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Prevention is the easiest strategy

Weed Words
 by Triny Roe

The wet goes on and on; the weeds keep growing. Weed management strategies can be broken down into three categories – containment, eradication and prevention.

Prevention is the simplest and easiest strategy. A number of species with documented serious weed potential are completely banned if they are not already present in a region. Others are known by their reputation, even if they don't make the formal list.

Make well-informed plant choices. Just because you can buy one in a plant nursery, doesn't mean you should. "Oh, I'll keep it in a pot." There's no guarantee it will stay there.

Eradication is reserved for species that are not already prolific in the region but have a history of getting out of control in other areas. Because there's not so many, yet, the expectation is that they could be removed completely before they cause widespread devastation. Rous County Council has a list of weeds which are prioritised in the Northern Rivers. These include wild-seeded banana and paper mulberry. Call the weed officer for advice.

Many common weeds are here to stay. They are already widespread so eradication across the landscape would be an impossible task so, at best, all we can do is stop them spreading further, ie containment. The landholder's role is to minimise the biosecurity risk to nearby bushland or farmland. Don't let the pest plants set seed and propagate.

Chop and slash to prevent flowers and fruits developing if total removal of the parent plant is difficult. Mature woody weeds can be persistent and re-shoot a year later after treatment. Groundsel



bush is one that doesn't give up easily, even when herbicides are used. Follow up, follow up, follow up. Or get in early and hand-pull when they're small.

In a damp environment, and it seems to be permanently damp in the Northern Rivers, pulled out plants and prunings of many woody species left on the ground will continue to grow. This includes environmental weeds like night-blooming jasmine, *Cestrum nocturnum*. Night jasmine is not really a jasmine. In the Solanaceae family, it hails from the West Indies and grows as a shrubby bush or small tree up to four metres high. The spearhead-shaped lanceolate leaves have an acrid smell when crushed.

Also called lady-of-the-night, this hardy shrub produces clusters of richly scented creamy yellow tubular flowers. As the name suggests, it flowers at night but the strong fragrance can be overpowering. Some people report trouble breathing with nose and throat irritation as well as headaches, dizziness and nausea.

The globular fruit are white when ripe

and contain around 10 seeds. These germinate readily after passing through a bird's digestive tract. While the fruit are happily eaten by some birds, the fruit and all plant parts are poisonous to other animals, poultry and humans.

Night jasmine is considered only a minor environmental weed; at this stage, perhaps that's because it hasn't yet spread too far and wide. However, it could be a sleeper weed, waiting to explode. The seeds are tough and can remain viable in the soil for several years.

In valleys which it already infests it can form thick patches and outcompete native species. It likes shady situations, so can invade forest understory and be problematic in regenerating bushland.

As the floodwaters subside, keep an eye out for new plants appearing on your patch. They could be some of the numerous species identified as weeds due to their ability to take over and exclude other preferred vegetation. Biomass at the expense of biodiversity is a backward step.

Happy Weeding

Plant of the month



Hairpin Banksia *Banksia spinulosa*

by Richard Burer

This month let's get back to the garden and enjoy dry (hopefully) chilly sunny weather.

Perhaps you might go for a walk in the heathland closer to the coast or even go inland closer to the great dividing range. If you do you might spy this very common Banksia, *Banksia spinulosa*, hairpin Banksia.

This lovely species is very popular in landscaping, and many horticultural selections can be found in nurseries such as Birthday Candles or dwarf forms that are compact and suitable for the small garden.

Pictured is the straight form *Banksia spinulosa* var *spinulosa* growing on fairly free-draining chocolate soil in Nimbin, nearly

three years old, covered in flowers and growing very well trying to reach its optimum height of a couple of metres.

However, I can see that it's going to respond to pruning by next summer to keep good form.

I love using this plant as an excellent screen plant that provides shelter, habitat and beauty while supporting many invertebrate and vertebrate species.

Its floral display after only a short time is a nice reward in the garden.

Enjoy a crisp June folks, and we will see you next month where we get back to the forest.

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based local natural area restoration contractor and consultant:
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Making Do

by Scott O’Keeffe

Years ago I was driving through an industrial area in Brisbane. I passed a concrete spoon drain running through a swath of mown grass right in the guts of a sprawl of warehouses.

I spotted something in the concrete drain, and instead of hurrying past as I usually do in these places, I pulled over. I trained my binoculars on some lumps in the sour-looking drain water, and I was astonished to see a dozen Eastern Water Dragons (Intellagama lesueurii) in the slush, basking on the concrete barrage and scattered around the grass.

I thought of the related Bearded Dragon, all but gone from backyards, and thought, “Isn’t this pathetic... Water Dragons reduced to this.” I’d been used to seeing them along creeks in the forests west of Brisbane. Thinking like an ecologist, I later realised these reptiles are not woeful, but triumphant.

Wildlife colonises human-dominated landscapes more often than we realise, and not just in urban areas. Rural roadsides, crops, weescapes, farm dams and abandoned buildings have all been colonised by native plants and animals. They’re doing what they’ve always done. Surviving and adapting.

These adapters have some things in common. They have complex, flexible behaviour, broad diets and robust physiology. But it’s not just the nature of the organisms that create this scene; it’s also the character of the altered landscapes.

Wildlife is not sentimental about what we treat as a damaged environment. What they confront is a new space with few species, unexploited, a lack of competition, abundant food, breeding sites, and maybe encouragement from humans. Forget aesthetics; to a water dragon, a concrete drain is a creek, a bunch of basking sites and easy-to-grab insects and scraps.

Australian urban areas are filled with a wide range of flowering native and exotic plants.



Not where you would expect Bush Stone-curlews to nest. See the egg?

In warm climates, this year-round abundance supports higher densities of native stingless bees than the bush.

Their presence in the suburbs doesn’t make them lesser bees than those in the wild. So many people appreciate their presence that they have provided artificial hives, delighting thousands and conserving bees. The bees found a new niche to exploit, and people are happy to oblige.

