

Wiradjuri Plant Use
in the Murrumbidgee Catchment

compiled by Alice Williams and Tim Sides

Murrumbidgee
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

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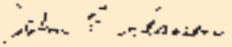
The food, fibre, medicine, shelter, ceremonial and other uses of each plant is wide and varied. Each plant may have been prepared in different ways by different Wirdjuri people. The Murrumbidgee CMA does not recommend these plants for food, medicinal and other uses and offers no recommendation as to the preparation of these plants, or the use they might be prepared for. Some plants are dangerous and might have harmful effects if not identified and prepared correctly. The Murrumbidgee CMA accepts no responsibility for any accident arising from the use of plants mentioned herein.

Foreward

The Murrumbidgee CMA works in partnership with Aboriginal communities to achieve positive natural and cultural heritage outcomes. The objective is to increase the cultural knowledge of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people and to create a greater understanding, awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal cultural heritage values by all of the Murrumbidgee catchment community.

This book was developed in consultation with local Aboriginal communities within the Murrumbidgee catchment. Through the publication and printing of this book the Murrumbidgee CMA hopes to open doors for greater involvement in Natural Resource Management by Aboriginal communities.

This publication will enable Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people to have a permanent record of their Aboriginal cultural heritage values of native vegetation within the Murrumbidgee catchment. It will also enable the Murrumbidgee CMA to protect and enhance the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of native vegetation.



John Searson
General Manager
Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority

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Clinton Murphy and Aunty Sonia Piper, Brungle



Steven Meredith, Raylene Eades and Laurence Clarke, Griffith



Honor Lee, Alice Williams, Phillip Kerr and Ian Woods, Hay

Community Meetings



Wagga Wagga Community Meeting



Narrandera Community Meeting



Michael Lyons, Narrandera



Ian Woods and Phillip Kerr, Hay



Darlington Point Community Meeting



Aunty Sonia Piper and Clinton Murphy, Brungle

Community Meetings

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Introduction

The Murrumbidgee CMA is committed to achieving a greater understanding and awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Murrumbidgee catchment. The Murrumbidgee CMA is working in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities across the Murrumbidgee catchment to achieve positive outcomes in Natural Resource Management and to create a greater understanding, awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the landscape.

This book is a contemporary guide to the identification of plants within the Murrumbidgee catchment and their significance and cultural use for the Wiradjuri people. The Wiradjuri Cultural Landscape Mapping Project, of which this publication is a product, consulted widely with local Aboriginal communities across the Murrumbidgee catchment. The consultation process involved the collection of information on the Aboriginal cultural heritage uses of native vegetation.

Through the publication of this book the Murrumbidgee CMA is facilitating and planning for greater involvement of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people in Natural Resource Management.



This book is a resource for Aboriginal communities and the broader community alike to access, to further an understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage uses and significance of native vegetation within the Murrumbidgee catchment. It will also enable the Murrumbidgee CMA to protect and enhance the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of native vegetation through its projects for the protection and enhancement of culturally significant vegetation.

This book only provides a brief overview of the plants listed. A description of the plant's traditional uses is also recorded, in the detail requested by the Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people of the Murrumbidgee catchment. This list does not cover every plant and every use that was, and in many cases still is, undertaken by Aboriginal communities, but helps the reader to increase their knowledge of plants that are significant to the Wiradjuri Nation. As many of these plants and related species grow throughout Australia this book will be useful for a wide range of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people and the wider community to identify and relate native vegetation to traditional Aboriginal uses.



