This hardy shrub, familiar to many, continues to spread in the Nimbin valley and beyond. Spot it now and address infestations of this prolific plant before they get worse.

A mature specimen can produce up to 1.5 million light, fluffy seeds at a time. Some of them might blow only a few, or up to 40, kilometres away, but about half of them land in the vicinity of the mother bush. So that's only 750,000 seeds with a potential to germinate in your paddock. It won't be long before a thick grove develops.

The wedge-shaped leaves with toothy margins are easily recognised. Knee-high seedlings will usually hand weed OK, especially if the soil is damp after a bit of rain. Sometimes you may need to use a tool to tease them out. As with many woody weeds, the gnarly tap root can reshoot from a broken bit, so make sure all bits are removed.

Another well-known pest plant, Easter cassia, *Senna pendula*, put on a great golden display this year. This prolific spreading shrub comes from the family *Caesalpiniaceae*. Even though it is a legume, contrary to popular belief, cassia does not nodulate and does not fix nitrogen. It colonises road sides, fence lines, creek banks and intrudes into orchards and rainforest.

Plant native rainforest cassia, *Senna acclinis*, instead. It looks similar to Easter cassia but is smaller, less robust and has flat pods. Endangered in the wild in NSW, rainforest cassia is a valuable nectar source for native bees and important for fairy wrens



who use yellow petals in their courting.

Keep your eyes out for new weeds. They can pop up anywhere, especially along creek banks. Flooding in the last few years has enabled opportunistic species to spread to new areas where they can quickly become a problem. Check along the creek banks and anywhere floodwaters reached.

Look for incursions of pink knotweed, *Persicaria capitata*, aka *Polygonum capitatum*, a low-growing ground cover. Not as well known as some other weeds, this one is also commonly called pinkhead, smartweed, and even Japanese knotweed, notwithstanding it is a native of China.

It is used there in traditional herbal medicine for urological conditions. (NB: this is a weed column – consult a health practitioner for medical advice.)

Considered an environmental weed, Pink knotweed has naturalised in parts of NSW and Qld. It is also recorded as being a pest plant in New Zealand, Ireland, England, California and several other US states.

Pink knotweed is easily

recognised by the distinctive dark V-shaped band on the deep green ovate leaves. These can turn red under stress.

This pretty, perennial creeper grows fast and spreads quickly. The stem is woody at the base. It is usually multi-stemmed and puts down roots at any of the nodes along the stems.

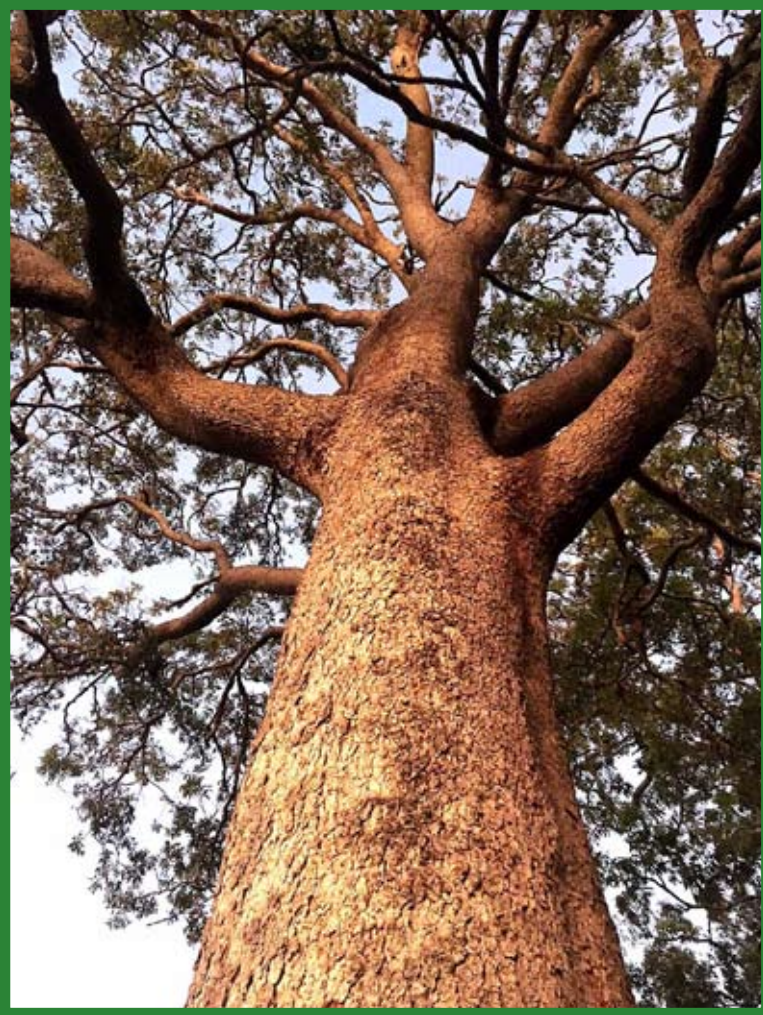
Forming thick mats up to 15cm high, pink knotweed is tough, can grow in a range of soils and outcompetes native species.

