

Kicking off the year with Eternity

by Kerry Hagan

Nimbin Garden Club is kicking off the year with a visit to Amanda's place.

If you've never been to a Garden Club meeting, let me tell you it's always a great experience.

We meet in the afternoon of the third Saturday of the month and wander around a garden.

It's always fascinating to see what our hosts are doing with their land. Some are beautifully maintained, some are extraordinarily productive and some are an unholy mess like mine is!

Usually, because it's Nimbin, there is a proliferation of food production, and many of our hosts feed themselves very well from what they grow. On top of that, we finish the afternoon with an afternoon tea which is always a veritable feast.

So, come along, meet new people and have



Nimbin Garden Club notes

Nimbin Open Learning Centre courses



An example of gelli printing

Term one commences on Wednesday 4th February, with courses in gelli printing, creative writing and tetrakap etching. All \$80.

If you are interested, or would like more information, call 6689-1477 or check our Facebook page at Nimbin Open Learning.

The Open Learning program is an initiative of Nimbin Community School.

We welcome contributions from our community

Send us an article, review, photo or letter for our next edition



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Using the one rein stop

by Suzy Maloney

I absolutely love the one rein stop. It's one of the first things I teach my students, and we often revisit it at various points to ensure it stays easy and automatic for both the rider and the horse.

Basically, it's built on the foundation that a horse cannot buck, bolt, rear or pigroot when the body is bent. In order to perform these types of maneuvers, a horse's body needs to be straight. It's why many trainers ensure the horses head is bent while mounting for the first few rides and with green broke horses.

When we ride bitless, clarity and trust are important. Without a bit in the horse's mouth, we rely on the whole body conversation between us and our horse, rather than leverage or discomfort. This is where the one rein stop fits beautifully into bitless riding. It is not just an emergency brake, but a way to redirect energy, regain balance, and stay connected when things start to feel uncertain. It promotes communication, safety and connection.

The one rein stop means using a single rein to ask our horse to bend laterally through their neck and body, rather than pulling back on both reins to force a halt. When a horse bends, they cannot brace straight through their body or continue powering forward. The bend naturally softens their movement and invites them to slow down.

Lateral flexion encourages relaxation, chewing, blinking, and a softening through the topline. Instead of escalating pressure, we reduce it by changing direction. Many horses learn that this bend is a safe place to come back to when they feel worried, excited, or distracted.

One of the reasons I value the one



rein stop so highly is that it avoids the instinct to pull when something goes wrong. Pulling back on two reins can create confusion, pressure overload, or even panic if the horse does not understand what we are asking. The one rein stop gives us a more precise, one-directional conversation. We are not saying "stop now," but rather, "let's bend, slow, and come back together."

As with any skill, the one rein stop needs to be taught before we rely on it. We begin at the walk, in a calm environment, making sure our horse understands how to follow a single rein without feeling trapped. We shorten one rein and bring our hand gently toward our hip or upper thigh, keeping the movement smooth and predictable.

Sometimes it can help to press the hand holding the rein against the thigh, to stop it wobbling in midair.

It's important to make sure the other hand moves forward, giving rein so the

horse is able to bend. When people are first learning the one rein stop, these are the two most common errors: applying pressure to the outside rein, and a waving, wobbling hand on the inside rein.

We wait for the horse to bend their neck and allow their body to follow. At first, they may simply turn their head while continuing forward, and that is part of the learning process. We stay patient, allowing their feet to slow as their balance reorganises.

Sometimes they may walk in circles for a while, and that's OK. The moment they stop, we fully release the rein. That release is what teaches the horse that slowing down and stopping is the right answer.

As confidence grows, we can practise the one rein stop at the trot and canter, always building gradually and ensuring both sides are equally clear. In bitless riding especially, the one rein stop is not about control, it's about conversation. If we grab one rein in panic, our horse will feel that tension immediately. If we stay calm, balanced, and consistent, the bend becomes familiar and reassuring rather than alarming.

Ultimately, the one rein stop supports the values that draw many of us to bitless riding in the first place. It allows us to guide rather than force, to redirect rather than restrain, and to prioritise the horse's emotional and physical wellbeing. When we use it thoughtfully, it becomes less about stopping and more about maintaining trust, even when things don't go to plan.

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Be a responsible land-holder

Weed Words

by Trin Roe

Love the summer days – warm, wet, everything growing flat out. Time to get out and weed!

