

The energetic presence of horses

by Lisa Willey

If you have ever spent any time around a horse, you will likely know what I mean when I say there is a special kind of magic that not only emits from them but conjures up within us when we are around them, too.

They are in tune to something that we have been conditioned throughout our lives to ignore – energy.

If you have a calm energy and are focused only on the present moment, you will find horses tend to be drawn to you, because this is the language they speak. If you are stressed or anxious, and your mind is racing, thinking about what has happened in the past, or what will happen in the future, they will often drift away.

Horses are prey animals. They are finely tuned to detect the subtlest shifts in their environment. They read micro-expressions, posture, breathing and heart rate. They don't respond to

the words we say, but to the energy behind them.

Being in the presence of horses can literally change our physiology, lowering our stress hormones, reducing anxiety, and regulating our heart rhythm. When we interact with horses in a calm way (even without touching or approaching them) our heart rate and cortisol levels (the hormone linked to stress) begin to drop.

Studies in equine-assisted therapy show that our heart rhythm can actually sync with the horse's, creating a physiological synchrony that promotes relaxation and emotional regulation.

Energy isn't just spiritual 'woo woo' mumbo jumbo. Everything in the universe, including us, is made up of vibrating particles of energy. Our thoughts, emotions, and heartbeats generate measurable electromagnetic fields that extend beyond our bodies.

The HeartMath Institute, for example, has found that



the human heart produces an electromagnetic field up to several feet wide, capable of influencing those nearby. Horses, with their finely tuned nervous systems, sense and respond to this energetic language.

Just as tuning forks resonate when struck near one another, living beings can fall into resonance, too.

You feel it when you meet someone new. Some people you instantly align with, even before you have spoken a word, and others you feel no desire to be around.

The 'energy' horses respond to is simply the sum of our physiology, emotion, and intention, all vibrating outwards.

When we are in the

presence of horses, we want to be a part of their energy. We want them to choose to approach us or be near us, and by having the right intention, but with no expectation, we allow ourselves the opportunity to open up in a way that we couldn't if we were stuck thinking about work or what to make for dinner, and in a way we sometimes find difficult with other people.

In a world filled with screens, work demands, noise and constant stimulation, horses remind us what it feels like to be attuned to ourselves, to nature, and to the energy we carry.

They don't just mirror us; they help us better ourselves by showing us who we really are when the masks fall away, reflecting us with complete neutrality. They don't judge, but they don't pretend either. If we're scattered, they show us. If we find our centre, they show us that too.

It's no wonder so many people describe time with

horses as healing. They help us remember what balance feels like, inside and out.

Maybe that's why so many of us are drawn to horses even if we have no intention to ever ride. They remind us to breathe, to soften, to listen more deeply, and remind us that the problems we carry around in our heads aren't really all that important.

So next time you find yourself standing near a horse, or looking out over a paddock where they graze, take a deep breath and focus on the present. Watch how their ears twitch, how their breath rises and falls, how the light shifts and glistens on their coat.

You will find that you leave calmer, happier and more at peace than when you arrived. Let that feeling envelop you and stay with you long after you've walked away.

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Riding horses with the seat

by Suzy Maloney

When riders first learn to communicate with horses, the focus often falls on reins and legs.

But the seat, the way a rider uses their pelvis, weight, and balance, is the foundation of effective riding.

The seat connects directly to the horse's back, influencing rhythm, direction, and energy.

A well-developed seat not only improves communication but also helps build trust and harmony between horse and rider.

Why the seat matters

The horse feels everything that happens in the rider's body. A small change in weight distribution, the way the pelvis follows movement, or the tension in the rider's core can all send signals. For example:

- Shifting weight slightly forward can encourage forward movement;
- Deepening the seat and softening the lower back can signal a downward transition;
- Evenness through both seat bones helps the horse stay straight.

When the seat is unclear, the horse may brace, lose balance, or rely too heavily on rein pressure. But when the rider's seat is steady, balanced, and communicative, the horse can

respond with lightness and ease.

Developing an independent seat

The first goal for any rider is to develop an independent seat, a seat that follows the horse's motion without gripping, bouncing or relying on the reins for balance.

This allows the seat to become a true aid rather than an unconscious weight.