Take care with common names for plants. Another plant from the same family, *Polygonaceae*, is also known as Japanese knotweed and considered extremely invasive. However this one, *Reynoutria japonica*, grows 3-4 metres high so not readily confused in the field.

Managing land is an ongoing responsibility, as new weeds will always arrive by wind, water, vehicles, on clothing and via animals – wild and domesticated.

We all have a bio-security obligation to ensure pest plants are appropriately managed. Be a good neighbour and don't let weeds spread.

Happy weeding.



## Plant of the month

### Red bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera*

Selected and photographed by  
Richard Burer, *Bush regenerator*

The last of the Autumn light casts its positivity in the lithium hour on this iconic and endemic tree.

Red bloodwood is common in and around the valleys of Nimbin and due to its very hard timber and its habit, many beautiful trees still live among us offering humans and native wildlife alike the many attributes of this healing tree.

Highly regarded by the first

Australians, bloodwood exudes a blood red resin used for treating many ailments. The sap is also a favoured food for gliders.

Possums and birds relish the flowers in late summer and now in May the gum nuts are offering a great feast to cockatoos.

Easy to grow, pick the gum nuts and place in a paper bag, the nut will open and release the seeds. Sow and pot up in spring.

Remember it's a big tree, so the edge of the paddock or in your conservation area is recommended.



# There's a lot of me in this tree

by Greg Bork

Now I'm arriving at the first tree, which is a red cedar. It's a tall one with a fairly straight trunk, which means it's possible that it grew up toward the light within rainforest, but now it's out on its own in the lantana.

This tree feels like joy when I see it, it has so much vibrancy and life. It's the type of tree that first brought Eu-ropean people to this area. They would think how juicy it looks, with all that beautiful wood in it.

I want to give this tree learning about difficult truths, trying to understand why all the trees nearby are also on their own and slowly being killed by weeds, where a hundred years ago there was probably beautiful rainforest all around and an intact canopy and no weeds at all...

This tree is binna burra, or white beech; its got a real presence. It's my connection to the Antarctic beech Mother Trees up in the place called Binna Burra, that are thousands of years old and loomed out of the mist when I came across them on a yatra pilgrimage

into the rainforest in the clouds. The feeling that I'm giving this tree is ancestral ...

Here's a little brown kurrajong that came up after I cleared lantana. This is a baby tree, it's a pioneer tree with a lovely white flower. I give this tree a reciprocity story; I'm healing Country and Country's healing me. This tree is where this particular area is going because it's a baby tree. It's going to out-compete the lantana and bring back the rainforest...

When I looked up and saw this tree, here, it had a sense of awe and mystery to it, because it's clearly older than all the other brushbox around, and it's quite mossy down the bottom. It's been struck by lightning at some stage, so it's snapped off in the middle and now has these new gnarly branches that come out and look different from all the other trees.

It has a very magical feel to it, and when I saw it I had this sense of wonder and not understanding how I could possibly theoretically have some kind of relationship of care with this tree when I moved to Bundjalung Country five years

ago.

This kind of tree was very contentious at the Terania Creek blockade. Loggers argued it is not a rainforest tree and so should be cut down, even if it's thousands of years old. It feels like a boundary line; Terania was the moment things turned around, and it's a new way of thinking and feeling.

There's a lot of me in this tree, a lot of searching for who I am and who those people were who came here in the seventies who wanted to be something other than what the world was becoming, wanted to understand their broken relationship with nature ...

Now I'm back out onto the grass on the rainforest margin, and this is where the bundoon (pademelon) come out at night-time; there are so many little poops all over the place. When I'm sleeping I can hear the bundoon grunting and having arguments with each other.

*Thanks to NGT for running my series of walking interviews with local people in the rainforest they look after. You can find these interviews at: [reciprocalrestoration.org](http://reciprocalrestoration.org)*





**Legal writes**  
by John Adams

Monday morning, list day at the Local Court; four unrepresented unfortunates sit as far as possible from each other out the front. In the courtroom there's just the prosecutor at his end of the bar table, me at mine, his Honour on the bench with the monitor and the court officer below him, two blurry

solicitors' faces and a couple of prisoners on the screen on the wall. The legal system adjusts. The Chief Magistrate pronounces: all defended hearings where the defendant is not in custody and which have been allocated a hearing date that falls between 4th May and 31st July 2020 are to be vacated. Such matters are to be listed for mention on a date in September 2020. Earlier matters have already been