Landholders have a biosecurity duty and requirement to manage weeds on their properties. At a bare minimum, do not let them spread.

Depending on the region, different species have varying management requirements ranging from complete eradication to simply control. Control means don't let them spread. Do not let them set fruit and seed and cause further impact.

Look for opportunities to protect and enhance landscapes, be it in suburban block gardens, acreage lifestyle properties or working farms. Don't plant invasive species and appropriately manage the ones that are already present or arrive later. They will come, if not already there.

Much of the Northern Rivers was clear-felled and farmed. Dairying was popular after all the trees were cut down, irrevocably erasing vast

tracts of indigenous ecosystems.

The Big Scrub, a vibrant patch of subtropical rainforest in Northern NSW, originally covered 75,000 hectares. By the beginning of the 20th century, there was around 1% left after the farmers got through clearing as per the conditions of their occupancy.

Thousands of exotic plants

from all parts of the planet were introduced by the new settlers.

They replaced the thousands of

local species of trees, shrubs, vines,

epiphytes, and groundcovers that

made up the subtropical rainforest.

Not all imported plants are

problematic. Currently around

2,700 plants are on official

weed lists, and 400 of these are

considered serious problems.

In the late 20th century, tree

changers began to replace some of

the farmers. City folk bought old

banana and dairy farms, converted

the bails, planted vegetable gardens

and fruit trees. Many started

regenerating the forests.

Damaged ecosystems readily

allow the establishment of exotic

species. Nature will fill the

vacuum. Some of these weeds can

outcompete, outgrow, and smother

species we want to prioritise, our

food species, our bush regeneration,

and our ornamental gardens.

Some claim we need weeds to

restore the land to health. They

are playing a role. Though, if there

were no weeds, the native pioneers

would step up if the seed bank was

still intact. If not, the wind, water

and birds and bats would soon

transport the necessary seed to

needy areas.

Wattles are quick growing, shed

nitrogen-rich leaves and create a

fertile environment for regenerating

forest. Skip the lantana, madeira

vine, cats claw, giant devil fig,

coral tree, privet, groundsel bush,

ragweed and croton weed stages

and go straight to native forest.

There are a lot of weeds out there

and it can be hard to know where

to start. What are the worst weeds?



Weeds can be triaged. Ones that don't cause a problem and may even be useful all the way through to exterminate on sight. Identify and act promptly as required.

New weeds will continue to come. Some like parthenium weed, *Partenium hysterophorus*, will cause serious problems if it naturalises in NSW as it has in parts of Central and Southern Queensland.

Chook owners and hobby farmers look out for this pretty, frilly, fast-growing herbaceous weed. Several incursions into NSW originating from contaminated chicken feed have been identified and controlled. Seed can remain viable for 10 years, so it can be a sleeper and pop up anytime. Travellers from infested zones in Queensland can also carry seed.

Looking to escape the city and move to the Northern Rivers? If you're not familiar with local plant species, consider a vegetation survey to see what you might be up against. There will be weeds.

"Priced low for a quick sale" might mean quick sale before the weeds grow back.

Happy weeding.



Young globe artichoke plants

can be taken as a herbal tea, but I often prescribe

it as a tincture, and particularly in a general

herbal digestion mix. Other

herbs such as fennel seed,

ginger, meadowsweet and

chamomile can be included.

Globe artichoke is better

known for its delicious

flower buds which can be

eaten as a vegetable. The

immature flower bud has

a 'heart' at the base which

is cooked and considered a

delicacy.

It is also nutritious, and

particularly beneficial for

the gut microbiome with

its prebiotic inulin content.

It also contains valuable

minerals and vitamins.

The leaves of the artichoke

have been used throughout

history for their medicinal

benefits and have been

extensively researched.

Numerous studies with an

extract of globe artichoke

leaves have shown significant

reductions in triglycerides

(blood fats), total cholesterol

and particularly LDL

cholesterol (the 'bad'

cholesterol which is

inflammatory and associated

with poorer cardiovascular

health).

Blood sugar levels were

also improved. Studies

have also found significant

improvement in high blood

pressure from taking the

extract.

Globe artichoke leaves are

a classic liver health herb.

The extract can protect the

liver from damage

from toxins, it can encourage

the growth of new healthy

liver cells and increases the

production of bile.

This in turn supports

detoxification and digestion.

