Dear Members,

Now that the great flurry of activity associated with the September ASGAP Conference in Adelaide is over, it's time to shift focus and get to work on the newsletter. My apologies and thanks to those people who've had rather a long wait for responses to their correspondence this year.

In Adelaide Meryl Ritchie (Mackay) and I were fortunate enough to be shown round the "Red Ochre" production depot, and to enjoy dinner at the "Red Ochre Grill" before the Conference commenced (more detail further on), and I'd like to thank member Roger Fielke of Australian Native Produce Industries for arranging this for us, including the tasting of those raw materials with which we were unfamiliar. I only regret that time prevented us accepting his invitation to visit the ANPI nursery at Renmark while we were in South Australia.

During the Conference I attended the Study Group Leaders' Meeting on the first evening, and with Meryl's help, and the welcome assistance of Colin Jennings of South Australia, set up the Study Group display in the conference hall. Wendy Phelps of Longreach Bush Tucker lent me two beautiful but currently unobtainable posters for inclusion, and I purchased another in Adelaide to add to our existing collection, so it ended up being quite eye-catching and colourful, as well as informative. Colin also managed to find a few fresh specimens to augment the ones we'd scrounged.

One of the interesting seminar presentations was entitled "Bush Foods", and presented by Andrew Fielke, the chef at the "Red Ochre Grill". During the workshop session I attended member Ben Lethbridge's on Quandongs, and Andrew Beal's (ANPI) on Floriculture and Bush Foods.

The field trips gave me two firsts - Muntries (Kunzea pomifera) and Quandong (Santalum acuminatum) growing! The Muntries were at Aldinga Scrub on the Fleurieu Peninsula, and the Quandong trees were on "Wallowa", a grazing property deep in the Mallee. For me, the Mallee trip was the highlight of the excursions. It was just so different!

The other exciting event in September was the Bush Tucker Workshop organised by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in
Rockhampton. When you peruse the program further on, you'll notice some familiar names. This was a really great day, and part of its success was the wide cross-section of the community who attended and all their diverse interests. We also received a great deal of printed material to supplement the sessions and displays. My paper was well received, as were Eric Anderson's wonderful slides which accompanied it. As well, I set up a display table to complement the other, more commercially oriented ones around the room. The informal networking within the framework provided was extremely valuable to us all. We were royally fed - morning tea was hot finger food courtesy of Peter May from Rivers Bistro - pork chipolata sausages with bush tomato and red wine dipping sauce, and chicken rolls with bush tomato and wattle seed. Lunch was a buffet barbecue under the pergola prepared by Gerard Hill of Rosie's Bistro. We dined on beef fillet marinated with bush tomato and served with a choice of lemon myrtle and sweet chili sauce, mountain pepper mustard, or bush tomato salsa, accompanied by a tossed salad with bush tomato and a spinach salad with wild lime, chili and bush pepper dressing, wattleseed damper with lemon myrtle butter, and topped it off with wattleseed icecream! Definitely gourmet stuff. More detail later about the talks.

Does anyone have any information about companion planting using Australian plants? Please share anything at all you may have on the topic, as I have received a number of enquiries, most notably from the Permaculture group centred on the Capricorn Coast.

I have received preliminary notice of the first National New Rural Industries Conference to be held in Perth from 18-21 October 1998. For further information contact the organisers: Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd. ACN 008784 585. PO Box 890, Canning Bridge. Western Australia. 6153. Tel: 08 9364 8311. Fax: 08 9316 1453. Email: promaco@promaco.com.au

Don't forget to look for other items on the web if this is your thing. Try the June 1997 issue of the following on-line magazine http://www.global-garden.com.au or the site at http://www.ausbloom.com.au for growing info and a mail-order seed supply.

Regards,

Lenore Lindsay and Rockhampton SGAP.

WELCOME to the following new members/subscribers:

Una BARNETT: P.O.Box 952, Yeppoon. Q. 4703.
Iva GUASCHINO: 96 Irrubal Rd., Newport. N.S.W. 2106.
Michael & Anne-Marie SENTSCHUK: 9 Laurel Ave., Campbelltown. S.A. 5074.
John WRENCH: 14 Ennerdale St., Chermside West. Q. 4032.
EDIBLE SPECIMENS TABLED AT MEETINGS:

The specimen table has been very sparse due to the general drought conditions over the last few months.