Here are some exercises to try:

- Lunge lessons without reins. Ask a helper to lunge your horse while you drop the reins. Place your hands on your hips or out to the sides. Focus on feeling the movement of the horse's back and allowing the pelvis to follow. This helps us discover whether we are stiff, gripping, or leaning.
- No stirrups work. Riding without stirrups at walk and trot improves balance and allows us to sink into the saddle. We need to avoid gripping with the thighs; instead, letting our legs hang and feeling our seat bones in contact with the saddle.
- Off-horse core training. Activities like yoga, Pilates, or even simple planks and bridges strengthen the core and increase awareness of pelvic alignment. A supple, strong core is essential for a responsive seat.

Using the seat for transitions

The seat plays a major role in transitions between gaits. Instead of relying on reins to stop or legs to go, we can practise using the seat first.

- Downward transitions (trot to walk, walk to halt): Breathe out, soften our lower back, and imagine our weight flowing downward into the saddle.

We need to resist the temptation to pull on the reins; letting the seat give the primary signal.

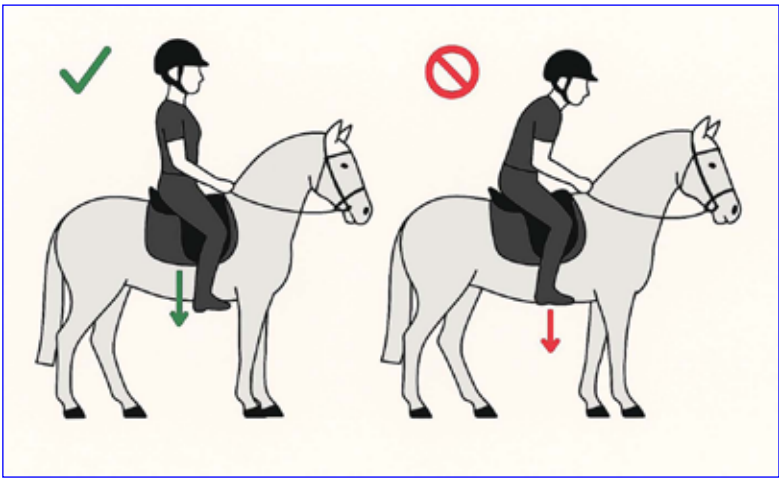
- Upward transitions (walk to trot, trot to canter): Allowing the pelvis to follow with more energy, almost as if we're "scooping" forward with each stride. Support with a gentle leg aid if necessary, but focus on the seat as the main initiator.

Exercise: Practice transitions where we consciously use our seat first, adding reins or legs only if our horse does not respond. Over time, the horse will begin to listen more closely to our body cues.

Guiding direction and bend with the seat

The seat is also crucial for steering and lateral work. Turning isn't just about pulling a rein; it begins with where the rider's weight is placed.

To ask for a turn, we can think of gently weighting the inside seat bone while allowing your outside leg to support.



For circles or lateral movements, imagine the pelvis "mirroring" the shape of the horse's back.

Exercise: Ride a 20-metre circle and focus only on the seat. Keep both hands steady and light.

We can ask ourselves: Am I sitting evenly? Do I feel the inside swing of the horse's back? Make small corrections by shifting weight subtly rather than pulling on the inside rein.

Building feel and connection

Perhaps the greatest gift of riding from the seat is the deeper feel it develops. Because the seat communicates quietly, the horse learns to respond without tension.

Over time, this builds a partnership based on trust rather than force.

Exercise: On a relaxed walk, close both eyes for a few strides. Notice

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Weed Words

Triny Roe

The Northern Rivers is a popular destination for people fleeing big cities, seeking rural lifestyles. They buy a few acres or a hundred, or maybe a modest house site in a rural village subdivision.

Rolling pastures, grazing farmland on the outskirts of villages give way to the housing demand and developers. New settlers come, build homes and make gardens, plant fruit trees, herbs and vegetables.

Wherever you land, good luck with the weeds. There will be weeds. Carried by wind, water, and wildlife, on vehicles, on shoes, we pick them up on our clothing and carry weed seed to new locations.

Sometimes we buy them at a nursery and personally bring them home. There is no 'white list' of approved plants, and it can take years to get another species on the black list. Around 20 new weeds are listed each year.