Another study found the

extract effective in treating

symptoms of IBS ("irritable</

The voyage of vanilla

Food Matters
by Neil Amor

Vanilla is the only edible fruit of the orchid family, the largest family of flowering plants in the world. There are over 150 varieties of vanilla plants. Just like grapes that make wine, no two vanilla beans are the same in flavor, aroma or colour.

This tropical plant is native to Mexico, specifically the humid tropical regions in the southeast of the country. The first people to use vanilla were the Totonacs, a pre-Columbian civilisation that lived along the Gulf Coast of Mexico.

The Totonac people had a sacred relationship with vanilla. According to their mythology, vanilla was born

from the blood of Princess Xanat, who fled to escape an arranged marriage. Captured and killed, her blood gave rise to the vanilla vine, which became a symbol of beauty and passion.

When the Aztecs conquered the Totonacs, they adopted vanilla. They called it "tilxochitl", which means "black flower." The Aztecs mainly used vanilla to flavour a cacao-based drink reserved for the elite and for religious ceremonies.

The history of vanilla changed dramatically with the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century.

Hernán Cortés, the famous conquistador, was introduced to a young, enslaved person from Réunion Island, Edmond Albius, who discovered a method for hand pollination. His technique involved using a small stick to transfer pollen from the male to the



Photo courtesy Wiki

female flower. Thanks to this discovery, vanilla cultivation quickly spread to other tropical regions, especially Madagascar, which would become the world's leading vanilla producer.

Today, vanilla is one of the most popular and expensive flavours in the world. Its high price is due to the complexity and intensity of its production process.

Additionally, natural vanilla is often challenged by synthetic vanillin, a much cheaper substitute made from lignin or petroleum.

However, for purists and gourmets, nothing can replace the richness and complexity of true natural vanilla.

The Guinness Book of Records states the largest vanilla slice record is held by

Dulwich Bakery in Adelaide, Australia, which created an 804.11kg (1,772.76lb) custard slice in July 2016, measuring 6 metres by 2 metres.

This no-cook vegan pudding has a good dose of soy and a double caffeine whammy hit of chocolate and espresso. Makes 1 very large or 4 normal serves.

Mocha Soy Pudding

1 cup chocolate buttons
1 pack of firm tofu, drained
1/4 cup soy milk
2 tbs strong espresso
1 tsp vanilla
pinch salt.

Melt chocolate in a heavy saucepan and let cool. Meanwhile, blend the tofu, milk, coffee, vanilla, and salt. Blend for 30 seconds.

When cooled, blend in the melted chocolate until smooth and creamy, about a minute.

Chill for at least an hour. Until next month, eat well.

Remembering the parts of ourselves that learned to leave

by Auralia Rose

Soul loss is a real phenomenon. Human beings have been annexing parts of their soul ever since they began reincarnating. Over countless lifetimes, fragments of our essence have become separated through trauma, fear or disconnection.

For Indigenous peoples, this is the form of soul loss that occurs when they are severed from their ancestral lands. This kind of loss is not merely emotional; it is spiritual, devastating and profoundly destabilising.

I would like to share a past life regression I recently facilitated for a woman, which demonstrates this truth:

This turned out to be a very sad lifetime. The boy's father feared that the people would not understand and that their family would be ostracised. Like many, he had forgotten his own connection, as had most of the tribe.

A decision was made to send the boy and his mother away. His mother had always supported her son, she still retained the memory of the sacred nature of who she was and where she came from.

He remembered existing as a vast, swirling mass of purple and gold energy. In that state there was no separation, no individuality as we



Photo courtesy Cambridge Uni Press

Forced from their ancestral lands, the boy and his mother sought refuge with another tribe. Though they were taken in, it was not their land, nor their people, nor their dreaming. The grief of displacement ran deeper than sorrow. It was as if a piece of them had been torn away and the profound spiritual disconnection caused their health to suffer.

Parts of their soul had been left behind when they were forced to leave, manifesting as emptiness, despair and disconnection. For them, land was identity, lore, memory, ancestors, kinship... The loss of their sacred sites, songlines and dreaming stories was real and devastating.

Mother and son both left their bodies early, each making a conscious decision to return home. They re-entered the swirling purple and gold energy and were reabsorbed into its joy and wholeness.

From this higher perspective, the boy's consciousness could review the life he had just lived and understand it as an experience of expansion. Even the pain had

offered evolution, not just for his own soul, but for the wider field of consciousness from which all souls emerge.