25/7/97: Acacia decora (edible gum), Capparis sp., Diospyros ferrea var. humilis, Santalum lanceolatum, Terminalia oblongata, Leptospermum sp., and a number of Grevillea, Callistemon and Eucalyptus species (nectar).

22/8/97: Melaleuca linariifolia, and a number of Eucalyptus and Corymbia flowers.

26/9/97: Diospyros geminata.

24/10/97: Eugenia reinwardtiana.

EXCURSIONS:

6/7/97: Microscope session at Central Queensland University with Dr Kerry Walsh.

3/8/97: This was a full day round trip of around 180 km through the Morinish Rosewood area. From Rockhampton the convoy headed north-west through Ridgelands to Limestone Ridge, south to the old Rosewood gold diggings then Emu Crossing on the Fitzroy River, and westward home through Kalapa. We made a number of stops to check out vegetation, native wells, ruins and graves, etc. A patch of remnant scrub along a dry creek bed (with the inappropriate name of Boggy Gully) proved amazingly diverse. Within about 20m were 3 species of Geijera, 2 of Brachychiton, Sandalwood (Santalum lanceolatum), False Sandalwood or Budda (Eremophila mitchelli), a tall Hovea sp. and many other plants. Ted McHugh, a retired stockman who knows the country and acted as guide, reckons that the best Burdekin Plums grow on limestone, and we certainly saw some magnificent trees!

Acacia salicina, Alectryon connatus, A. diversifolius, Brachychiton australis, B. rupestris, Canthium odoratum, Capparis sp., Carissa ovata, Citriobatus spinosan, Cupaniopsis anacardioides, Diospyros geminata, D. humilis, Drypetes australasica, Erythrina vespertilio, Exocarpus latifolius, Grewia latifolia, Planchnella cotonifolia var. cotonifolia, Pleiogynium timorense, Santalum lanceolatum, Siphonodon australis, Capparis lasianthus, Cissus opaca, Enchylaena tomentosa, Eustrephus latifolius, Malaisia scandens, Opuntia tomentosa*.


Dear Mrs. Lindsay,

[1] Keep up your good work. I must owe you membership renewal; do tell, please.

[2] Plants of Tasmania has sold me a number of endemic Tasmanian plants in tubes, so finally I can participate in your Group's efforts to grow native food plants. In particular, I've got

- Rubus gunnianus, Alpine Raspberry, said to be "the best native Tasmanian fruit";
- Billardiera longiflora, Climbing Blue Berry, said to have edible 1.5cm fruit;
- Cenarrhenes nitida, Native Plum, said to have edible fruit;
- Tasmannia lanceolata, Native Pepper, whose dried fruits are said to be hot and spicy;
- Eucalyptus gunnii, Cider Tree, whose sap is a replacement for maple syrup.

Are there any other endemic Tasmanian food plants? Is there another member who has already grown any Tasmanian food plants? I'd like to hear of the experience.

[3] Wrigley & Fagg's Aromatic Plants, p 94, says Mimusops elengi has edible fruit -- 2 cm and orange. Also, that there is a specimen tree at Rockhampton Botanic Gardens. No common name give -- I've never heard this 15m tree mentioned in your newsletter, despite being a native plant. Do you know more about it? How does the fruit taste?

How about Opilia amentacea? [p 98]. "Ovoid, orange-yellow fruits are about 3 cm long and are edible." Pogonolobus reticulatus? [p 106]. Randia fitzalani? [p 110]

[4] In terms of food, seeds of grasses dominate our diets -- so I'm most interested in

- Echinochloa turnerana, an Australian native [no common name] said to already produce a fine crop of seed [like wheat?] after only two downpours totalling 10cm -- far less than required by sorghum or millet. With selective breeding, what could it do as a food crop? Any information? Could be the most important Australian contribution to the world diet, if it grows in drought.

Jack Thompson.
# Mimusops elengi (Tanjong Tree or Red Coondoo) bears oblong, pointed fruits which are orange-red at maturity. The mealy yellow flesh surrounding the large dark brown seed is edible but astringent, and attractive to Fruit Pigeons.

# Opilia amentacea (Catkin Blooming) is a tropical root parasite with a twining or scrambling habit. The illustration I have seen shows the fruit as creamy yellow, and I have no information about taste or preparation.

# Randia fitzalanii (Brown Gardenia) bears quite large (4-5cm across) brownish fruit containing numerous seeds, which were eaten raw by the Aborigines.