Drive down a back road where it’s mostly grazing land with a few remnants of weed-infested bush lining the creeks. The curtain of exotic grasses, herbs, lantana and woody weed thickets on the roadside supports loads of native finches, whose ancestral habitats were native grasslands, the understory in open forests or the fringes of rainforest

Red-browed Firetails, Chestnut Breasted Mannikins and Nutmeg Mannikins all take advantage of the abundant seeds in the disturbed verges. They make use of the woody species for nesting. It’s ordinary grazing country that doesn’t appear in wilderness posters. The finches don’t care; it’s just habitat, and a bountiful one at that. Thank goodness they are there.

The most unpromising-looking landscapes can become refuges. We need to understand what it is about the new landscapes that support wildlife. We might know what caused them to decline where they were common, but let’s look at the less than pristine places where they now live. We’ll find clues about how to restore them to their former homes.

Several examples illustrate. Bush Stone-curlews have all but disappeared from



Chestnut-breasted Mannikins thrive on Setaria and other exotic grasses. Photo: K van Vuuren

the southern half of Australia. Cities like Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns are the best places to see them now. We should ask why they thrive there when they have disappeared from the bush. It’s not just that ‘they have nowhere else to go’.

Australian Bitterns once inhabited wetlands from southern Queensland to Tasmania. Now the only places where they seem to be doing well are rice paddies. Luckily, rice farmers understand the importance of this landscape, and accommodate the birds.

Urban areas support many kinds of native butterflies for the same reasons that they support native bees. There is an abundance of food. The food plants are not always the same as those in the wild, but there are closely related species that butterflies can take advantage of.

A friend has a butterfly garden in the city on a postage stamp sized block. She plants for wildlife and has x species of butterflies in her garden; many complete their entire life cycles there. She doesn’t care that the backdrop isn’t a rainforest. neither do the butterflies.

Native plants too, colonise the human landscape. Native figs in the city sprout and growing happily on old stone walls, deposited there (appropriately) by Figbirds. For the figs, the walls are just cliffs.

Grey Mangroves have colonised urban landscapes where they never grew previously. Where rivers have been altered so that brackish water penetrates into new areas,



Sago Flower (Ozothamnus diosmifolius) claims a space. Photo: M O’Keeffe

mangroves have colonised stream banks inland from where they previously grew. They’ve brought Bull Sharks with them as well. I could fill ten pages with examples of this phenomenon. Black Kites and White Ibis at rubbish tips. Brush-tailed and Ring-tailed Possums in backyards.

These organisms are not less interesting because they inhabit new (sometimes ugly) landscapes. Quite the opposite – their ability to cope with change is remarkable and worthy of our attention. If I have marsh frogs in my city birdbath, I won’t lament the fact that it’s not a big wetland, I’ll say “Thank goodness.”

Our response to wildlife can be dismissive when we see them outside the environments we think they should inhabit. To some, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos seen in exotic pines may seem less noble than their cousins in a remote canyon. But they’re the same species.

A better way to see this bird is to marvel at its ability to adapt to a completely new landscape. What we learn by appreciating these creatures can be help us ensure they are conserved in their ancestral habitats as well as the novel ones.

A more thoughtful perspective will help us to appreciate and protect the wildlife we have close to us, even if we still love to see them in wild places.

Calling all outdoor artists

by Nerelle Draisma

You may not realise what all the buzz is about, but down here at the Greenthumb Nursery we have sprung into action.

Not only have we considerably expanded our range of plants to include open pollinated heirloom veggies and put in lovely display gardens, we are now collecting local artists to come and be part of this wonderful habitat creation.

Currently, we have some lovely work on offer including bespoke bird baths. Not only are they inspiringly sculptural thanks John and Nerelle, they add the vital element of water to the garden.

Understandably, nobody wants to talk about that right now, but at some point in the future the sky won’t fall forever and birds, and let’s not forget the bees, will once again be in search of a drink.

Josh has also recently added his gorgeous wooden planter boxes to our range with various styles and sizes available, all hand-crafted from timbers sold



at Nimbin Building Materials. The boxes are suitable for the indoor or outdoor environment.

Our representation is rich and varied but we’d love more. This is a call-out to local artists with artwork ready to go, as we have plenty of rustic wall hanging space and expansive open areas for functional art like bush furniture and larger-than-life sculptural works.

It’s time to get cracking and roll up your creative sleeves people! If you would like further conversations regarding terms and conditions, please call into the nursery on Tip days: Tuesdays, Thursdays or Saturdays to have a chat.

Greenthumb Nursery is located at Nimbin Building Materials, 50 Gungas Road, Nimbin. See you there.

Radicchio ROSA, Cichorium intybus

A richly coloured member of the chicory family

by Thom Culpepper

Radicchio, pronounced [ra’dikkjo] is a salad leaf vegetable with red, pink and green variegated coloured forms that are cultivated and sometimes ‘forced’ so as to develop the flavonoid anthocyanin (an antioxidant) to replace the green chlorophyll of normal plant culture.

It is widely used in Italian and French cuisine, served in mixed green salads and ‘warm’ salads, grilled or roasted in olive oil to reduce its spicy/bitter taste, and is added to risottos and pastas.

The plant contains intybin, an analgesic and sedative, and the roots after roasting and grinding are used to produce a coffee substitute or additive. Radicchio root is the main source of the prebiotic inulin that is used as a soluble-fibre food additive with various medical/biochemical applications.

Radicchio is a popular vegetable universally among salad aficionados, adding beautiful colour to many *culinaries*. The plant has been utilised from Roman times, and wild forms have naturalised in the world generally. The vivid blue flowers herald its presence, but it needs a cold period to develop the deep red coloured form.

Twelve weeks from seed to harvest, over winter makes it a ‘survival plant’. By judicious husbandry and ‘blanching’ under black pots, it can yield 3-4 cuts. The first cut (above the heart core) is usually discarded. These plants that ‘cut and come again’ are very economical on land and labour inputs.