Choose wisely what you plant. Native species will benefit the whole community. They are attractive, provide food and habitat for birds, bees, other wildlife and even people.

Do not plant more jacarandas, *Jacaranda mimosifolia*. (Sorry Grafton, I know you have a festival for them.) Pretty as a picture in Spring, in the Northern Rivers and SE Qld this spectacular purple flowering tree has become a pesky environmental weed. This probably means nothing eats its seeds.

Jacaranda seeds in their round brown woody pods have a papery casing giving them wings to blow on the wind, (no need for Red Bull).



Jacarandas pop up anywhere and everywhere, in bushland, on creek banks and along roadsides.

Another weed species with winged seeds is cats claw creeper, *Dolichandra unguis-cat*. Those pretty yellow flowers seen on the trees along Goolmangar Creek and many others in the Rainbow Region, belong to cats claw creeper, an insidious tenacious vine that clambers 30 metres up tall trees.

It grips the bark with tendrils armed with three pronged claws. Eventually it will smother the host plant, blocking sunlight to the leaves, resulting in its demise. The weight of the vines cause branches to break.

On the ground, cats claw forms dense mats. It's difficult to eradicate due to underground nuts deep in the earth from which it will readily regrow. Not to be confused with the Amazonian herbal remedy cats claw, *Uncaria tomentosa*, this cats claw creeper is useful for weaving. In entrenched infestations, consider harvesting the vines and prevent further seed production.

A Mullumbimby business weaves cats claw into eco-friendly coffins. If it's a new occurrence, kill! We don't need more. The winged seeds drift on the breeze to new

locations. Again, flood is another vector for this and many other weed species. There's a lot of flooding in the Northern Rivers and a lot of weeds. There will always be weeds!

Black taro, *Colocasia esculenta*, is another flood traveller. Reproducing vegetatively, it multiplies rapidly. Unfortunately not edible, this ornamental species chokes waterways and excludes other vegetation. If you see one appear, remove it promptly before there is a solid clump.

The ground cover, yellow flowering Singapore daisy, *Sphagnetocola trilobata*, should also never be planted in rural areas. Ignore permaculturists who recommend this. It's a serious environmental weed and once introduced, it spreads everywhere and is difficult to control. The stems root at every node.

Once popular and promoted for erosion management on slopes, it was introduced to Australia in the 1970s. By the turn of the century, it had outgrown its role and shown an ugly side. Mowing and slashing spread it and make it grow thicker. The key to control is follow up, follow up and follow up!

Get onto weeds early and reduce your workload. Happy weeding.

Parsley: Best food source of Apigenin – part 2

Nature's Pharmacy

by Trish Clough, Herbalist

Last month I wrote about a flavonoid called apigenin that is showing promise in autoimmune and other diseases. It is present in many fruits and vegetables, with the highest concentration in parsley. It also is plentiful in chamomile, celery and artichokes.

Because apigenin supports the immune system and has protective anti-oxidant effects, studies over the last 12 years have shown it may have beneficial properties against various cancers.

A review article in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* 2021 mentions that apigenin has actually been of "clinical interest" since the 1950s when it was found to have histamine regulating benefits and is "bronchodilatory".

The immune system is very complex. It creates many different cells and processes to achieve a balance between fighting infection and modulating inflammation. Cytokines play an active role in these processes.

Cytokines are signalling molecules produced by immune and other cells. They travel throughout the body, coordinating the activity of the immune system as needed.

The balance between stimulation and down regulation is complex and susceptible to dysregulation. In response to triggers such as invasion by an infectious microbe, cytokine levels can be overstimulated.

Infection-fighting cytokines create inflammation as they do their work, and this can lead to serious tissue and organ damage. For example, the 'cytokine cascade' associated with the Covid-19 virus

was severe in some people, requiring hospitalisation as it could be life-threatening.

US Herbalist Stephen Buhner listed a number of medicinal herbs that help reduce harmful effects of excess cytokine activity in coronavirus infections. These include Dan Shen, Japanese knotweed, Chinese skullcap, cordyceps and boneset.