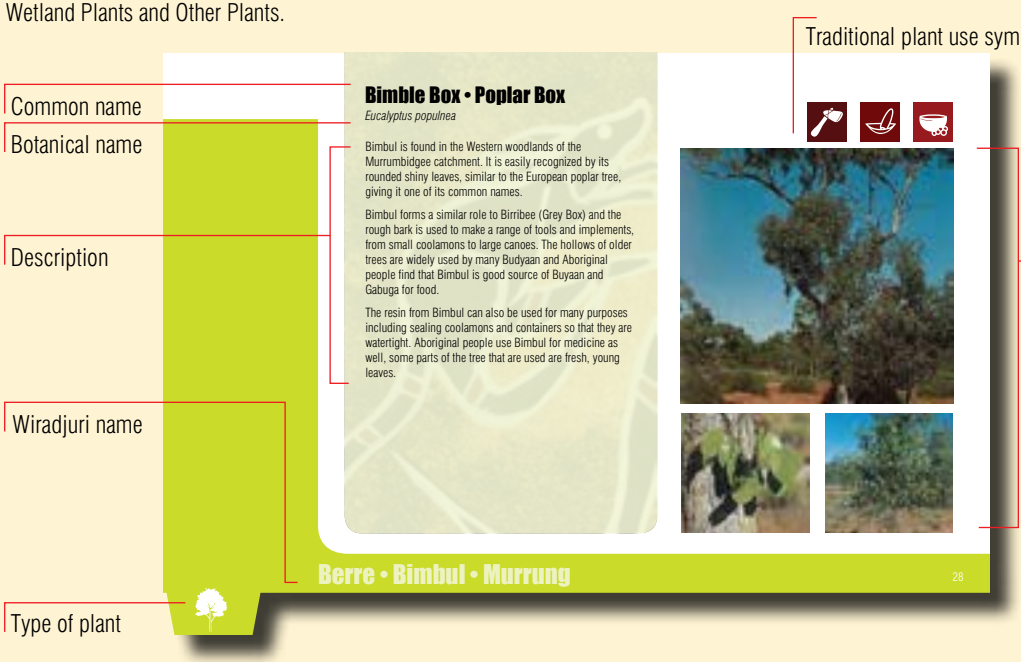
The plants listed begin to draw a picture for the reader as to what areas of the landscape are important to Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people and can provide a starting point to identifying plants that are significant to Aboriginal communities.

For further plant descriptions to aid in identification please refer to the References and Further Reading.

More information can be sought from the holders of traditional knowledge. These knowledge holders have indicated to the Murrumbidgee CMA that they are willing to be contacted. The Murrumbidgee CMA Catchment Officer, Aboriginal Communities should be contacted to provide the details of the knowledge holders. The Murrumbidgee CMA reserves the right to not pass on the details of the knowledge holders.

How To Use This Book

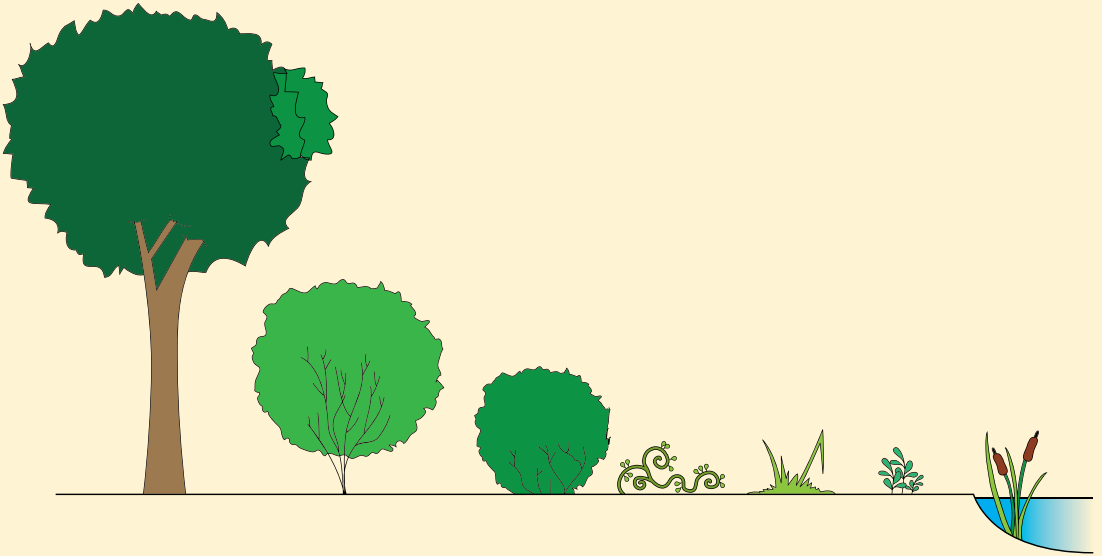
The plants are listed according to their place in the structure of a woodland: Trees, Shrubs, Bushes, Grasses, Herbs and Forbs, Wetland Plants and Other Plants.