The main growing areas in Italy are the Veneto region on the Adriatic, Venice, Padua and Chioggia being marketing centres of distribution.

There are a number of popular types, ‘di Treviso’ (red) and ‘VillaFranca’, a beautifully loose-leaf form (yellow with red flecking) being the most sought after. The latter is rarely cooked as it changes colour, and it’s sweeter than most other types.

A sweet green variety Cicoria ‘Borca’ gives the green to a salad mix. A very bitter variety, ‘Treviso Tardino’ is considered by the ‘Cicoria’ fans to be the ultimate experience.

Radicchio grows well in Oz. The cooler growing areas are adequate; if you can grow broccoli, cabbage, daikon and lettuce, Radicchio will thrive. At harvest after sequential cuts, finally lifting the plant with 10 cm of root, store them in damp peat or sterilised compost in cool dark storage, with no light. Replant the root in late winter or very early spring.

Alternatively, roast and grind the



root to make a coffee replacement ‘Chicory’ beverage.

Salad mix

Tear leaves and add choice of corn salad, (marche), lettuce varieties, sliced Florence fennel, red onions or red shallots, shredded carrot, shredded daikon or other radish, cucumber, avocado, olives, poached eggs, capers, balsamic vinegar-olive oil-and garlic dressing, toss and garnish with herbs of choice, anchovies and thinly sliced hard (‘antico’) pecorino or parmesan or crumbled fetta.

Use the salad mix to dress a cold pasta, a riss, or as a side for prepared grilled meats or roasts. Also use as a bed for grilled seafood or cold-aspic fowl or fish.

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Woman of the Apocalypse

Tarot musings

by Amy Scott-Young

The “Woman of the Apocalypse: Symbol of the Holy Virgin and the Church” image (pictured) is from the *Hortus Deliciarum*, completed in 1185. Originally compiled by Herrad of Landsberg, Nun and Abbess of Hohenburg Abbey in Eastern France, this Religious Medieval Manuscript, and many like it, were used as pedagogical teaching tools.

The imagery contained within this particular Manuscript, notwithstanding its biblical content, clearly relates to the Traditional Astrological Zodiac and the Philosophical Arts. Interestingly, most of the imagery in the Major Arcana of the Tarot can also be found within its pages. Some of the symbology used in this image alone relates to quite a number of the Rider-Waite-Smith-Tarot cards, although this may only be apparent to a seasoned Tarot reader.

From around the time this Manuscript was completed up to the 1700's a clear relationship between the Medieval Church and Traditional Astrology can be seen. This is evident by the many Zodiacal sculptures featured in the entrances of Cathedrals, Basilicas, Abbeys, and Churches of this time period as well as the reflection of Traditional Astrology in the Churches seasonal activities. Traditional Astrology focuses on outer events and is quite different from the Modern Astrology of the 20th and 21st Centuries which is based more on character analysis and psychological insight.

In 1492 Marsilio Ficino, a well-renowned Traditional Astrologer and Catholic Priest, describes the height of this period in a letter to a friend: “This Century, like a Golden Age, has restored to light the Liberal Arts, which were almost extinct: grammar, poetry, rhetoric, painting, sculpture, architecture, music ... this Century appears to have perfected Astrology.”

Although the Modern Church now teaches that all forms of divination are to be rejected, this was clearly not always the case. It wasn't until 1633, when Galileo published his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* that things began to change. In this publication, Galileo favoured and was able to prove Copernicus' heliocentric theory. Being the first to observe the Astronomical sky through a telescope, he also discovered many stars that were not visible to the naked eye.

Pope Urban VIII (formerly Cardinal Maffeo Barberini) who originally supported Galileo's ideas, in his role as Cardinal, later refused to look through Galileo's telescope for fear of disrupting the intellectual status quo. The Church having much more persecutory power at this time convicted Galileo of heresy and he was forced to spend his last days under house arrest for doing nothing more than discovering a new truth.

This eventually led to the Age of Reason and the late 17th Century in which Traditional Astrology separated from both Astronomy and the Church. From this time, Traditional Astrology was practiced only by an isolated few and many of its techniques and subtleties sadly vanished.

Is it possible that the Tarot actually documents and preserves this lost artform of Traditional Astrology to ensure its knowledge and wisdom is never lost?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's words, in relation to Copernicus, seem to sum up this possibility so well: “Of all human discoveries and opinions, none may have exerted a greater effect on the human spirit than the doctrine of Copernicus ... Never, perhaps, was a greater demand placed on mankind - for by this admission, so many things vanished in mist and smoke!”



Death Threats & Therapy

Last month I hired a secretary. But she's couch-surfing too and doesn't have a desk yet.

Mine is a door across a saw-horse, bed, and two thick books, not law-books; they're all gone. I drive past the office in South Lismore where the space for the glass doors remains a sheet of plywood. I want to graffiti it, but resist taking my paints to town.

Readers may have noticed that our website is pending (re)construction. So is the office, to be created anew in a minimalist style designed around ease and speed of occasional evacuation. I've been beaten by the post office, espresso bar, nursery, brewery, bottle-shop and chemist.

The estate agent tells me we can start paying rent again next Monday. South Lismore's happening.

Last week was the hearing for the client who failed to get bail last month. An issue occasionally arising in these matters had become relevant; an alleged victim didn't want to give evidence but had been subpoenaed and told she'd be arrested if

she didn't turn up.

Whether this would have happened is moot, but the prosecutor said she could get the assault charge withdrawn if we pleaded to two intimidations (death threats) and a breach AVO. We pleaded. Less time inside that way.

He kept ringing from gaol. Was he going to get out? If not, how long was he going to get? Was that why they were going to put him on the truck, to let him out tomorrow? Would we have the same magistrate? I answered many of his (free) calls. It's lonely inside.