Abnormal cytokine activity can help create autoimmune diseases, chronic inflammatory diseases and even cancer. Genetic predispositions, environmental exposures and past medical history also play a role in these disease processes.

While infection-fighting cytokines can produce excessive inflammation, the immune response is also regulated by a number of anti-inflammatory cytokines.

Studies show that pro-inflammatory cytokines can contribute to autoimmune inflammation. These cytokines include interleukin-1 (IL-1), tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-α) and interleukin-6 (IL-6). Elevated levels of TNF-α for example are associated with the development of several autoimmune and inflammatory disorders, including rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, and inflammatory bowel disease.

To make things even more complex, some cytokines can have both a pro- and anti-inflammatory role on different tissue states.

Anti-inflammatory cytokines help to calm down inflammation, enable tissue repair, modulate allergic responses and are associated with a regression in autoimmune damage.

The study I mentioned in last month's column showing a beneficial effect of

apigenin in an experimental model of the inflammatory eye condition called uveitis demonstrated a reduction in pro-inflammatory cytokines after four days of apigenin medication.

The uveitis was experimentally induced in the (unfortunate) mice. Inflammatory cytokine levels were significantly reduced in the apigenin treated group, along with reduced damage to the eye.

Further studies were done in a laboratory setting using human cell lines relevant to uveitis. It was found that the apigenin significantly blocked the inflammatory cytokines in this model also.

The studies have relevance for other central nervous system diseases, as the same type of immune cells, called microglia, are active in the eyes and the brain.

Of course there is a vast stretch from experimentally induced uveitis in mice to human autoimmune disease. But the research looks very promising although there are challenges using apigenin. It has limited bioavailability via the digestive system.

Considering food sources, it has been pointed out that 'heroic' amounts of parsley would be needed to reach a therapeutic amount, so it seems a concentrated apigenin supplement would be needed.

This would then require further research to see whether there were any adverse effects by combining apigenin (or heroic amounts of parsley!) with immune modulating drugs currently used in the management of autoimmune diseases.

But this research is potentially very valuable as the current drugs have some harmful side effects.

Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Kerry Hagan

We were given a swelteringly hot afternoon for our visit to Carol and Allan's garden on Gabal Rd at Lillian Rock.

When Carol and Allan first bought their old dairy farm way back in the 70s, one of the first things they did was plant many shade trees.

It was under the welcome shade of two now very mature Lilly pillies (*Syzygium floribundum*) and (*Acmena smithii*) that we began our wander around the extensive garden.

We were fortunate to see the final blooms of the magnificent native dendrobium orchids

Altogether a great afternoon which we managed to complete before the thunderstorm hit!

Thanks so much Carol and Allan.

The November garden is our final attempt to visit Carly and Scott's syntropic garden, having been cancelled three times this year due to the weather. Fourth time lucky, we hope!

5/56 Robb Road, Lillian Rock on Saturday 15th November, 2-4pm. Please bring a cup, a chair and a plate to share.

Also, the Garden Club Christmas party is being held on Saturday 6th December at midday, 336 Stony Chute Road (Nimbin side of landslip if works aren't finished).

Members, please bring a plate of salads, mains or dessert. Guests are welcome at \$10 a head, which covers food and wine or beer.



Photo: Kerry Kellaway

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WOK ON!

Food Matters
by Neil Amor

This cross between a saucepan and a frying pan was developed several thousand years ago in the Canton region of China, where fuel was scarce, although metal woks only started to appear in China in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), where it was first used for stir frying (an original Han Chinese innovation). The first woks found are little pottery models on pottery stoves in Han Dynasty tombs. There was usually only one fireplace, on which the whole meal had to be prepared. In order to make the best possible use of scarce fuel, the wok was hung directly over the fire. The uniqueness of wok cooking is conveyed by the Cantonese term wokhkei: “breath of the wok”, which is the distinct charred, smoky flavour given to the food. The main advantage of the wok, beyond its constructed material, is its curved, concave shape. This shape produces a small, hot area at the bottom which allows some of the food to be seared by intense heat while using

relatively little fuel. Its other advantage is it is capable of boiling, braising, steaming, stewing, roasting, searing, smoking, deep and stir frying all kinds of food. A more unusual use of a wok is cited in The Guinness Book of Records...Wok Racing. It cites the fastest speed on a four-person-wok is 96.61kmh (60.03mph) and was achieved by the ‘Red Chili Wok Rockers’ of Germany, in Innsbruck, Austria on 9th January 2011.