Wiradjuri language is used throughout this publication. Please refer to Glossary on page 94.

Tools / Implements	The plant is used to make tools and implements such as boomerangs, spears, axe handles, coolamons, canoes, rope, and baskets.
Medicine	The plant is used for a specific medicinal use or broadly utilised for a number of health issues.
Food	The plant is either a source of food through its fruits, roots and leaves or habitat for other food sources such as warral, gabuga, budyaan and mandiyaba.
Shelter	The plant provides protection from the elements, using parts of the plant, such as bark, to make small huts, or hollows that can shelter people.
Fire	The plant can be used to make fire, or carry fire from one location to another.
Water	The plant stores water in roots or stems, or is an indicator water is nearby.
Fish Poison	The plant can be used to stun fish in waterholes, making them easier to catch. Fish Poisons are usually made from the bark or leaves of a tree and added to waterholes that remain when a creek, river or wetland dries up. Common fish to be caught and eaten include Dangur, Gugabul and Gagalin.
Dye / Paint	Parts of the plant, such as fruit, are used to make dye and paint.
Spiritual / Ceremonial	The plant has known spiritual qualities or is used in ceremonial activities.

Woodland Structure



Trees	Other Plants (Parasites)	Shrubs	Bushes	Other Plants (Vines)	Grasses	Herbs and Forbs	Wetland Plants
One trunk (Guulany)	Grows on other plants	Many stems (Galgang)	Many Stems (Barrinan)	Creeps or climbs	Narrow leaves (Buguwing)	Wide leaves (Dirramaay)	Found in or near water (Badin Badin)

Plant Names

Wiradjuri Name

Some common Wiradjuri language to describe trees and animals has been used throughout this book. These Wiradjuri words are explained in the glossary on pages 94 and 95. The Wiradjuri names for these plants have been sourced from Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people who attended community meetings held across the Murrumbidgee catchment, and texts such as *A First Wiradjuri Dictionary: English to Wiradjuri, Wiradjuri to English and Categories of Things*, and *Wiradjuri Heritage Study For the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area of New South Wales.*

Common Name

Many plants have a variety of common names, this book has tried to use the single most common name used in the Murrumbidgee catchment. Some plants, such as *Acacia pendula* have two common names, Boree and Myall, used equally as widely. Others, such as *Amyema species*, have a common name used by Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people and their more widely known common name, such as Snotty Gobbles and Mistletoe.

Botanical Name

The plants in this book have been listed according to their scientific name, this is how they are described botanically, in Latin. The first part to the botanical name is the Genus, this is a description that describes a particular plant and its close relatives so that they are grouped, for example *Eucalyptus* describes all the box, gum and mallee trees. The last part of the botanical name is the Species, this is a further naming description that sets the plant apart from all other plants and is commonly based on a Latin word (*tomentosa* means ‘of the sun’, indicating the bright red berries of *Enchylaena tomentosa*).

Blackwood

Acacia melanoxylon

Mumbil wood is very hard and is used to make spear-throwers and shields and the bark is used to make string.

The bark is also heated in water and used to treat aching joints. Other medicinal purposes are as a body wash to treat cuts and sores, as a mouthwash and to treat infection and stomach cramps.

Like most Garal the seeds were collected and ground into flour for cooking.







Boree • Myall

Acacia pendula

Buuri was once a widespread woodland tree on the Murrumbidgee floodplains, with clearing and grazing it is no longer as widespread as it once was. Early descriptions of what is now the Western Riverina grasslands is one of an endless sea of Buuri where early explorers couldn't see more than a few hundred metres at a time. It suckers readily and grows rapidly to its maximum height of around 4 metres when ungrazed.