I'd prepared detailed written submissions, and his girlfriend wrote a letter saying his behaviour was out of character and it was all her fault.

The magistrate said she gave no weight at all to the letter, and sentenced him to 20 months with 10 at the bottom. Now I'm applying for legal aid for a severity appeal in the hope we can get a few months knocked off.

His girlfriend called me too, and sent long text messages. If you're wondering whether I should



Legal writes
by John Adams

be talking to an alleged victim, a witness in the crown case, it's alright, there's no property in a witness.

You have to be careful of course. Don't want her, under cross-examination, to come out with, “but his lawyer told me to say that.”

But why no weight to her letter? Back in the baby-boomer phase of feminism I read a book called *Battered Wives*, about couples who fight each other, often after a few drinks. It postulated a formula; fear + frustration = anger.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, liver fire blazes upwards. Later that night or next morning, he grovels, vows never to do it again. She wants and/or needs to believe him. Nothing is resolved.

Violence tends to escalate. If no-one calls the cops, it can end in death. Violence doesn't have to be physical.

When a big bloke gets drunk and threatens to kill someone, terrifying them, it's very properly taken seriously. Punishment sends a message to the community.

But that's the magistrate's job. I'm only a defence lawyer. After far more chats with them than Legal Aid could pay for, I can see that this couple are good for each other. He says meeting her was the best thing that ever happened to him. She's his first real partner, got him off drugs. She's lived with domestic violence before.

They're desperate to be back together. He'll do anything; anger management, relationship counselling, whatever. She's strong. I suspect she'll wait for him, and make sure he does.

Flood support: Herbies Hub continues



Nature's pharmacy

by Trish Clough, herbalist

Last month I wrote about our volunteer Herbies Hub supporting flood-affected people in Lismore.

Another month has gone by and we are still busy. We have cut back to five days per week in the past month and our team of Herbalists and Naturopaths have looked after between 10 and 20 people each day. In total we have treated more than 700 people since the flood.

We were generously supplied with donations of herbal medicines and nutritional supplements by many companies and other practitioners, for which we are very grateful.

We have also offered treatments in Wardell, Coraki and just recently in Woodburn. It's distressing to see how much trauma is still present in our communities. Because our volunteers and

donated products are finite, we are currently reviewing how and where to best allocate our support, and may concentrate more on the smaller towns which have less access to support.

I would like to share some thoughts on one of the most common reactions to the flood stress, which is severe insomnia. Every day we are giving remedies to people who are so stressed (and exhausted and 'wired' at the same time) that their sleep pattern is very disrupted. Many people have responded well to our herbal remedies and have dropped back to give us feedback.

One special example is a woman who is helping to look after a flood-affected family's traumatised children. I gave her a combination of herbs to help with sleep and stress. She called in the following week to say she is now sleeping well and feeling so much better. She looked much more relaxed and brighter. She was so enthusiastic and declared “I love you” as she was leaving. As you could imagine, it really made my day. The work we are doing is challenging and seeing how it helps people is very rewarding.

Managing sleep problems can be difficult as there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Different remedies suit different people. Fortunately, we have a variety of anti-stress tablets and herbal liquids so we tailor the

treatment to each person's needs. Prescription medications require caution, as some herbal medicines are contraindicated. We have been using saffron capsules for some people, and also my new favourite magnesium powder formula with glycine (a calming amino acid which supports neurotransmitters).

For other people, we use a tablet formula containing lavender oil and calming herbs. One person came back to report she had wonderful sleep on these tablets, and she especially loved the feeling of the lavender oil infusing through her body. She was so enthusiastic about how well she felt that she was wanting to write to the herbal medicine manufacturer to let them know how good the tablets are.

Another of our favourite tablet formulations contains a herb called withania, as well as other nervines. Withania is very helpful to damp down the stress hormone cortisol, so this formula is helpful for the 'tired and wired' type of insomnia. I will often prescribe a formula like this in the morning, and then a double dose at night.

I also find a liquid extract of kava combined with motherwort works really well for people who wake during the night and can't get back to sleep for hours. (Both herbs can be unsuitable with some prescription medications, so it is important that our team are qualified practitioners).



Lavender

We also have a lovely blend of chamomile, lemon balm and passionflower liquid as a calming medicine. It is suitable for children, as it is made with a glycerine (instead of alcohol) base and is sweeter tasting.

Our most frequently supplied remedies are flower essence blends, both Rescue Remedy and the Australian bush flower Emergency Essence. They can work quickly to calm people when they feel overwhelmed and teary. I recommend that people carry a bottle with them so it can be used whenever it is needed.

Trish is available for consultations by appointment on 0452-219-502 or email: trishclough@internode.net.au

The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.

Trauma

It is timely to write about trauma. After all, we have experienced horrendous floods this year and fires three years prior and many people suffered directly and indirectly the effects of these. On social media many were saying that everybody affected have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It needs to be said right here, that this isn't true. Not all who went through these experiences are affected in this way.

Our responses to threat are primarily instinctive and biological, and secondarily psychological and cognitive. We go into fight, flight, and freeze mode, common to all mammals. First, we enter the arousal cycle. Our muscles tense, as we identify the source of possible danger. Then we enter the mobilisation stage where our bodies begin to produce adrenaline and cortisol, the two primary chemicals that energize us to fight or flee. In the third stage, we discharge this energy by completing the appropriate defensive actions (fighting or fleeing).

The fourth and final stage happens when the nervous system, no longer aroused, returns to a state of equilibrium. If we are overwhelmed by the threat and are unable to fight or flee, we instinctively employ the third action plan, the "freezing response". Here we are in a dissociative state where our minds seem to separate from our body, but we are still highly aroused, setting the stage for high anxiety which may continue for a while.

I note here that PTSD is identified as the ongoing experience of trauma lasting more than three months. Less than three months, and this trauma response is identified as Acute Stress Disorder (ASD). Not all experiences of stressful events become disorders (a very important point here).