Lemon chicken
This dish can be utilised in various ways. Works equally well with pork, prawns, white fish, or tempeh. Add snowpeas and black fungi for a larger meal. The egg/flour coating will make it crisp.

Ingredients
300gm chicken thigh fillets, preferably skin on, trimmed and cut into 1cm slices
1 egg, lightly beaten
½ tsp sea salt
2 tbsp cornflour
Vegetable oil for deep frying
2 lemons
3 tbsp sugar
3 tsp white vinegar
Sichuan pepper
2 spring onions, sliced



Wok cooking in Nanjing

Method
Place the chicken, egg and sea salt in a bowl, toss together and leave for 20 minutes. Remove chicken allowing the excess egg to drip away, and toss in the cornflour until evenly coated. Heat the oil in a wok until just smoking and deep fry the chicken pieces until golden brown and cooked through. Drain on paper towel. Set aside on a warm serving plate. Finely grate the zest from ½ a lemon, then juice the whole lemon. Peel and segment the remaining lemon. Place the sugar, vinegar, lemon segments, zest and juice and 3 tbsp of water in a small pot over low heat, and cook, stirring, until the sugar dissolves. Bring the sauce to the boil and remove from the heat. To serve, pour the sauce over the chicken and sprinkle with a pinch of Sichuan pepper and spring onions. Until next month, eat well.

Flourish Sanctuary News

by Jagad Samuel

The Grail weekend has just concluded at Flourish Sanctuary, and it was a powerful success. Several men described the experience as life-changing – one even said it was lifesaving. It reminded us just how vital it is for men to have spaces where they can truly support each other, share honestly, and grow together. As a community we need to explore more ways to support men and women's wellbeing. It was a joy to welcome Mir to Flourish, reintroducing a Sufi influence at Flourish. Mir is planning to offer explorations into Perennial philosophy – the idea that philosophy and theology, metaphysics and science are ultimately speaking about the same truth in different languages. Keep an eye on the Flourish website for upcoming sessions. Monday Meditations, Jagad's morning classes, resume in November from 10.30am to 12pm, offering a simple, peaceful way to begin the week together in stillness and shared presence. Bodhi's class continue on Monday evenings from 5.30 to 6.30pm. With Jagad's health continuing to improve, Satsangs will also return, held on the third Sunday of each month from 1pm to 3pm. Satsang is a Sanskrit word meaning “gathering in truth.” It's a space for people to come together in reflection, dialogue, and quiet – exploring spiritual questions and listening from the heart rather than the head. It was wonderful to have Sattwa back at Flourish recently, and we're looking forward to learning more from him about Kriyas – ancient yogic practices that combine movement, breath, and



Mata, Babaji, Atmavani, Peter and Max last time they were at Flourish.

focus to awaken a deeper flow of energy and awareness. We also extend a warm welcome to Mata and Babaji, whose presence brings a new wave of devotion and inspiration. We expect they will be offering Havans in November, Havan's are traditional fire ceremonies that honour the elements and invite purification and blessing, as well as yoga classes. Our Wednesday mornings in the garden with Bodhi continue to be a peaceful and grounding way to spend time at Flourish. Working with the earth reminds us of our shared connection to life and to each other. On Thursdays, Michael offers his unique sound healing sessions, weaving together the resonant tones of Japanese singing bowls and the deep vibrations of the didgeridoo. These sessions are a beautiful way to realign body and mind through vibration and sound. Our Saturday KYM (Kirtan, Yoga and Meditation) gatherings remain a joyful highlight of the week. Rather

than heading to the gym, why not give your body, mind, and spirit something truly nourishing? Kirtan's devotional music uplifts the heart, yoga brings balance and vitality, and meditation restores inner stillness. Meanwhile, preparations are well underway for the upcoming World Peace Festival. This year's event promises to be vibrant, inspiring, and full of heart. We're seeking volunteers who'd like to gain experience and skills while being part of something meaningful – and fun! It's a wonderful way to connect with community, support peace, and celebrate life together. Tickets are now available at www.worldpeacefestival.com.au and it's shaping up to be a blast. Apart from the sound healing sessions, all regular activities at Flourish are offered by donation, making it easy for anyone to join in. You'll find full details of upcoming events at: FlourishSanctuary.com.au or you can message Jagad on 0433-173-508 for more information.