# Plague and the legal system

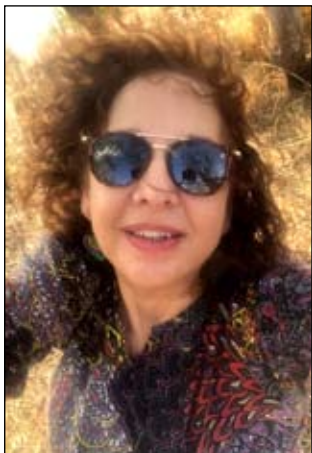
adjourned. Clients are no longer required to appear in person. Lawyers are instructed to email the court with pleas and mentions. The therapy dog's on holiday. I miss her. A lawyer on the screen says her client needs bail as he's scared of being inside when tiny life-forms sneakily hitch a ride in the respiratory system of a new inmate, or an officer coming on shift. The disembodied voice of a DPP solicitor appears by telephone to argue that NSW prisons are safer than the world outside. Legal Aid acquires expert forensic reports and emails them to lawyers. I can no longer chat with my friends in the Family Courts registry: filings are all electronic. And the system grinds on. A fight over a 12-year-old child, that started when he was 7, continues. We already have grounds for a contravention application. Now their lawyer sends my client a letter saying the ordered time with his child is not going to happen, because of the virus.

But the Chief Justice on the radio says that court orders should be complied with, even if it means crossing borders. All you have to do is carry them (original or photo on phone) to show police. And if, for instance, the changeover place has been closed, parties are advised to be "calm, sensible and reasonable" and put their own interests aside. Orders usually include "as agreed between the parties and if not agreed then..." Agreement can be by email or text. In my client's case, the other party, as expected, refuses to agree. I amend the contravention application. Throughout the world, crime rates drop, except for domestic violence, which, of course, rises, along with alcohol sales. New crimes are invented, like being out and about for no good reason, or, more serious, sneezing with intent. Governments take the opportunity to do deals with lobbyists, destroy more forest, and make life harder for critics.

The planetary tipping point drama, the ultimate mystery thriller – in my opinion: which of them will triumph? – fades from view behind this latest episode in the cosmic tragi-comedy. It's been a good one so far, the virus; full of mystery, pace and dramatic tension. Looks like the transformation of life as we knew it. Significance begins to leak from the world of things. The hierarchy of needs itself is re-written. Now it's water, food, shelter, the web (and its servant, electricity), and only then the company of other humans. And protection from other humans. **Correction:** In an earlier article, I wrote that narcissists comprise 1% of the population. The anecdotal in this case trumps statistics. Narcissists don't generally consult psychiatrists to be diagnosed. Why would they? There's nothing wrong with them. Their prevalence therefore remains mysterious. Yet another good reason to stay at home.

## Healing battle scars

Ushering in one of my indigenous clients into an office, I was struck by the deep indent in her face. As she sat near me, hands wringing, one could clearly mark the broken cheekbone. The dent went almost to her jawline and I could have fit my knuckles into that hole. I noticed the all-too-familiar ragged scar on her furrowed brow that usually resulted from a sharp object injury.



by Aniko Papp

Oh so gently, I had to question her so I could get enough information to apply for a court order to protect her from her partner. Trying to explain in words how she felt to have her face caved in by a steel bar by the man she loved. On another client, I noticed a deep scar in the upper side of her arm, where he sliced her contraceptive implant out of her skin because he was jealous. In my own head, I tried to make sense about how not having contraception would keep one's wife faithful.

She murmured of years of sitting on the veranda of her house each day, whilst her husband worked. Allowed off only if he was with her. She managed to sneak out to meet us and was shaking with tension, worried he'd find out she was gone before she had a chance to sign papers.

In a remote community, women were playing cards beneath a large tree and an older aunt sidled up to me. She asked for help for her niece trying to leave her violent partner but he refused to let her out of his sight. I noticed a young man, with jeans and a rock t-shirt looking like her was just out

of school, lurking around the fence. A woman who looked 16, surreptitiously glanced up at him from time to time, whilst she ostensibly played cards. The women waved him off. Whilst he stalked off, we made plans for her route back to the safe house. I realised that the card-playing game was a ruse by the women to help their fellow sisters. This same innocuous man, later that night, shone bright car lights through the chain wire fence of the safe house, scaring the women and children inside, screaming for her to get out. He drove off before the police managed to arrive. A woman with a melted face from where he had thrown boiling water over her; women with heads down, whispering to me how he woke her up at night and made her get him tea. Why would he do that? I soon found out that that was a euphemism for unwanted sex. One woman asked if being bitten and having her arms pinned down during sex, was domestic violence. I asked her if that was what she liked? No. She loathed it. I remarked as gently as I could,

it's not just domestic violence – it's rape. The scars on the outside often were deeper within these women's minds and hearts. Grief that someone who they loved, who were fathers to their children, would do such things to them. Terror and pain buried deep within their psyche. Anxiety, jumpy at noises, inability to remember dates, shutting out terrible memories, living from moment to moment never knowing what will trigger a beating, leave their marks. Sometimes the women are so affected, that they act irrationally or lash out at their assailants and then they are labelled mad and bad. Women are being told that they provoked him. That he was just drunk. Or stoned. Or because you had the temerity to seek love or comfort elsewhere or wanted to leave. Black, white or brindle, these scarred women come from everywhere. One white woman I acted for was a nurse, kicked by her own sons in her belly until she miscarried whilst their long-abusive father watched. Using makeup to hide bruises or wearing long sleeves to cover black finger marks as they were ashamed.