# I know Pogonolobus reticulatus by its former name of Coelospermum reticulatum or Medicine Bush. It is very common round Rockhampton, usually as a small shrub in regrowth or in open Eucalypt woodland, though I have seen it as a small tree with thick corky bark like a desert Hakea. The seed is reported to be edible as well as the fruit. However, I believe this plant's considerable potential is in the cut flower trade rather than as a food plant, as it has attractive, long-lasting foliage as well as small, white sweetly scented flowers and round green berries which turn black when ripe.

# I do not know Echinocloa turnerana, though the introduced species E. colonum (Awnless Barnyard Grass) and E. crus-galli (Barnyard Grass) are both edible raw or cooked.

# If anyone can give any more information on any of these it would be appreciated. (Ed.)

15 Patricia St.,
Karalee,
Ipswich. Q. 4306.

Dear Lenore,

......I have not planted any new edible native plants. I've been working rather long hours lately.

I think sending seed direct to members is a good idea. I have seed of Tetragonia tetragonoides at the moment, and I will have seed of Syzygium australe, Eugenia reinwardtiana, Myoporum sp., Eustrephus latifolius, Waterhousia floribunda, and perhaps a few other species in season.

I am looking for seed of edible sedges and grasses, aquatic plants, and small plants suitable for part shade in south-east Queensland.

Yours faithfully,
Judith Brass.

Terminalia ferdinandiana (cover illustration): The fruit of the Billygoat, Kakadu or Green Plum of the northern monsoon tropics has an extremely high vitamin C content (3150mg per 100g - Brand et al. 1983), and the tree also yields an edible gum. It is not surprising that it was highly prized by the Aborigines.
Dear Lenore,

... I too have subscribed to the new Bushfood magazine, which I find very interesting.

Not much happening here (Mid North Coast N.S.W.) at the moment. Just trying to decide which bushfoods to purchase for trial plantings.

I really enjoy reading the newsletter. Keep up the good work.

All the best,
Sue Arnold.

Australian Ethnography Institute,
P.O.Box 557,
Yass. N.S.W. 2582.
22 October 1997.

Dear Lenore,

You do a great job on the newsletter and I can't tell you how much it has encouraged me to plod on with what seemed like a completely thankless task of convincing West Australian Government groups of the value of such plants. It seems that they may have seen the light as I see that their new crops people have discovered that the world grows more than cabbages!

Regards,
Peter Bindon.

P.S. The publishers have suggested a few additions to the m.s. I'll do them soon as they are keen to go ahead.

Dear Lenore,

Thank you for your interesting newsletters.

Suggestions - When Australian food plants are given, could it be shown whether the plant grows in tropical or temperate areas or both. It would help as to which could be grown in the Southern areas of Australia.

Could you please publish a list of nurseries in various states which can supply a range of Australian food plants.

Best Wishes,
A.Rudnick.
We do have the names of quite a few nurseries on file, and I know that in the past I published a small list which was obviously not comprehensive – more a space filler actually – and invited people to send in information about either their own, or other nurseries that they knew of, especially if they had had dealings with them and could recommend them. Perhaps the time has come to start publishing lists, so if you’ve still got stuff to be included please send it in. (Ed.)

I take your other comment on board, Arthur, and will try to remember to mention it specifically if I can. Generally, anything reported as growing in Rockhampton (ie in the meeting or excursions lists) you can assume probably requires a frost-free climate to be grown outside without special care, unless it’s common in southern areas as well, in which case you'll no doubt recognise it anyway. "Tropical" can usually be interpreted as meaning a plant will grow in a garden as far south as Sydney. Of course, there are tropical trees in Melbourne, but they are perhaps not quite as healthy and flourishing as their Brisbane cousins.

Dear Lenore,

I thought I would write and tell you about the Bush Tucker Display we put on at the Regional Flower Show at Rochedale last weekend.

Val Watts from Brisbane Southside Branch got the idea first and asked me if I would help. Val’s husband, Fred, made her a special octagonal table for the display, as below.

This octagonal table was placed so that people could walk all around it. The central section of the table was raised and designed to hold plants in containers. Each main segment featured a different plant and Val displayed parts of the plant and items made from it in those sections, with a matching container plant in the special central section behind. Around the outside of the table were pockets containing recipes for the foods featured. These recipes were free for people to take, and they all disappeared before the first day was over. There were 16 recipes and 20 copies of each.