Utilisation in Ericksonian hypnotherapy

The other day I did a hypnotherapy session with a client coming for dental anxiety. During the session, a neighbour started drilling a wall, so I incorporated that sound into the hypnosis. After all, I work on the principle that we can be aware of a multitude of things, and if we have previously only concentrated on our problems, bringing awareness to the multiplicities shifts our consciousness to whatever happens around us, and not be fixated anymore on just the perceived issue. Incorporating the sound of drilling is a neat example of incorporation in therapeutic practice. I could've totally ignored the sound, but it was very loud and present – and quite funny, really, given what we were working on. Something that the client referred to at the end of the session. The sound, and my reference to it as one of many sounds, served usefully as a reinforcing tool, given that I was emphasising that one's attention can be on anything, and nothing at all. The art of incorporation is central to hypnotherapy, as is its counterpart, utilisation. What might otherwise be seen as interruptions are actually very useful



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

opportunities. The principle of incorporation is using the sounds, sensations, perceptions that arise during a session. Sounds of drilling, perceiving the texture of the rug draped over the client's legs, the softness of the cushion behind their back, etc, can all be used to deepen a person's trance. The principle of utilisation is similar, but refers to anything the client does: movements, words, facial expressions, breathing patterns (even breath itself), cognitive and emotional processes. All can be woven into the hypnotic language employed. I always employ awareness of breath into the hypnoses I do, because it is already a gift. While we live, we

breathe and we can use our awareness of our own breath whenever anxiety arises. Some hypnotherapists suggest deep breathing, but I find such a suggestion can cause a lot of problems. Getting someone to take deep breaths can create thoughts like, 'am I doing it right,' as well as possibly inducing hyperventilation. Awareness of an ordinary breath, on the other hand – breathing out and letting go and feeling more and more relaxed, pause, and breathing in the new – is always available to our awareness, and without stress. And, of course, the beauty of it is that breathing is occurring whether we are awake or asleep and we can be aware of it, or not, and whether we are a matter of choice. Just like anything else in our consciousness, problems included. I also often refer to the thoughts and memories that are likely and most probably arising as I'm doing a hypnosis, and I'm likely to say, “isn't it interesting that you can have this thought, or that thought, or that... and they keep coming and going like clouds in the sky, taking shape and form, and evaporating.” This technique is quick in

inducing a trance state. The point of this is that awareness is shifting all the time in ordinary life and when we pay attention to such processes our fixations on problems shifts. It's hard to hang on to a single iterative thought when we become aware of the multiplicities of things that arise. Milton Erickson, the father of the branch of hypnotherapy that I practise, saw the techniques of incorporation and utilisation as central to the creative process of hypnosis. The old idea of swinging a pendulum in front of a person's eyes, and making them focus on just that and ignoring all which is going on around them is unhelpful, in my view. I'm far more interested in bringing awareness to complexity than trying to control the person. It is in the awareness of complexity that we are able to choose what we attend to, which seems to me to be the whole point of therapy. We are free agents when we become aware of such things. Please email me to: dr_mccardell@yahoo.com if you are interested in receiving clinical hypnotherapy. It's all done on-line, which works well.

The root of all stiffness

Most people think that stiffness comes with old age. 'Old and stiff' seem to belong together. But the truth is, stiffness begins when we stop moving, and it usually starts in the tissues designed to give us stability. Take the thoracolumbar fascia. This remarkable sheet of connective tissue wraps our trunk like a three-layer corset, linking breath, spine, pelvis and legs. It's packed with collagen, the material that makes up fascia – strong, rope-like fibers that bind where load and stability is required.

When we keep moving, fluids circulate and tissues are able to stay more mobile and supple. When we stop?