The shame isn't yours, I say. The fault isn't yours, I reassure them. I refer them to counselling. I get their protection orders. I see many who have become stronger and escape these relationships. Some weep as they ask me, am I mad? Am I really an awful mother? One client described feeling like dog shit beneath his shoes. These wounds are harder to heal.

## An animal's purpose

by Donna Connolly

This month's article has an element of homework to it, as we seem to have a little more time on our hands these days. Have you ever wondered why an animal has come into your life? Or wondered why a particular animal spirit keeps appearing in your life? There is always a reason. Sometimes it's just a simple message and other times it's deep soul contract, life changing stuff! Quite often animals choose you, they are in your life to assist you in evolving in some way. Sometimes we get an animal thinking that we will be changing their life, only to realize that their presence has completely transformed ours! And usually for the better.

These lessons can show up in a myriad of ways. Your beginning story: how and when you met the animal. Did you rescue your animal or did they just show up one day? Where else is this prevalent in your life? For example, every animal you have ever had is a rescue. All of a sudden you see that you have a habit of rescuing people too. Are you too enmeshed in others' lives? What's the benefit for you? The stories, being the hero? Mirroring: the animal will mirror the behaviours of the human or mimic the situation. It can be profound when you recognise this. A good example of this is when the pet is particularly stubborn and the human has to deal with that trait. Realising how it feels to be on the receiving end of stubbornness and how it is creating obstacles in their life. Modelling: where the animal has the opposite energy to the human. Eg, a



hyperactive dog with a chilled human. With the animal needing regular exercise, the guardian may incidentally become healthier and happier while giving the dog their daily walk. Expectations: you think the relationship will be one way and it turns out the exact opposite. This is often the case if the human gets another dog after their original one passes away. However, all animals have their own unique personalities, and you can rest assured the next one is here to teach you a whole new set of lessons. Sickness and disease: it is astounding the number of animals I meet with the same illness as their guardians. From cancer to asthma, I've seen it all. Now you get the general idea, here is the homework aspect:

- Choose an animal to work with (they can be living or passed over) who has had a huge impact in your life
- Using the above list, decide how this animal is working with you
- When you think of this animal what emotions do they evoke?
- How do you feel around this animal?

- How do you feel when you are not around this animal?
- Do your feelings ever change, eg pure love, frustration, anger?

It is important to answer these questions honestly as you can, you may be amazed at some of these first insights. It's okay if some of the answers are positive and negative; it's the challenges that help us grow the most. Now that you have figured out how the animal is getting your attention here is your set-up statement template:

- Name of the animal:
- Action or behaviour:
- To help me learn:
- By making me feel:
- Improving what area of my life:

Obviously you can use this method over and over again; I encourage you to do so. Understanding the purpose of an animal in your life can be life-changing. There is always opportunity for growth, and animals tend to give us the master class. Sometimes the lesson is as simple as letting go. Dora's purpose in my life has been multi-layered. Mostly it was to remind me of my masterplan and to keep me on track; our current learning is life balance and the importance of taking time out.

Just a reminder we are still open for business in these times. In fact, we have always had distance services available. Reiki treatments for humans and animals and readings for animals or humans living or passed over using Zoom or phone calls, prices start at \$60. Look forward to connecting.

Donna is a professional animal communicator, psychic medium and reiki master  
www.rivergem.com.au  
Text to 0490-156-038



# Interacting with horses through the heart

by Suzy Maloney

Wow what can I say, a lot has happened since last month, the entire world has changed, crazy days indeed.

I sincerely hope that you are healthy and well and staying safe. We're all experiencing a totally new reality and it can be very challenging. Now that we all have lots more time at home it's great for our hearts and souls and mental health to spend time with our horses. So head on out to the paddock and let your horses do their magic!

More and more I find that coming from the heart when interacting with horses creates a deeper understanding and connection between human and horse. Many times, when I'm teaching, I find students wanting to analyse and understand every single thing the horse does. This is totally understandable, as our culture values intellectual ability above all else. Our schooling systems train the brain. But when working with horses this can create a disconnect between the human and horse.

As the human is analysing what the horse has done and thinking, thinking, to work out what it means and why the horse did it, they are not feeling. They are missing crucial messages from the horse because they are so much in the head. I have seen this hold back many potentially awesome horse people, as it can be a hard thing to let go of.

I'd like to propose that we actually have three 'brains'. One in the head, one in the heart and one in the stomach. The head brain is the CPU. It loves to nut out minute details and find facts and reasons for everything. This is very handy when first learning something new but can be a hindrance later on.

The stomach is where we just 'have a gut feeling about something' and is the seat of intuition. Intuition is fantastic



if we listen to it, and the more we listen the stronger it gets. The heart is the feeling centre, the place of love and compassion. This is where we 'just feel it's the right thing to do' without having to know why.

All three 'brains' are necessary to have a complete palate of knowing. When one dominates, and in our culture it's usually the head brain, our understanding of things is diminished.