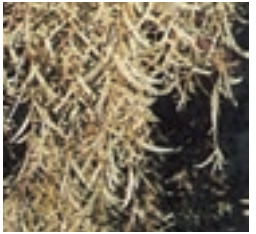
Like most Garal the seeds are a valuable food source to Aboriginal people and provide a staple flour to make bread with.

Tools and weapons such as boomerangs, digging sticks and clubs are made out of the Buuri's hard wood.

Buuri is an excellent shade tree and is used as shelter on hot summer days.









Cooba • Black Sallee

Acacia salicina

A small to large tree, Guba can grow as high as 20 metres tall. It has drooping branches and green leaves, like a willow.

Aboriginal people use the wood and resin to make and repair a range of tools.

It also is used as a medicine and is known to be used as a body and mouth wash.







Deane's Wattle

Acacia deanei

Garal is a name for all wattles. This Garal is a small tree that grows to around 5 metres tall.

The bark is covered with small hairs and is used by Aboriginal people to make string and rope.

It flowers most of the year, so there are always seeds available to be ground into flour.

Garal is also used as a medicine and the bark is used by Aboriginal people to make a fish poison.

The tree is known as a men's spirit tree.







Golden Wattle

Acacia pycnantha

This Garal has very tough wood which is widely used for tools by Aboriginal people.

The resin and gum is eaten by Aboriginal people before it becomes too hard.

Aboriginal people also know of medicinal properties.







Green Wattle

Acacia trineura

A small tree to around 5 metres high, Yulumbang has deep green leaves and a bark high in tannin.

The bark tannin is used by Aboriginal people to make fish poison.







Hickory Wattle

Acacia implexa

Gidya has a rough, cracked grey bark and a very hard wood. This makes it extremely useful for making string and rope that can be used to hold tools together as well as provide wood that will not break easily and can be shaped to be used for a variety of tools such as boomerangs and digging sticks.

Gidya seeds form in coiled pods and can be ground into flour, like most Garal seeds.

The bark is also used to make fish poison and used as medicine.







Miljee

Acacia oswaldii

Fully grown, this Garal will reach between just 2 and 5 metres tall.

The seeds are the main source of food, they can be eaten raw when still green, straight from the pod, like peas, however the pods are poisonous. The seeds are also easily collected by ants, so near the entrances to ant hills is an easy place to collect seeds that can then be ground between two rocks to make flour. The flour can then be mixed with water to form a thick paste which is cooked on the campfire, in the coals, on clay heat-retaining balls, or hot, flat rocks.

Resin is also used to glue tools together and make string hard and waterproof.







Needle Wattle

Acacia rigens

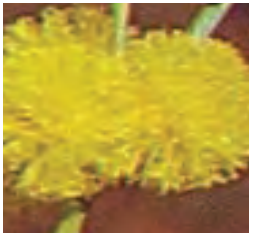
A small tree, or large shrub, seldom growing more than 3 metres tall. Like many Garal the wood is hard and used widely to make implements such as digging sticks and spear throwers.

The seeds can be ground into flour to make damper.

Aboriginal people know the tree to be useful as a medicine, especially for older people.







Nelia

Acacia loderi

Nelia can grow up to 10 metres tall, with multiple trunks with rough bark.

The leaves make an umbrella like canopy and have a curved point at the end.

The fibrous bark is useful for making string and rope and the resin is eaten and can be used as glue.

The seeds are used to make flour for bread.

Aboriginal people also use the plant as a source of medicine.







River Cooba

Acacia stenophylla

Yumang is found along the edges of creeks, rivers and wetlands, often found with Binyal (River Red Gum) and Pulty (Black Box).

It usually flowers in summer and early autumn, producing vast quantities of seed.

The seed is collected and ground by Aboriginal people to make flour, which is used to make bread which is baked on campfires.

Ash is mixed with Bidyuri (Pituri) bark to make a fish poison.

The hard Yumang wood is also used to make boomerangs.