According to the DSM-IV (a bible of psychiatric diagnoses), for trauma disorder to be diagnosed, the person must experience at least one of five cluster symptoms: recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections, nightmares, flashbacks, intense psychological distress in response to memories or reminders of the trauma, and physiological arousal cued by memories or reminders of the trauma); three or more of seven symptoms of persistent avoidance (of memories or reminders of the trauma) and emotional numbing (dissociative or psychogenic amnesia for important parts of the trauma, loss of interest in important activities, feelings of detachment or estrangement from others, restricted range of affect, and



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

a sense of a foreshortened future); and two or more symptoms of increased arousal (sleep difficulties, irritability or outbursts of anger, concentration difficulties, hypervigilance, and an exaggerated startle response).

PTSD doesn't necessarily occur after ASD and ASD doesn't necessarily occur after a stress event. Why is this so? Length of duration may be a consideration, as frequency could be also, but the data is inconclusive. The anxiety response is not the same across all potentially traumatic events. Some events, such as random rape, are transient, while domestic abuse is usually repeated. Hand to hand combat can be transient, but can be repeated many times. Floods and their ongoing destruction go on for a long time, but the time factor isn't necessarily sufficient to bring on an ongoing trauma response. Other things are at work, and we still really don't understand everything about this stress response. Some people are more resilient than others, some have better networks and can express their feelings more openly, perhaps.

Several studies have found that low cortisol levels in the acute aftermath of the stressful event and an elevated resting heart rate shortly afterwards tend to result in a stronger and more sustained stress reaction, which is hypothesised to contribute to the development of PTSD.

Also an extensive prior history of psychiatric problems and/or substance abuse may make a person particularly vulnerable to the development of PTSD. Prior traumatic history also contributes to the development of a stress disorder.

So how we live our life now matters in terms of how we respond to stressful events. Now is the time to communicate and connect with others and learn to manage our issues without abusing alcohol and drugs. Working through our anxieties and concerns through counselling is really useful in preventing the development of the debilitating conditions of ASD and PTSD because they are not inevitable.

Therapy for existing trauma really does matter.

We are all one being and one soul

The fundamental principle of Past Life Regression is that our Soul journeys throughout numerous lifetimes, places and dimensions, whereas there is really only One Soul having an infinite variety of experiences.

In Neal Donald Walsch's book *Conversations with God Book 3*, he explains it this way:

"There is no dividing line between Souls – there is no place where one Soul ends and another begins. And so, it is really one Soul holding all bodies. Yet the one Soul feels like a bunch of individual Souls."

To help explain this concept, Walsch offers the imagery of the air in your living room and the air in your kitchen. There is no specific place where the air of the living room stops and the air of the kitchen begins.

The air in the whole house is the same air, there is no separate air in the living room, yet the air seems like other air because it smells different from the air in the kitchen. You may open a window because the living room seems stuffy, yet the air from outside is the same air as in the house, moving in and around everything. It just has different characteristics.

And so it is with what we call Souls. They are all parts of the Creator, taking on different characteristics. As we are all individuations of the One Soul, there can be no separation between us. Only One Soul on the planet at a time.

Here is an exercise that may help you with this concept and heal some buried emotions, called "There is only One Soul on the planet at a time and it is



mine"

When you observe someone displaying some behaviour you don't like, try to see this person as no longer being separate from you. Their actions are your actions. Observe and try to feel what they are feeling without judgement while holding the thought: "There is One Soul on the planet at a time and it's mine". You will probably observe traits that you won't want to admit are in you but if you stay with it you can uncover emotions and feelings that are holding you back.

Imagine you are observing someone speaking angrily and loudly on their phone to their partner, using plenty of swear words. Observe but don't judge. You just might just hear your Soul crying out to be heard, your Soul crying out for compassion and love.

Beware of the ego telling you "I'm not like that" or "I don't do that" and they shouldn't either. The ego doesn't want you to feel any of you buried painful emotions, but you won't heal your emotional pain if you listen to your ego. As long as you deny your painful feelings, you'll keep seeing it in other people's behaviour in one form or another. You, as the only Soul on the planet, will encounter individuals who



by Auralia Rose

are simply mirroring you. The positive and the negative.

If you use this technique you may discover there is no-one else to blame for anything that happens. Can you still judge others for showing you what is already inside of you?

This exercise can help you grow and open your heart to more love, freeing you from the burden of being a victim of circumstances. You might see that others are in need of love and compassion. With just One Soul on the planet at a time, you won't be able to hide from yourself any longer. You will be healing all your hurt emotions.

And as you heal yourself, you are contributing to the healing of the One Soul.

Sessions available in Murwillumbah, phone 0422-481-007, web: auraliarosewellbeing.com

Getting your shit together



View from the loo
by Stuart McConville

Beating down the well-worn track to my loo, I slip and slide on the red mud and nearly end up on my ass again.

Outhouse toilets are wonderful things most of the time, but the challenge of getting there in this extended play wet season is getting tiresome. I hate to think of how this might play out in 20 years or so when I am not so nimble. Could be some brown stains along with the red mud!

One option to consider is to use an inside urine-separating toilet with a vent fan and a removable bucket. The urine is collected in a large plastic reservoir and can be diluted 3-4:1 with water to make a powerful fertiliser for the garden. Urine is sterile and poses no threat to health, so can easily be handled without gloves.

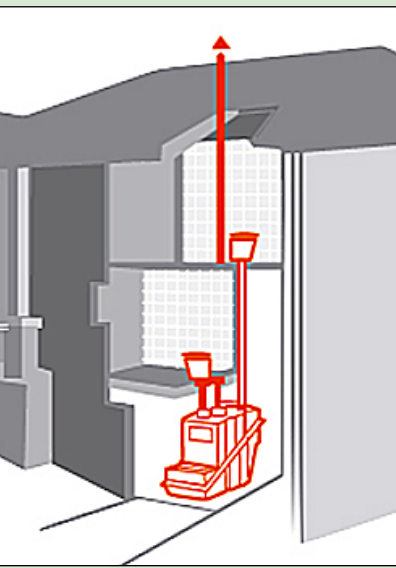
Throughout the ages, urine has been

used to wash and whiten clothes, as a disinfectant, as a medicine and a fertiliser. Every human produces just enough Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (NPK) in their urine to grow enough wheat for their own supply of bread. With the war in Ukraine preventing huge supplies of grain to the world and Russia and Belarus having two thirds of potash supply (Potassium), we will need yours soon!