When we are with our horses and are coming from the heart, we put the horse first. We feel compassion for them and understand they are sentient beings with their own thoughts and feelings. When we are doing something with our horses we are constantly wondering, how is this for you? We allow our hearts to open and feel as the horse is feeling.

If we can stop analysing what the horse is doing and why, we have the opportunity to feel what the horse is doing. This gives us information that we can then base our actions on. Our actions will then be more likely to be a positive event for the horse.

Which brings us to intuition. If we allow ourselves to open and feel the horse with our hearts, we can then go a step further and listen to our intuition. We allow ourselves to 'know' what to

do next. This type of 'knowing' is very different to the intellectual type. At first it can be difficult to trust it, but if you do follow your intuition and actually do that thing that popped into your head, you'll be amazed at the results. If intuition is used regularly, it starts to flow. Then you won't have to worry about what to do in different situations, you will just know.

The effect on your relationship with your horse when you come from your heart and listen to your intuition is incredible. Horses that formerly were afraid of humans can find their trust again. Horses that have retreated inside come out and start communicating. To be felt and heard is the best thing we can ever do for another being, of any species.

For some horses, this will be the first time they're ever had this type of relationship with a human. And for us humans it's awesome to be able to turn off that ranting monkey in our heads for a while. Enjoy having a deep and meaningful connection with your horses using all three of your brains.

Phone 0401-249-263

happyhorsesbitless@gmail.com

www.happyhorsesbitless.com

Facebook: Happy Horses Bitless Bridles

## Recognising pain in horses

by Les Rees

Horses are clever at hiding pain, and can often endure it for long periods, trying to adapt and deal with any inadequacies within their bodies by adjusting how they move in order to avoid it.

A plausible explanation for this is that it stems from the dynamics of living in the wild. Those who display any weakness would be obvious targets of prey animals as a source of food. As a result of this trait their domestic counterparts will also remain stoic until the injury is getting serious and this is when that horse with the normally beautiful temperament may become explosive and display defensive behaviour.

This is often a confusing time for their owners who are ill-equipped with the knowledge to detect issues connected to the biomechanics of the horse. Sadly, it's common for many horses to end up with chronic conditions because they have been so clever at masking their pain.

Misconceptions often revert to thinking of the

horse as being stubborn and difficult, leading to negative outcomes such as retraining that doesn't deal with the issues concerning their injuries, ill treatment; selling them on or, even worse, having them put to sleep.

It pays to learn something about biomechanics and conformation in order to understand and appreciate where the horse is coming from rather than assume that it has just gone sour.

Some of the things to look for include the assessment of the structure of the horse, the movement in walk, trot and canter on both hard and soft surfaces, and by palpation.

### Assessing structure

Ensure that your horse is standing square, then look to see if there are any discrepancies from one side to the other. Look for any differences in the size of corresponding muscles; check to see if one side is higher than the other, look from the front and the back.

When you begin to observe these things, you will gain knowledge of how a horse can be impacted by these imbalances and gradually

you will find the key to understanding the painful effects this can have on the horse.

For example, if a horse has bigger muscles on one side of the body we would assume that the horse is using these muscles more than those on the corresponding side. You could then investigate the reasons for this discrepancy.

It's also important to see if any structures are higher on one side than the other, as this can impact the movement causing extra concussive elements that may show up somewhere else in the body.

Examining the movement of horses in walk, trot and canter in both directions on hard surfaces and soft surfaces, both ridden and on the lunge, will also help to improve your attention to how your horse is moving.

Questions to consider involve in the placement of where the hooves hit the ground. Are they equal on both sides of the body, do they swing to the outside/inside during movement, does the back foot fall into the print of the front foot on both sides, etc.

When you groom your horse, you can include some



palpation (the application of pressure) which can help you to assess any sensitive areas. You can also use your flat hands over the body in order to pick up changes in muscle texture, temperature and nerve fluctuations.

These things will help you to understand your horse's individual requirements before you make any bad decisions concerning your horse's future. If in doubt, you can call in a professional who will assess and work on any problems found, and also supply you with some stretching exercises that will help speed up your horse's recovery.

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Why did the toilet paper roll down the hill? To get to the bottom.  
Did you hear about the man who went to the psychiatrists wearing nothing but cling wrap? The psychiatrist said, "I can clearly see you're nuts."  
What's the fastest cake? Scone.  
What's a pirate's favourite letter? You'd think it's R, but a pirate's first love is the C.  
I couldn't believe that the highway department called my husband a thief. But when I got home, all the signs were there.  
Have you heard about corduroy pillows? They're making headlines.  
Sometimes I tuck my knees into my chest and lean forward. That's just how I roll.

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# About face, masks and mysteriousness

**W**earing a mask can be a lot of fun. Combined with a fancy dress and the donning of a mask, you can set the scene for a night of frivolity, mayhem and a lot of laughter, and this is mostly because you can play being someone else and while only being partly recognisable doing so.

The wearing of fancy dress and masks in the Carnival of Venice, a yearly celebration that ends with Lent, forty days before Easter, is meant to protect Venetians from anguish and hardship. What a stark irony that this year the whole country of Italy was brought down by the Covid-19 epidemic during the carnival. Now everyone there is having to wear masks all the time, as are many across the world.

