

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



a truly wonderful afternoon on Saturday 21st February, 2-4pm at 'Eternity Springs', 483 Tuntable Creek Road.

Bring a cup, a chair and a plate to share and we really hope to see you there.



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 tetrapak 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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NIMBIN HEMP EMBASSY

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 Triny 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 crofton 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?

Passing the mantle

Nature's Pharmacy by Trish Clough

I have a big announcement to make concerning the Nature's Pharmacy column. Starting from next month, the column will be taken on by Sammi Allen, owner of the Nimbin Apothecary.

Sammi will have exciting things to write about, as she and her family are organically growing lots of herbs and manufacturing tinctures, oils and herbal teas for the apothecary.

Additionally, Sammi is available for dispensing in the apothecary several days per week.

I have really enjoyed researching and writing the columns and have welcomed the warm feedback and appreciation from readers. It's been a privilege and a pleasure to share knowledge and experience.

A little surprising when I looked back, but I have been doing the column for nine years.

Please don't think I'm retiring from herbal medicine

practice, as that's not the case. I've lived at Iluka for three years now, and made the decision I want to focus more on being a local herbalist for my small community.

Globe artichoke

For my final column, I am featuring the herb globe artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*), the leaves of which are a valuable medicinal herb.

I have been growing some plants so I can make a fresh plant tincture. Although it is a Mediterranean plant, I was surprised to see it does not have much tolerance for living in the hot summer sun (same as a lot of us really).

Fortunately, I planted some in different garden locations, and I found one semi-shaded garden bed is making them happy.

A good thing about globe artichoke is the leaves are huge, so unlike delicate herbs like chamomile, a good yield is possible from just a few plants.

The leaves are incredibly bitter, which is always an indication that the herb is beneficial for digestion. It

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



Young globe artichoke plants

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 bowel syndrome').

Sammi and I chatted about globe artichoke. She said, "It is one of my favourite go-to herbs for liver and gall bladder support. I like it because it's gently

supportive, rather than a hard and fast tonic."

She added, "We currently grow globe artichoke on the Nimbin Apothecary farm. We've just made our first fresh plant tincture that is now available from the dispensary."

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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 “tlixochitl”, 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 this royal drink by the Aztec emperor Montezuma. Impressed by its aromas, he brought vanilla pods back to Europe. Very quickly, vanilla

became a prized spice in the royal courts of Spain and France.

However, growing vanilla outside Mexico proved to be a major challenge. The reason? Pollination. Vanilla is a finicky orchid. In its native Mexican habitat, it relied on a specific tiny bee, the Melipona, for pollination. Without this bee, vanilla couldn’t produce fruit.

It wasn’t until 1841 that vanilla could be successfully cultivated on a large scale outside Mexico. This breakthrough was thanks 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
¼ cup soy milk
2 tbls strong espresso
1 tsp vanilla
pinch salt.

Melt chocolate in a heavy saucepan and let cool. Meanwhile, blend the tofu, milk, coffee, vanil-la, 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.

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.

I do talk to all kinds of beasts: birds, horses, dogs, cats, quokkas, octopuses, and the like. I did talk to a carpet snake once, as I parted 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....

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



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

any idea of mind in other animals, going along with the idea that humans are somehow superior in some way.

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 beings.

What, though, is this thing called “mind”? It is generally used to refer to a collection of mental faculties like consciousness, thought, perception, emotion, memory, and will, encompassing both conscious and unconscious processes.

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

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.

Plant of the month



by Richard Burer

It’s easy to see how one of our local rainforest nurseries named their enterprise after this iconic tree.

This stunning tree species in most rainforests is very common in the area, but often you don’t know it’s about, as its flowering abounds above the canopy, attracting valuable pollinators in its rainforest home.

A tree reaching 40 metres in rainforest environments, it is usually super old and fairly rare. I have seen a very big specimen at south Ballina that fits this description, and I originally thought it was a Moreton Bay fig (you’ll find it at the end of one of those sugar cane roads).

Locally I find that they grow to around 15-20 m in places Like Nightcap NP, Boatharbour NR and in regenerating and re growth rainforest.

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 a bit of protection, 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 regrowth rainforest.

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

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant: richard.burer@gmail.com

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:

She remembered a lifetime as a young Aboriginal boy, about 6-8 years old, tracing a diagram in the red earth with a stick while his people stood around him in a circle. He was trying to explain something he remembered clearly from before his spirit entered his body.

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

understand it – only absolute joy, bliss and unity.

At times, parts of this energy would separate to have unique experiences, yet nothing was ever truly separate. Each fragment retained its essence, always connected to the whole.

Eventually, a voice emerged within that golden-purple expanse, introducing the idea of incompleteness and the need for varied experiences. And so, part of that energy chose to enter the physical world, becoming the little boy now drawing in the dirt – trying to explain that all beings are, in truth, one great soul experiencing itself through many forms.

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.

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, not their people, not 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 every 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.

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Come visit us at our new location and help us celebrate being back in the Lismore community — same heart, new home!



Ipomoea alba
Photo courtesy Leon Levy
Native Plant Reserve

different removal techniques.

Locals who utilise the Black Road swimming hole will start to notice the effects of the weed management on both sides of Terania Creek.

The Council community grant

program is an excellent initiative which has provided a huge help to the Tuntable Creek Landcare group, and I encourage community groups to apply if you have a project in mind for the future.

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