The bucket, which has a biodegradable liner bag, fills up with poo and sawdust and is vented by a small 12v fan to ensure there is no lingering smell. It's then a matter of getting the bag up to the outhouse once every few weeks to empty it into the bigger chamber, where it will be composted down at a leisurely pace in a relatively dry environment.

It is important during this wet season that compost toilets are maintained well. Excessive moisture inside the chamber needs to be vented by a working fan and drained via an unimpeded liquid drain. The best way to check drainage is to remove compost and check to see if there is any liquid building up underneath. Watch out for ingress of groundwater if the chamber is dug into the ground. If this is occurring, a plumber will be required to install a non-return valve.

The flue on a compost toilet should have a condensation trap at the base that has a drain valve. It can also double as an insect trap if a clear container is installed under the flue. A bit of red wine will attract drain flies who can then go to their death sloshed and happy. Another tip is to paint the flue black so that solar gain will heat

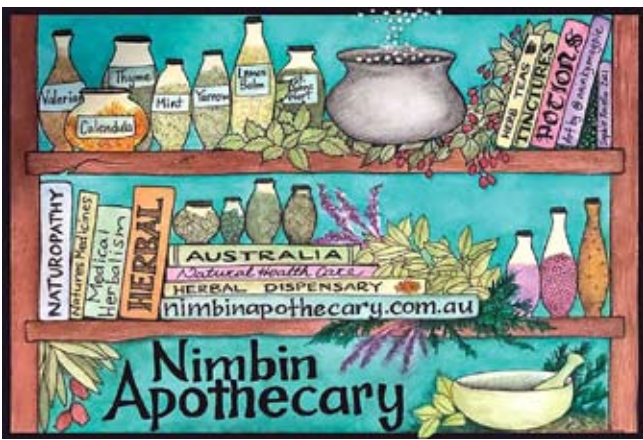


the flue and aid the venting of the chamber through rising warmer air.

The flue cap needs to be large enough to prevent rainfall coming down the flue. I often use a T with extensions that can be removed with a couple of screws. This is important because every now and then it is worthwhile cleaning the inside of the flue as spider webs do build up and impede air flow. Alternatively, a small mesh filter can be installed on the top of the flue to prevent spiders, but this will inevitably clog with small dust particles, so needs maintenance as well.

The price of looking after your own shit is eternal vigilance, so please do your best and make shit happen, because magic won't.

Stuart runs Pooh Solutions, waste water consultants and composting toilets. Phone 0427-897-496 or email: poohsolutions@gmail.com



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Mental health in postpartum



Doula Wisdom
by Kirrah Stewart

Following the birth of their baby/babies, parents will most likely feel a wide range of emotions from joy to exhaustion. Around 3-5 days after the birth, the 'baby blues' can make an appearance. Up to 80% of new mothers experience the baby blues and symptoms can include; teariness, irritability, nervousness and feeling extra emotional.

With help and support from a partner, family or friends, it normally resolves quite quickly. If these symptoms continue beyond two weeks after birth, it is considered a sign of something more serious.

Postpartum depression can have similar symptoms to the baby blues, however, they persist for longer than two weeks after birth

and can occur any time in the first year postpartum. Symptoms often include; sadness, feeling empty or hopeless, feeling exhausted, loss of interest in self care, anxiety, overwhelm and loss of pleasure in life.

As many as 1 in 5 expectant or new mums and 1 in 10 expectant or new dads will experience perinatal anxiety or depression (that's around 100,000 parents every year in Australia).

Because postpartum mood disorders are so common, there are many organisations that offer help and support. Below you can find some helpful resources.

Beyond Blue

You can visit Beyond Blue online at: www.beyondblue.org.au or call their helpline on 1300-224-636. They are helping to increase awareness about perinatal mental health. Beyond Blue have created programs based on latest evidence to support families in finding support and help for mental health and wellbeing.

PANDA

You can visit PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia) online at: www.panda.org.au or call their national helpline on 1300-726-306. They are an accredited mental health service that help people



access quality support during pregnancy and into their first year of parenthood.

They aim to provide early detection, support and education. Their helpline is staffed by trained and experienced counsellors providing a safe and confidential space for people struggling with the challenges of parenting.

Gidget Foundation

You can visit the Gidget Foundation online at: www.gidgetfoundation.org.au or call their helpline on 1300-851-758. Gidget Foundation Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that provides programs and support to increase emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents.

The foundation is made up of a dedicated group of health professionals, parents, friends and family that support raising awareness of perinatal depression and

anxiety. Their services are diverse and inclusive. Doula Wisdom happily donates to Gidget each month to help more families have access to holistic care.

If you are pregnant or postpartum and feel like you're struggling, please consider talking to friends or family about your situation. You may also like to make an appointment to see a doctor who can refer you to a counsellor or psychologist.

If you feel you are in immediate danger or having suicidal thoughts, please get help immediately by calling 000 or lifeline on 13-11-14. There is always help available.

Kirrah is a postpartum doula, masseuse and lactation counsellor supporting families in the Northern Rivers. To download a free natural birth checklist head to: www.doulawisdom.com or text Kirrah on 0429-308-851

You don't have to live with lower back pain

A lot of my clients see me for low back pain. Besides them sometimes having tight gluteus (butt) muscles and tight hamstrings a lot suffer with tension and pain in the Quadratus Lumborum (QL) muscles. This area is a common source of lower back pain.