What will be the effect on the quality of human interaction when we cannot take off our masks? This question was posed to me by a friend the other day. My response is that the increased mysteriousness of the quality of interactions will likely breed suspicion and paranoia in some people. This is because human interaction depends mostly on how we read the faces of the people we are talking to. Jonathan Cole, a

neurophysiologist and author, has observed this in his book *About Face*. A lot of the trust we have in one another comes about through our interest in the facial expressions of others. When someone doesn't, or can't, show much expression our tendency is to treat that person as inherently untrustworthy and thus to be ignored or avoided.

Interestingly, the one who is being 'read' this way, comes to feel blunted emotions of their own, because we come to know ourselves through our interaction with others. The result of this blunting of interaction is an isolating process that can lead to loneliness and depression.

Some people cannot engage in the lovely dance that is human interaction through facial mobility because of nerve disease or damage, as can occur in those with Parkinson's disease, Moebius syndrome, stroke, and the by-product of oral and other facial surgery, for instance. Wearing a mask is pretty similar. A facial paralysis is mask-like, after all.

When we cannot 'read' the expressions of others, we very readily assume that the other person doesn't have much personhood



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

and thus much integrity. The blandness of the mask, whether worn or stuck there by disease or neurological damage, or even just as a matter of personality trait, becomes a 'blank canvas' that others can 'read' whatever they are inclined to do.

I'm remembering right now the trial of Lindy Chamberlain, whose baby was taken by a dingo. Her lack of facial expression was 'read' by practically everyone as guilt. Where were the tears, the anguish, the wailing and gnashing of teeth in this cool, collected woman? She literally was deemed guilty by omission.

When someone is wearing a surgical mask it is as

though they are somehow not a person at all, present and absent at the same time. Normally faces are lively and our expressions dance around in response to what we are talking about. In a face that is hidden behind a mask or stuck in a mask-like fashion, there is none of this vibrancy and it's hard to know what they are thinking or feeling, or if they have any feeling at all.

When coupled with words like, "Good to see you," or "I like how you're wearing your hair," or whatever, spoken by a masked one, the words are often treated as though they are sarcastically said, because instead of a friendly smile, there is nothing.

In the face of sarcasm, we usually retreat. In the face of no facial mobility, a paranoid response can emerge. What is this person hiding, what are they concealing from us, do they know stuff we don't, and so on. These are words that spring from the imagination when little actual information is shared.

Sharing, without masks, is playful, caring, and – the containment of this virus aside – this is why I hope we can soon take off our masks and be gloriously responsive again with one another.

## Giving birth during pandemic

### Doula Wisdom

by Kirrah Stewart

**I** know that a lot of people are thinking about switching from a hospital birth to having a homebirth because of everything that is going on with Covid-19.

I recently spoke with homebirth midwife, Bronwyn Moir (Holistic Midwifery) so she could answer some common questions that are coming up.

She has noticed an increase in homebirth enquiries, not so much because people think they will catch coronavirus in the hospital, but more along the lines of being able to receive the care and support they want.

In some places, options are being limited due to Covid-19. For example, not being allowed to birth in water, not being able to use gas, not being able to have the support of their doula or partner, or being separated from their baby at birth.

What's your advice for people thinking about planning to birth at home, Bron?

"It's really important that people reach out and speak to local privately practicing midwives to talk about their individual circumstances. It's good to find out what options are in your area and who the midwives are that are available."

What's the difference between having a hospital midwife versus homebirth midwife?

"I think the biggest difference I've noted from working as a midwife in the system and working privately as a homebirth midwife, is the continuity of care. Homebirth seems to have a higher continuity of care. This means you're seeing the same midwife



throughout your pregnancy, labour and for six weeks postnatally.

"I feel like I can offer more individualised care. I can talk to women about her individual wants and desires. The woman is the one in-control. She's the one making the informed decisions. I think overall people feel more supported and more empowered during the process."

What is the difference between birthing in a hospital versus birthing at home?

"There's no place like home! We are mammals, and just like other mammals, we need specific things to help birth flow. Birth is an orchestrated hormonal event and we can't 'think our way through this'."

"By understanding how birth works, we can understand that the environment has a huge impact. Home is generally where you do feel the

safest. In your own space, you can have your own things around you, your own bed, your own food and your own smells. These things can help us feel more relaxed, which allows the right hormones to flow. Birth tends to flow more easily when we feel safe and supported."

One of the big questions that comes up... is home birth safe?

"Yes. It's been proven that homebirth is just as safe for women who don't have any pre-existing medical conditions, who are considered low-risk and who are supported by skilled well integrated midwives, especially if they live within a reasonable distance to a hospital."

"Privately practising midwives are highly trained and skilled healthcare practitioners. We carry the equipment we need to deal with problems and we have the skills to recognise if there is a problem and transfer in a timely manner."