I had a square table in a corner of the room covered by a tablecloth featuring bush foods. I displayed potted plants and foods made from them with descriptions of plants and details of recipes printed on large cards. I’ll enclose some for you to see.
Glenn Leiper (author of "Mulooroo"), from Beenleigh, also brought in a mass of fruiting specimens which we laid on black plastic sheeting on the floor.

We had a small table with various books about native food plants and recipes for people to look at, and another small table with some of the commercial foods that could be bought from "Joliffe's Bush Tucker Supplies" at Yeerongpilly.

Val's display featured:
- **Bunya Nuts** (*Araucaria bidwillii*) - boiled, baked, fried and pureed.
- **Macadamia Nuts** (*Macadamia integrifolia*) - Macadamia biscuits and Macadamia Pie.
- **Beach Cherry** (*Eugenia reinwardtiana*) and **Riberry** (*Syzygium luehmannii*) - Lilly Pilly Jam, Lilly Pilly Jelly and Lilly Pilly Cordial.
- **Midyim** (*Austromyrtus dulcis*) - Midyim and Lilly Pilly Pie.
- **Lemon Myrtle** (*Backhousia citriodora*) - Lemon Myrtle Vinegar.
- **Flax Lily** (*Dianella sp.*) and **Native Ginger** (*Alpinia coerulea*) - Dianella Jelly and fresh ginger root tips.
- **Warrigal Greens** (*Tetragonia tetragonioides*) - Warrigal Greens and Macadamia Nut Salad.

My display featured potted plants:
- **Alpinia coerulea** (Native Ginger).
- **Davidsonia pruriens** (Davidson's Plum) - in flower.
- **Dianella atra** (Flax Lily) - with fruiting stem of **Dianella congesta** stuck into pot.
- **Eugenia reinwardtiana** (Beach Cherry).
- **Microcitrus australis** (Round Lime).
- **Sterculia quadrifida** (Peanut Tree).
- **Syzygium luehmannii** (Riberry).
- **Tetragonia tetragonoides** (Warrigal Greens).

These were supplemented with foliage and parts of plants from:
- **Alpinia coerulea** (Native Ginger) - showing edible root.
- **Araucaria bidwillii** (Bunya Nuts) - sprouted nuts.
- **Backhousia citriodora** (Lemon Myrtle) - with a sign saying, "crush me and see why I am called LEMON MYRTLE".
- **Backhousia anisata** (Aniseed Tree).
- **Backhousia myrtifolia** (Carrot).
- **Macadamia integrifolia** (Queensland Nut).
- **Persoonia cominsi** (Broad-leaved Geebung) - with fruit.
- **Persoonia virgata** (Geebung) - with fruit.

In front of the appropriate plants, were plates of food with the recipe for each printed on large cards:
- Boiled Minced Bunya Nuts - in a glass jar.
- Bunya Nut Ice - sweets in glass jars.
- Macadamia Nut Toffee.
- Bunya Nut Biscuits.
- Jan's Bunya Nut Fruit Loaf - this is really nice and I shall make it instead of a Christmas cake this year.
- Cheese and Nut Loaf - savoury loaf that can be sliced and buttered.

Glenn Leiper’s specimens included:
- **Acronychia imperforata** - fruit
- **Austromyrtus dulcis** (Midyim)
- **Backhousia angustifolia** (Curry Bush)
- **Backhousia anisata** (Aniseed Myrtle)
- **Backhousia citriodora** (Lemon Myrtle)
- **Backhousia myrtifolia** (Carrot)
- **Dianella congesta** (Flax Lily) - fruit
- **Hibiscus tiliaceus** (Cotton Tree) - buds
- **Macadamia integrifolia** (Macadamia Nut) - fruit
- **Microcitrus australasica** (Finger Lime) - fruit
- **Pleioogynum timorense** (Burdekin Plum) - fruit
- **Rubus fraxinifolius** (Native Raspberry) - fruit
Rubus rosifolius (Native Raspberry) - fruit
Tetragonia tetragonioides (Beach Spinach)
Trachymene incisa - tubers - these have a lovely sweet crunchy taste.
(I think there may have been a few more, but I just can’t remember them.)