The muscles are located on either side of the lumbar spine. While they are situated at the lower back between the pelvis and the lowest ribs, and thus commonly referred to as a low back muscle, these muscles are considered to be the deepest abdominal muscles.

These deep core stabilisers are used when we sit, stand, and walk, so understanding Quadratus Lumborum can give us a better understanding of the effect it has on our physical wellbeing.

Origin and Insertion of Quadratus Lumborum

The QL originates at the top of the pelvis and inserts at the 12th rib.

The QL has various functions including both stabilisation and movement of the spine. It allows you to flex your spine, and extension of the lumbar vertebral column.

It stabilises the pelvis, lumbar spine, and lumbosacral junction. Additionally, because of its connection to the 12th rib, the QL plays a role in breathing, supporting expiration and assisting the diaphragm during inhalation.

When I treat this muscle, I always see the client take a deep breath and I see a release of other muscles; it has a kind of domino effect.



by Sonia Barton

Contribution to lower back pain

Lower back pain is typically described as a deep aching pain. Sometimes it goes right across the top of the pelvis. However, depending on the cause, it can be experienced as sharp and acute.

Activities with repetitive movements, like running or cycling, can cause QL strain when core and back muscles are weak and when posture isn't optimal. Additionally, sitting for long periods of time can create stiffness and tension due to the continuous contraction and tightness in this muscle. In cases of repetitive strain and prolonged sitting, the pain is more likely to be felt as a dull ache.

Twisting and bending can create tension in the QL and, because it is a core stabiliser, the QL can become tense or tight when having to work to stabilise the spine and pelvis.

The weirdest thing is that if these muscles are tight, it can affect the legs and cause a tight feeling in the calves.

Posture

Posture is important to consider when the QL is tight or causing pain.

Tilting the pelvis and leaning to one side while standing or slouching while sitting can cause the QL to overcompensate to stabilise the spine and/or pelvis and aggravate it. A good example is how parents carry their child on one hip.

Using back support while sitting and finding a more neutral position for the spine and pelvis while performing any activities can protect the QL from this constant contraction and thus, spare a great deal of soreness and discomfort.

Other Considerations

Lengthening this muscle can provide relief when it is tight. Lateral stretches, standing and seated, can help to lengthen the QL.

Self-massage can help to relieve tension in the muscle and the surrounding tissues. Deep, intentional breathing can also help to relax an overactive muscle, as well.

You don't have to live with pain

You don't have to live with lower back pain. I can be here to support you in the process of returning to pain-free living.

Why not book a couple of sessions and give Bowen therapy a try? Call me for a friendly chat to see if I can help you. I work in Nimbin and Murwillumbah.

*Sonia Barton Bowen
Therapist and Reiki Teacher
Phone: 0431-911-329
BowenEnergyWork.com.au*

Natural Law

by Helene Collard

In an interconnected world, life is a web of relationship. Every thought, word, action, in-action, emotion and feeling, is an interaction with the universal consciousness, that creates a reciprocal ripple effect, that shapes our world.

Our history across lifetimes, cultural conditioning, family of origin, religious and spiritual teachings, political, economic and other social influences, all converge to create a unique 'lens' through which we each view our world.

Therefore, based on our life experience and influences, we acquire and develop; beliefs, likes and dislikes, personal vulnerabilities, political persuasions, values, religion, spirituality, relationship dynamics and more. All these form our reality.

As we traverse the world from our unique reality, on this wonderful journey of life... Guess what? Everyone is running their own 'lens' influenced from their life experience and influences. This difference is what makes our planet so dynamic, magical and rich.

The big question then, is within this myriad of colour and contrast in our world, 'how do we anchor a solid sense of Self, keep our hearts open and live this life with a sense of excitement, adventure and curiosity?' Or as academic, researcher and storyteller, Brene Brown puts it, how do we live with a "Strong back. Soft front. Wild heart"?

How do we remain engaged, rather than avoidant, and, without becoming enmeshed? How do we maintain a clear sense of Self, that is not entangled in our past or future, or, with someone else's story? How do we hold ourselves with confidence, while remaining receptive to another person, and, when there is deep resonance, allowing our reality to be reshaped or changed? Indeed, Marcel Proust mused "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

Boundaries are often named and received as something that creates a wall or barrier, which naturally elicits defensiveness and conflict. It is often forgotten that the purpose of boundaries is to maintain and/or re-establish safety, which has potential to create more intimacy and deeper connection.

Yet, back in the day, if you had clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and food in your mouth, you were deemed safe. Today, we know much more about safety.

A comprehensive evidence base shows us that the early years of childhood (0-8 years) have a profound impact on a person's future health, development, learning and wellbeing. In fact, social and emotional wellbeing is a key area of the early childhood learning frameworks and curriculum in Australia and overseas.

This national framework guides

children on how to form healthy relationships with themselves and their world. In addition, parents now have access to workshops around critical attachment theory and the 'circle of security.' It is now known social and emotional development (or lack of it) has a major impact on brain development, and therefore, how equipped (or not) a person is, to negotiate their relationship with themselves and their world.

This systemic acceptance of the critical importance of a person's social and emotional development, is a step towards rearing humans with a stronger sense of self, and more knowledge and guidance,

at negotiating relationships in a healthier way.

Furthermore, the availability of these (and many other) emerging bodies of knowledge, that focus on social and emotional wellbeing, also recognize that many adults are

wanting to grow in this area.

In these potent times of change, your committed focus and intention, will literally move you from crawling to walking to running in no time at all.

I am in awe of the 'work' happening on the planet right now. Busting out of old programs, can feel like walking through a sea of thick chewing gum. Stay with it, you are closer than you think.

Come see me for a Reiki reset at Happy Mountain Yoga Studio in Wollongbar. Winter Reiki Courses are now advertised on my website. Learning Reiki is a path of empowerment, and will accelerate your personal and spiritual growth. Gift yourself a nourishing weekend of personal growth, and learn an ancient healing art.