To find out more about the services that Bronwyn offers, visit: [www.holisticmidwifery.com.au](http://www.holisticmidwifery.com.au)

Hopefully, one of the silver linings in this pandemic is that more people realise that homebirth is a viable option and that with the right support it can be a very satisfying experience.

This is your story to be written. Definitely take the time to become educated on the options available to you so that you can have the healthiest and happiest birth and postpartum possible.

I really believe that the right support makes ALL the difference.

Visit: [www.doulawisdom.com](http://www.doulawisdom.com) to download the natural birth checklist.

Email: [kirrah@doulawisdom.com](mailto:kirrah@doulawisdom.com)



# Covid 19 - Lock-step scenario

by Raven

A world of tighter top-down government control and more authoritarian leadership, with limited innovation and growing citizen pushback.

The pandemic had a deadly effect on economies: international mobility of both people and goods screeched to a halt, debilitating industries like tourism and breaking global supply chains.

Even locally, normally bustling shops and office buildings sat empty for months, devoid of both employees and customers.

During the pandemic, national leaders around the world flexed their authority and imposed airtight rules and restrictions, from the mandatory wearing of face masks to body-temperature checks at the entries to communal spaces.

Even after the pandemic faded, this more authoritarian control and oversight of citizens and their activities stuck and even intensified.

In order to protect themselves from the spread of increasingly global problems – from pandemics and transnational terrorism to environmental crises and rising poverty – leaders around the world took a firmer grip on power.

At first, the notion of a more controlled world gained wide

acceptance and approval. Citizens willingly gave up some of their sovereignty – and their privacy – to more paternalistic states in exchange for greater safety and stability.

Citizens were more tolerant, and even eager, for top-down direction and oversight, and national leaders had more latitude to impose order in the ways they saw fit.

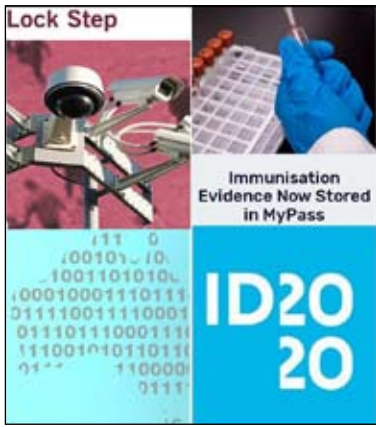
In developed countries, this heightened oversight took many forms: biometric IDs (ID2020) for all citizens and tighter regulation of key industries whose stability was deemed vital to national interests.

By 2025, people seemed to be growing weary of so much top-down control and letting leaders and authorities make choices for them. Wherever national interests clashed with individual interests, there was conflict.

Sporadic pushback became increasingly organised and coordinated, as disaffected youth and people who had seen their status and opportunities slip away incited civil unrest.

Even those who liked the greater stability and predictability of this world began to grow uncomfortable and constrained by so many tight rules and by the strictness of national boundaries.

The feeling lingered that sooner or later, something would inevitably



upset the neat order that the world's governments had worked so hard to establish."

The above is an excerpt from *Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development* PDF by The Rockefeller Foundation and GBN was written in 2010 and is still playing out.

Good friends with the Rockefellers is Bill Gates, and in 2010 the Gates Foundation called for the next 10 years to be the Decade of Vaccines and on the council are Anthony Fauci and the Director of the WHO (World Health Organization).

Bill Gates, Net worth US\$100 billion, the richest person in the world > 19 times, ranked seventh most powerful person in the world (2018), is the second largest donor

to the UN's WHO.

The Gates Foundation supports a stack of vaccine centred companies, the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), founded TerraPower, a nuclear reactor design company, and funded EarthNow - \$1bn network of 500 satellites to provide live video surveillance.

In March 2020 Bill quit Microsoft – founding partner of ID2020, the move towards global digital/biometric identification. Other founding partners include the David Rockefeller Foundation and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gates Foundation has given Gavi > \$3 billion).

In October 2019, the John Hopkins Center (Gates funded > \$265 million), the World Economic Forum and the Gates Foundation hosted Event 201, a pandemic exercise in New York. All five videos can be seen on Youtube and indicate how both business and government will manage information, misinformation, economic subsidies, vaccines, trade and travel shutdowns.

The World Economic Forum is made up of the world's 1,000 most powerful companies who up to donate \$975,000 per annum.

The social media manipulation by YouTube, Google and Facebook in

recent weeks comes directly from discussions in the fourth video of Event 201 about communications and countering "misinformation" (read non-mainstream sources).

YouTube deletes videos while FB says: "False information: Checked by independent fact-checkers."

Google uses algorithms to take out alternative information from its search results like this:

"According to data from the best-studied countries such as South Korea, Iceland, Germany and Denmark, the overall lethality of Covid-19 is between 0.1% and 0.4% and thus up to 20 times lower than initially assumed by the WHO."

An important distinction concerns the question of whether people die *with* or indeed *from* corona viruses. Autopsies show that in many cases the previous illnesses were an important or decisive factor, but the official Covid-19 figures usually do not reflect this.