Joliffe’s Bush Tucker Supplies featured:
Anzac Biscuits - made with ground wattle seed
Bush Tomato Chutney
Native Current Jelly
Bush Tomato - ground
Lemon Myrtle - ground
Native Peppermint - ground
Wattle seed - ground.

Our display caused a lot of interest and stimulated sales of our “Go Native - Wild Food Cookbook”. We also sold a few copies of “Wild Lime”, which I think is quite a good bush food book.

After the Flower Show was over and everything cleared away, we had a late afternoon tea and I released my cooked foods to the members there. Everything was eaten and they were asking for more; so I guess my cooking must have been up to scratch.

I tried a new approach with the Candle Nuts a couple of weeks ago. This time I boiled them in their shells like I do the Bunya Nuts. However, they developed the most repulsive smell, which I couldn’t tolerate. When I opened them up, the nuts tasted okay and I ate about four of them. Half an hour later I developed stomach cramps and vomiting. This lasted about an hour. I have decided to leave them for a while (until I forget the awful smell) and will try roasting them next time.

This year I am going to concentrate on storing and preserving various foods. Drying flavoured leaves like Backhousia spp., cooking or freezing various fruits, and freezing nuts. If Val and I are still up to it next year, we hope to repeat the display for the Flower Show; so it is important to have as many foods as possible available. We didn’t really have much variety in any quantity for cooking this time.

I obtained three Bunya Nut cones in March this year, which each yielded around 80 nuts. Most of these were boiled, shelled and minced finely. They were then frozen in plastic bags in 1-cup quantities. This makes them very easy to use in cooking. I had half the freezer compartment of my refrigerator taken up with Bunya Nuts.

The Bush Tomato (Solanum centrale) is an inland species, which will not grow here. Solanum aviculare, which is a local shrub here, has edible fruit when they are quite ripe. If I can obtain some of these, I intend to dry them and see if they are as good as the Bush Tomato. I had them growing in my garden many years ago. It is a short-lived plant, only 2 or 3 years, but easily grown from seed.

Hope you have an enjoyable time at the Adelaide Conference. I am sorry I am unable to attend.

I guess you will hear about SGAP Qld. Region’s Home Page on the Internet while you are at the Conference. We went on-line last week. John Reichelt has done the hard work of setting it up. I have provided the information and articles, and Lorna Murray and I have checked it for mistakes. John hopes to update it regularly on a 3-monthly basis and I think he expects me to edit and provide the material for it. The Internet address is:


Regards,

Jaw.
Dear Lenore,

First of all, find enclosed the $5 for my membership renewal.

Well, my bush food garden here in Mudgee is slowly taking off. My dog has also proven himself to be a keen gardener of bush tucker plants giving most of them a very heavy, but regular pruning - most seem to eventually grow back thicker and healthier than ever. He even digs out the ones he thinks I have planted in the wrong spot! Unfortunately those plants are always the ones that are hardest to get hold of.

The warrigal spinach is starting to take over the back yard as it received some shelter from our fairly severe frosts. In fact, I just cut it back by a metre or so and it's still massive. The spinach in my front garden had next to no frost protection and it nearly died, but it's coming back again now. Hopefully next year my newly planted gum tree will give it some protection.

The following are just now starting to grow well: quandongs, raspberry, bulbine bulbosa (which is self seeding everywhere now), mydiam (I'll learn to spell that one soon), muntries and so on. The mints are starting to grow back after dying back over Winter and hopefully the native basil will soon follow. I haven't quite given up with my Bush tomatoes yet (killed about 13 at last count) - I think we're all in the same club with these "strange new" plants and how to grow them.

Thanks for the pig-face cuttings you sent me. I put it in some seed raising mix and it started growing after a few months. However, I may have made the mistake of transplanting it yesterday into normal potting mix as although it was growing it appeared to have no roots. I gave it some of the Maxicrop liquid hormones (which is mainly a transplant stress reliever) and have my fingers crossed. I'll keep you informed of my progress.

Finally, after three years of searching for those elusive Billardiera (cymosa and scandens) I'm afraid to say I'm still searching. They are still proving extremely hard to get hold off so if anyone knows where they can be obtained from please drop me a line while I still have some hair left!

Oh, and the books reviewed in the recent newsletter appear very good. I just purchased Wild Food Plants of Australia (Tim Low) about a month ago and can recommend this book to anybody wanting a good "picture" guide to take with them on trips. The book Wild Lime also appears really good and I'll soon be trying out the spinach soup recipe (I don't know what else to do with the spinach - at the moment I've been composting my garden with it so if anyone has some good recipes.....). I'll send in my results for the next newsletter if I remember.