The Yemaya Centre is open!

Following the recent floods, the Yemaya Centre is currently open at Happy Mountain: 58-62 Simpson Ave, Wollongbar. Reiki treatments available. Reiki Courses coming soon! Visit my website to book.

Martha Regnault – 0447-669-679

- Yogalates on Zoom, Tuesdays 6-7.30pm
- Qigong on Zoom, Saturdays 10-11.30am
- Yogalates in Rosebank, Private sessions by apt
- Craniosacral Energetics in Rosebank, by appt

Lisa Jonas – Endorphina Creative

- Online Astrology Readings
 - Inner Wellbeing Sessions
- Bookings email: welcome@endorphina-creative.com

Liina Flynn – liina.flynn@gmail.com

- Beginners Yoga on Girards Hill, Monday 5.30pm
- Hatha Yoga on Girards Hill, Tuesday 5.30pm
- Special class to relax the nervous system

Commencing dates to be announced.

Mirek Oprzedek – Earth Shiatsu 0412-294-917

- Shiatsu Massage available now at Happy Mountain in Wollongbar

Visit: www.yemayacentre.com.au for more information.



Winter warming soups

Food Matters

by Evie Fairley

The transition of the seasons is perhaps one of the few ways the modern human can connect with the rhythm of mother earth. Subtle shifts in light and temperature can prepare us for the darkness that descends come mid-winter, or the brightness and warmth of the summertime.

Autumn, a season of transition, gentle in its flow, releasing us from summer's heat, with misty mornings, falling leaves, bright blue skies and star-filled nights and a hint of chill in the air.

I missed the beauty of autumn this year in the Northern Rivers as our rain-soaked skies blanketed us in a continuous grey landscape above, and a rather muddy one below. I especially missed seeing the Nightcap Ranges wearing its nightcap before evening descended.

Now winter is approaching fast like the disappearing light, and so it is time to stoke the woodstove and prepare foods that are warming and nourishing for our bodies and minds.

Autumn normally provides a great abundance and variety of fruits and vegetables, but even our gardens have missed the season where we can harness the sunshine to stock our larders for winter. So a simple fare may be what we need to eat during these unsettling environmental times.

Many of our local farmers have struggled with all the wet, so we must mindfully share what our local growers can provide and never take more than our share. Which makes the recipes for this month even more pertinent, as a large pot of steaming vegetable and grain soup can feed many bellies.

Here's two I love, and if you are lucky enough to have both a woodstove and dry wood to burn then you can warm your toes while your soup gently simmers, imparting a spicy fragrance to whet your appetite.

Roasted pumpkin, tomato and brown rice soup (vegan and gluten-free)

Use olive oil, smoked paprika and salt to roast half a large pumpkin evenly chopped, and several tomatoes cut in halves. Let them cool overnight. The next morning, fry up a leek in olive oil with fresh marjoram and sage.

Add the cooked pumpkin and tomato, mash with wooden spoon, add water with veggie stock, and then 1 cup of left-over cooked brown basmati rice. Cook through, then serve with fresh parsley and some gluten-free bread with a delicious dollop of cashew cheese.



Carrot soup with tahini and rosemary

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion finely chopped
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 cloves garlic roughly chopped
- 500g carrots chopped into 1cm thick rounds
- 400g grams chopped tomatoes
- 400g chickpeas, this recipe uses canned
- The zest and juice of an orange
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- A couple of sprigs of rosemary
- 1.5 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 4 tbsp tahini

Heat oil and add onion, cook for 10 minutes until soft and sweet. Add a good pinch of salt, paprika and garlic and cook for another minute or so.

Add carrots, tomatoes and the zest and juice of the orange and cook for a further 3 minutes until everything is bubbling then add stock and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes until carrots are soft.

While the soup simmers, drain and rinse the chickpeas and pat them dry with kitchen paper.

Put a large frying pan over medium heat and add 4 tbsp olive oil. Once hot add the chickpeas and rosemary and cook until the rosemary is fragrant and the chickpeas are crisp and popping. Sprinkle with salt and keep warm.

Once the carrots are tender take the soup off the heat and stir through the vinegar and half of the tahini and puree with a hand blender. Serve the soup topped with the fried rosemary chickpeas with the rest of the tahini and olive oil drizzled over.

Disappearing pain

My analogy of pain

Pain in my view of the world has two or maybe three main components:

1. The physical
2. The emotional/mental
3. The spiritual

The process to disappear pain is focussed on the emotional and mental component. It means that pain may not disappear completely if there is a physical component like a strain or broken bone, or infection.

What the process does affect is the emotional intensification of the pain through the level of anxiety and stress that may accompany it. In some cases like headaches, it can Disappear the pain completely. I have also seen significant reduction in pain for people suffering migraines.

How to do it

Find a quiet space and focus on your pain. Then answer the following series of questions. They may sound a bit strange in relation to your pain, but answer with what first comes to mind.



by Peter Ganser
NLP Master Practitioner

Hint: It may help if you have a friend ask these questions so that you can stay focussed on the pain.

1. Rank your pain on a scale of zero to 10 where zero = no pain and 10 is the end of the world.
2. Describe the location of the pain. (Sometimes it can feel like it goes beyond your body.)
3. What is the shape of the pain? (eg like a disk)
4. How big is the pain? (eg like a basketball)

5. What colour is the pain?
6. What texture does the pain have? (eg rough, spiky, smooth etc)
7. How hard is the pain? (eg like jelly, like a rock etc)
8. What is the rank of your pain now on a scale of 0 to 10?
9. If the rank has decreased significantly or is around 2, you can stop. If not, cycle back through the questions starting at question 2. Where there is a change in the answer, acknowledge it and then move on.

A final word

You may still have some pain left; this will most likely be the physical component. If you still have significant and on-going pain, see your medical professional for advice. Pain is a message that says, "There is a problem, attend to me".

Do as your body commands and attend to the pain.

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