Countries *without* lockdowns and contact bans, such as Japan, South Korea and Sweden, have not experienced a more negative course of events than other countries. This might call into question the effectiveness of such far-reaching measures.

"A man who stand for nothing will fall for anything." – Malcom X

## Chinese medicine's role in a pandemic

Although the pandemic has taken the world unawares, there are emerging patterns that can be seen. Even in the most catastrophic situations there are lessons to be learnt.

Disease is always due to a combination of internal and external factors: "heaven and earth combining to make the ten thousand things." Although there is a strong pathogen, there is variation in the symptoms individuals get, some people have no or mild symptoms while for others it is life threatening.

In the northern hemisphere there has been notably unseasonable weather. The winter was milder than normal and in North America as well as the warm winter there was a colder than normal spring. In Chinese cosmology, the macrocosm reflects the microcosm (us as individuals). We are inextricably linked to the external environment.

During the cold of winter, the yang energy goes into deep storage and it is a time of rest and replenishment. This is the kidney energy. When the kidney energy has not been replenished, individuals are weakened and more likely to be affected by pathogens, as seen especially in older and chronically unwell people.

As well the conditions have created an unusual pathogen. This virus does not seem to sequentially attack the levels progressing from surface symptoms to deep life threatening symptoms, but frequently attacks all levels at once. This creates multiple problems that are challenging both for Western and Chinese Medicine.



by Brigid Beckett

The role of Chinese medicine in this pandemic has been recognised in China. Partly this is due to the success of its use in the SARS epidemic. Also in China there is an integration of both systems.

As the pandemic hit its peak in China, a number of Chinese medicine practitioners were allowed to go into the container hospitals (after going through the difficult process of obtaining passes and then being provided with protective clothing), where anecdotally they were successful with using a combination of acupuncture, herbs, qigong and tai chi exercises.

At a global level, we need to know that all humanity is in this together. If one thrives all thrives, if one perishes all perish. "There are no perfect eggs to be found in an upturned nest." As well as immediate steps to contain the virus, unity needs to be achieved.

There needs to be constructive dialogue, readiness to forgive, the

ability to look at ourselves rather than lashing out and accusing others. This is also linked to our respect for the natural world and our willingness to conserve resources and limit greenhouse gases, in order to prevent unseasonal conditions that predispose to pandemics.

As individuals we can look after our immunity. Part of this is 'looking after the middle' which involves looking after digestion. It is helpful to limit or avoid processed foods and cold foods. If using juices, they should be mainly vegetable. Fresh herbs and fragrant spices are good. Getting enough sleep is very important.

Emotionally it is important to remain present and grounded and to avoid panic and fear. While we are in a serious situation, and it is wise to take all precautions regarding social distancing etc, we also need to know that the situation in Australia has been contained to an extent that the likelihood of any individual contracting Covid-19 is very low.

For anyone with low immunity or having a cold constitution, moxa is very useful. I can recommend points to moxa if anyone needs to know them. Herbal formulas such as Jade screen/Yu ping feng san are very effective for immunity. If you can source them! I am trying to source them, but may have to wait for a bit.

I hope things continue to head in the right direction and I can resume Community Acupuncture before too long. Until then, stay safe and happy.

Brigid Beckett is a registered acupuncturist. She can be contacted on 0431-702-560.

## Natural Law

We are all self-governing.  
Let us call upon our ancestors  
and teachers - past and present,  
to guide us in the way of the  
Heart.  
You are all my relations.  
All is One.

Welcome to May. This time is truly a catalyst of major change, to which many seers have long been referring. A time where the world is at its feet (and at home). A time of great collapse – before rebirth.

Last month I used the metaphor of the cocoon, and the truth that, in the chrysalis, the caterpillar turns to mush before making a grand entrance as a butterfly. The answers can always be found in nature.

A miraculous metamorphosis is in your sights... you must act, and, you must be patient.

This month there are strong themes around communication. Paradoxically, alongside that, are energies that indicate confusion and grey areas. In *Sitting in the Fire*, Arnold Mindell says that chaos and conflict can be our most exciting teacher, when we sit in the fire and remain open-hearted. When we focus in our heart, our self-awareness grows, community grows, and we can become part of the solution. Mindell also reminds us that lasting change, and strength in community, is always based on respect for the unknown.

Trust the mysterious river has its path. Your job is to stay calm and connected, so you can anchor into 'respect for the unknown', and go forward when those steps



by Helene Collard

are clear.

During May, make calming and connecting a daily practice, and dance by the banks of the mysterious river, as its path is revealed in Divine Time.

In-person services at Yemaya are currently suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions, but Helene is now available for remote Reiki treatments and remote deep listening cocoon.

Martha has taken her Yogalates classes on-line. Contact her for more details on 0447-669-679

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Helene Collard is a Culturally Informed Trauma Integrated Healing Facilitator, and a Reiki Teacher & Practitioner. She has been practicing Reiki since 2007 and began sharing and teaching Reiki professionally in 2015. For information, enquiries and bookings visit: [www.yemayacentre.com.au](http://www.yemayacentre.com.au) or phone 0405-656-797.