Keep up the good work.

Craig Heading.
Dear Lenore,

Enclosed is a money order for $5.00 for my subs. I have subscribed to Bush Foods magazine, as mentioned by you in the February newsletter. I find it informative. It is of course an industry oriented journal, with an emphasis on presently identified commercially viable crops. The vast wealth of Australia's food plants is still being subjected to a lot of scrutiny, from scientist, specialists and laymen alike. We could have a long way to go yet.

I had a few plums on my Illawarra plum this year, but the Drongo beat me to them gobbling them up before they were ripe, I reckoned. The plum bearing tree (about 6 yrs old) gets a lot of redish new growth, whereas the other tree (10 yrs old) only gets light green new growth. I am currently enjoying my Warrigal Greens, and cannot understand why they aren't a popular garden vegetable. It is dead easy to grow. They have a good 'spinach' taste, but do need that blanching first. It is a hell of a lot better than the new generation Spinach I tried last summer & autumn. One plant provides more than enough for two people. I am pruning mine regularly, to maintain fresh new growth, and to keep it under control.

I am trying to grow another Tasmania insipida. It is not doing too well above the agpipe on the eastern side of the house. I'm also trying both Rubus parvifolius and R. rosifolius, and I've got plenty of seedlings to experiment with. My Cissus hypoglauca did not germinate so well. I only got one to germinate. Gotta keep trying, I guess.

I now find there are so many books on so many aspects of bush-food, that I can be selective about the books I buy on the subject. But many of these books are very similar. This is as much a problem with books on Aussie plants as plants in general. People seem to favour the flavour of the time, I suppose.

Thank you for the last newsletter. I see the group is well distributed. Keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully,

Bob Buck

I do enjoy the way I can change my writing style on a Mac

HAVE A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Bob Buck
3 Currawang Place
Como West
N S W 2226
5 July 1997

Dear Lenore

Allan and I were at the home of the late Dick Dietsch today and members of his family asked that I pass on to you the sad news of his death. Although the family does not share Dick’s love of plants and gardening, they had heard him mention you name on several occasions and of your work with bush tucker. Perhaps you have already heard but just in case you have not been advised, Dick died on 10 May.

Dick had not been very well for the past couple of years. He still attended an occasional meeting of our Sutherland Group. However from about the beginning of this year he has been in and out of hospital and became seriously ill in March and was hospitalised until his death. Fortunately he died peacefully and apparently had been in good humour right to the last.

Typically of Dick’s thoughtfulness, he bequeathed his very large collection of books and magazines to Sutherland SGAP.

No doubt you have recovered from the stress and excitement of that most successful Conference in Rockhampton last year. It certainly left us with many happy memories of a most friendly Group.

Good luck for the future and we hope that the Food Plants Study Group continues to flourish. Incidentally, at our June meeting of the Sutherland Group we had a most successful bush foods night. Vic Chericoff was a very entertaining guest speaker. Plenty of interesting Aussie spreads, but we did miss your delectable Finger Lime Jam!

Kindest regards,

Moreen Woollett

DINNER AT THE RED OCHRE GRILL, ADELAIDE, 26.9.97.

APPETISER: Wattleseed and walnut bread; focaccia bread; macadamia oil; mixed dipping spices.

We asked the friendly waitress what the ingredients of the duha (not sure of the spelling) were, but her response was, understandably perhaps, that it was a trade secret. However Meryl and I identified aniseed myrtle, coriander, cumin, macadamia nut, salt, pepper berry, and bush tomato among the coarsely ground herbs that constituted this delicious starter. A piece of bread was dipped in oil then the mix, and agreeably stimulated the tastebuds, while we perused the rest of the menu.

WINE: White Ochre dry white 1996 from McLaren Vale, South Australia.
ENTREES: Bugs and scallops tempura with wild lime and chili marmalade, served on a bed of fried noodles.

Mixed mushrooms, shallots and warrigal spinach in a pastry puff with red wine and pepperleaf cream sauce.

Both delicious, with light, crisp batter on the tempura, and particularly rich and subtle flavours and textures in the mushroom dish.

MAINS: Chicken breast stuffed with prawns and warrigal greens, baked in tofu skin and served with a mandarin and lemon aspen butter sauce.