These tissues, already dense in the lower back densify even more, laying down more collagen and thickening. That's when stiffness creeps in, not because of age, but because what is referred to as the 'Circle of Potential' becomes smaller, shrinks. Try this test: Stand up, reach your arms overhead as far as you can. Hold that stretch, take one deep breath in and out... then reach again. Did you go further the second time? Most people do. That's the Circle of Potential at work. Our 'operational maximum' is smaller than our true capacity, and unless we keep exploring those edges, the circle closes in. Given its extensive use and importance in daily activities like bending, twisting, and lifting, the thoracolumbar fascia is highly susceptible to overuse and strain. This can lead to inflammation, stiffness, and pain in the area, known as thoracolumbar fascia pain.

This condition can significantly impact mobility and quality of life, necessitating proper care and treatment. The good news? It's preventable and



by Sonia Barton

even reversible. With the right knowledge and the right kind of practice we can reclaim stability, mobility, and real function well into later life. Signs and symptoms of thoracolumbar fascia pain:

- Persistent lumbar spine pain and tightness;
- Locking of the sacroiliac joint;
- Decreased ability to expand the diaphragm during breathing;
- Reduced hip motion range;
- Walking difficulties or pain in the hips.

Effective treatments include:

Bowen technique
This helps to release the tension in the area and allows fresh blood and fluids to reach the fascia, to increase movement, reduce pain and encourage healing.

Myofascial release
This technique focuses on relieving tension and pain in the myofascial tissues surrounding the muscles. It involves gentle pressure and stretching of the fascia, promoting mobility and pain relief.

Yoga
Regular stretching of the central area of the body will increase blood flow into



the area and the organs, to stretch the fascia and increase mobility.

Physiotherapy
This is a good choice too when the professional can give you a set of exercises for core stability that you can do daily to stop the fascia from tightening up. So, to prevent pain in the first place, it's best to keep your body moving by walking daily, stretching often, and not sitting too long during the day. Also consider having regular bodywork treatments such as massage, acupuncture, Bowen therapy, and maybe take up swimming on a regular basis. And drink filtered water. An active and healthy lifestyle will keep you going for many more years and stop you from becoming stiff and sore.

Sonia Barton conducts clinics in Nimbin and Murwillumbah. Phone 0431-911-329; bowenenergywork.com.au

Plant of the month



Mango
Mangifera indica

by Richard Burer

Mango is a very common tree in the Northern Rivers and is particularly at home in the valleys of the Nimbin area. A native to tropical and subtropical south-east Asia, Mango is considered endemic to India where it has been cultivated for four thousand years. Referred to as the 'King of Fruits', the mango is highly regarded in the local area and the tree grows and bears fruit in a good season throughout most of the area. Locally the best variety to grow in my experience is Kensington, also known as Kensington Pride and Bowen (seed-grown or grafted). It is the most widely grown variety in the area, and it's thought to have come from India in the 1870's to Queensland. It grows true to type, so it can be reproduced with the same characteristics as the fruit you might propagate from. In Nimbin I selected a seed-grown tree that produced excellent quality fruit, had nice short form, disease resistance where possible with a reasonable yield, and I propagated from that tree to establish our orchard three decades back. Other varieties that I found suitable include Nam doc mai (grafted), a Thai variety, which could also be known as Banana mango due to its shape and an amazing wonderful fruit; The Glen, R2 E2 (bloody massive fruit) which was developed locally at Blue Knob; and Rosie Red (a small fruited common mango) which I selected and named myself due to its unknown origins. It is possibly a common mango from Asia or the Pacific that could have come back home with a returned soldier or a local grower returning home from India some generations back. If you want to grow high quality fruit locally, you need frost-free north-facing land with plenty of air around your trees as air flow will help control fungal problems. While it looks like a great fruit set this year, due to our traditional spring weather, you may have to hope that eventual summer rain and the punishing sun doesn't damage or disease fruit forming over the next months. Anthracnose is the most widely spread disease stimulated by rain and moist conditions. Remember, mango doesn't need to be a forest tree unless you want it to be a vegetative feature, a signature tree. It needs air and plenty of room between other mangoes or other trees. Mangoes stop bearing when they touch, so big spacing is required if you're planting an orchard. Mangoes don't respond that well to pruning, but I give considered pruning over the years to keep trees manageable. Good luck folks, Mango is the king of fruits and perfect for the large garden and the farm.

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