When an experience is too vast, too painful or too overwhelming for our soul to hold all at once, our survival response gets activated and a part of us steps away. The thing to remember though is that nothing is ever truly lost. Soul fragments do not disappear. They wait, held in time, memory, land and love, until it is safe to return home to itself.

When we retrieve our soul fragments, we become more fully who we have always been, enjoying a palpable inner peace, authenticity and alignment with our true purpose.

I offer a unique form of soul retrieval where you can retrieve 100% of your soul energy, empowering you to be all that you are, an unlimited creator within this life experience.

If this speaks to your soul and you would like to find out more, please call me for a chat on 0422-481-007.

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Connecting across species

I am sometimes accused of anthropomorphism in the way I talk about, and to, other animals but this kind of assumption doesn't sit well with me.

Descartes in the 17th century, as much as the behavioural psychologist B F Skinner in the 1950s, saw other animals as stimulus-response mechanisms that could be trained, but lacked an inner life. They saw the attribution of minds to animals as a clumsy anthropomorphism.

And yet the observation of other animals, as they go around their business of being in the world, seems to point to a whole lot more. There are many minds, and many ways of acting and responding to the world.

What tremendous arrogance assuming that we humans are pinnacle of evolution, after all we all share an evolutionary and interactional heritage and as such minds didn't just spring into being with human knowledge. But....

Before I go on, I'll define anthropomorphism and give a brief history into why some still think we cannot share the life world of other animals and have a knee-jerk reaction to those of us who think otherwise.

Anthropomorphism is defined as the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to an animal or object. The arrogance of philosophers and scientists has, until recently, dismissed

any

idea

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humans

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Do I talk to all kinds of beasties: birds, horses, dogs, cats, quokkas, octopuses, and the like. I did talk to a carpet snake once, as I patted his/her silky body.

Connection and communication does take place. And this is the key and, I think, why the accusation of anthropomorphising my relationship with other animals misses the mark.

I'm not assuming other animals share my emotional nor cognitive response to the world, nor do I attribute my experience to them. They are different in size, perspective, bodily shape, methods of engagement, experiences, bodily equipment (sense of smell, eyesight, muscle sense, etc). A cat is not a human, I know this. But....

Interestingly, people with such conditions such as schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, and bipolar disorder sometimes have a deficiency in theory of mind, as do those with severe developmental disorders.

Minds give rise to language and behaviour (direct and indirect), to the ability to manipulate, extract, count, navigate and connect with one another.

These are shared by other animals (though it is only now that we are understanding this more),

Those of us who observe and study other animals

notice these activities are widespread.

Birds, for instance, have complex skills, some more than others: navigational, the learning of complex songs, the creation of fancy nests, the engagement in stealing, pretending to steal (thus exhibiting a theory of mind, observed in corvids [ravens, etc] and the capacity to acknowledge the existence of other agents with motives and knowledge different from their own.

They make and use tools; recognise and work with abstract concepts; show grief, joy, compassion and even altruism and form relationships with humans.

Octopuses, as explored by that beautiful documentary *My Octopus Teacher*, with Craig Foster, and also Peter Godfrey-Smith in his book *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness*, we are starting to realise, have rich minds as well as a capacity for relationships with us and other species.

Anthropomorphism may have been used to undesirable ends in the past but the demonisation of it in the present day serves equally undesirable ends.

It severs our intuitive connection with the natural world and we need now, more than ever, to connect with all the creatures of the Earth for our continued health and life.



by Dr Elizabeth McCordell

Plant of the month



Firewheel
Stenocarpus sinuatus

by Richard Burer

A popular street tree in the area and a favourite landscape species, a local Firewheel tree can be found next to the laundromat in Nimbin, an excellent tree for that location. Take a look, as it gives you an idea of a local planted tree that's close to 40 years old.

I often don't include them in my commercial plantings, but I did this season and I'm impressed that it withstood instant dry intense heat and weeds, to grow handsomely. It looks good. It loves light and of course good soil is preferred.

A signature tree to Indigenous people, firewheel is flowering this February from the coast to well west of Nimbin where trees hang on in cleared rainforest as hardy as anything. They are a common species in older growth rainforest.

Easy to grow; winged seeds are up for the picking in the cooler months.

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Ipomoea alba
Photo courtesy Leon Levy Native Plant Reserve

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