Emu fillet with Illawarra plum glaze accompanied by bunya nut and yam mash.

SIDE DISHES: Salad greens with lemon aspen and macadamia dressing and toasted pop-wattleseed.

Seasonal vegetables steamed with lemon myrtle.

Meryl was not feeling over-adventurous, and was more than happy with her choice of the chicken with its tangy sauce. I was a little dubious about the emu, wondering whether it might be too gamey or tough, but determined to make the most of the opportunity. No such thing! It was rich, melt-in-your-mouth tender, and the mash was a triumph - a perfect marriage. The side dishes were much too large; one would easily have sufficed between us. They were fresh and colourful, nicely presented, and the vegetables just sufficiently cooked. (The veges were pretty standard - broccoli, snowpeas, young corn, baby squash, as was the salad). The pop-wattle was wattleseed that had been popped over dry heat like popcorn. It added different flavour and texture, as well as visual appeal to the salad.

At the next table an overseas visitor was waxing ecstatic over his loin of wallaby, and the restaurant was full of similarly enthusiastic diners if the snatches of overheard comments were anything to go by.

DESSERT: Quandong pie and Tarago River rich cream.

Red wine poached pear with macadamia and muntries filling accompanied by a compote of mixed dried fruits.

Both the desserts were very rich and heavy, though delicious. We identified quandong, Davidson's plum and muntries among the fruit in the compote. This course was possibly the only weakness in the menu, as the choice did not include lighter offerings such as icecreams, a sorbet or fresh fruit dish using bush foods. The individual items sounded scrumptious, but after sampling the other courses, a large serving of warm pudding or pie might not have been to everyone's taste, and we were a little disappointed at the lack of balance.

After our Herculean efforts (all in the name of research of course) we couldn't cope with coffee or any of the other possible "afters", and called it a night. While not cheap, it was certainly not exhorbitant, and in our opinion, worth every cent for what was not only a meal of high standard, but a celebration of something uniquely Australian.
Peter May (chef) demonstrated two dishes and emphasized that he believed that "fusion cooking" was the way to go. Just as Australian chefs have adopted and adapted Asian ingredients and styles to create a cuisine that is internationally recognized as Australian, bushfoods will find their place the same way. At the moment there is still a novelty element that can result in overkill and frightening people off, but the assimilation has begun. He, personally, is excited by some of the new tastes and textures, and his enthusiasm as he discovered others was infectious. He also praised some of the commercially available products such as a macadamia and lemon aspen salad dressing which he serves with a warm prawn salad. In front of the group Peter prepared Lamb in lemon aspen and sweet Thai chili marmalade, and a chicken breast pocketed with camembert and bush tomato chutney, seared and seasoned with bush tomato and wattleseed powder, cooked in paperbark and served with caper berries.

8.30-8.50am  WELCOME
8.50 - 9.00am  Opening Address - Jean McRuvie
               Senior Marketing Specialist - DPI
9.00 - 9.30am  Bush Tucker an Indigenous Perspective (Bob Muir)
               For Bush Tucker (Lenore Lindsay)
               Durrambul People (Queensland Society for Growing Plants)
9.30- 10.00am  Local species (Lenore Lindsay)
               Yeppoon Rainforest Nursery (Pat Delalande)
10.00 - 10.30am MORNING TEA - displays of resources/materials
10.30 - 11.00am Species selection - Which ones and why
               Sourcing plants (Lenore Lindsay)
11.00 - 11.30am Native Harvesting/Marketing (Wendy Phelps)
11.30 - 12.30  Cuisine Preparation (Peter May)
               River's Bistro (Rob Fletcher)
12.30 - 1.30pm LUNCH - displays of resources & materials
1.30 - 2.00pm  Getting into networking/Marketing (Sammy Ringer)
               Australian Bushfoods Magazine
2.00 - 2.30pm  Quality Assurance Regulation (John Wrench)
2.30 - 3.00pm  Entering New Industries (Rob Fletcher)
               University of QLD Gatton College
3.00 - 3.30pm  AFTERNOON TEA - displays of resources & materials
3.30 - 4.00pm  Business Planning - Getting it together (Jean McRuvie)
               Marketing Specialist - DPI
               University of QLD Gatton College
4.00 - 4.30pm  The Next Step (Dennis Murphy) - DPI
               Panel Members Q & A
CLOSE