Silver Wattle

Acacia dealbata

Giigandul can range in height from 3 to 16 metres when fully grown, it has fine silvery-grey fern-like foliage, the newest leaves can be very soft and felty.

The bark has lots of cracks, making it stringy and ideal for string and rope making. The bark is also known to ooze resin which is prized by Aboriginal people as it is useful in waterproofing and gluing tools together, such as stone axe heads to a wooden handle.

The resin was also eaten and could be mixed with ash from burnt Giigandul bark and applied to wounds and sores.

The wood of Giigandul is used widely by women to make digging sticks which are used for many reasons, including digging small animals out of burrows, such as Bilbi and Wandayali and cultivation of Galagang (Native Leek) fields.

The seed pods yield another important food source, the Giigandul seed, these seeds are made into flour between two grinding stones and then used to make bread.







Yarran

Acacia homalophylla

Like most wattles, Yarrany, is used for many purposes by Aboriginal people, it grows up to 10 metres and will flower in the winter and spring.

The wood and bark is used to make tools and implements, such as clubs and axe handles.

The seeds are ground into flour to make small loaves of damper, roasted on open campfires.

Yarrany is often attacked by bag moths, a caterpillar that builds nests in the trees and proceeds to eat the leaves until the tree is very sick. These caterpillars are a good food source for a range of Budyaan and Gurudhaany, so are a good place to hunt for food.

Resin from Yarrany can be collected and eaten or soaked overnight to make a sweet drink, the resin can be encouraged by bruising smooth bark on young branches with an axe.







Bull Oak

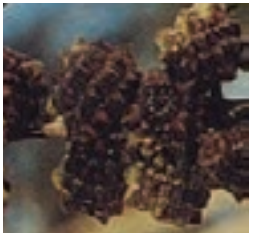
Allocasuarina luehmannii

Ngany is an important tree to Aboriginal people. It produces a durable, dark red timber and hard resin which are useful for making a range of tools and other implements, including weapons such as boomerangs and clubs.

Ngany is also a valuable food source as it attracts many animals, including Mandiyaba and Wayimaa. Many Aboriginal people also know Ngany is a medicine tree, for people and animals.







Drooping Sheoak

Allocasuarina verticillata

Birradhang is a small tree, only growing to 10 metres tall, it is distinguished by its rounded crown and fine drooping foliage.

The timber is used by Aboriginal people to make handles for stone axes, which can be fixed using string and resin from other plants.







Kurrajong

Brachychiton populneus

Garradyang is a slow growing, but impressive tree, up to 20 metres tall, closely related to the spiritual Boab (*Adansonia gregorii*) from Northern Australia.

The wood is fire resistant. Large pods full of seeds are produced throughout much of the year, depending on the season. The seeds can be ground and added to hot water, giving a coffee-like taste and smell.

Young stems, leaves and roots are eaten raw. The bark can be used to make string and rope due to its fibrous nature and used to make dilly bags, fishing nets and fishing lines. The bark is stripped and soaked for three days in water and then chewed to make it more flexible.

The resin oozing from the tree can also be used for tool and implement making.

Aboriginal people also use Garradyang as medicine.







Black Cypress Pine

Callitris endlicheri

Shaped like a pyramid, Kara occurs in dry, well drained areas such as sandy rises and rocky outcrops.

The narrow, straight, trunks of young trees make good spears. The wood and dry leaves are also good fire kindling. The resin is very sticky and is used as glue and as medicine by Aboriginal people.

Kara has ceremonial significance to Aboriginal people also.







White Cypress Pine

Callitris glaucophylla

A medium to large tree, reaching more than 20 metres, Garraa is widespread across the Murrumbidgee catchment. Growing in sandy soils Garraa is an ideal food source for Aboriginal people.

Branches often start low to the ground and with a rough bark, are easy to climb. Budyaan nests in hollows, such as Gilaa and Widyagala can be raided, where the Gabuga and young can be collected.

Larger Budyaan, such as Maliyan also use Garraa to make large stick nests from which they can launch themselves to hunt for prey in the surrounding woodlands and grasslands.

The resin produced by the tree is used as glue for binding tools and other implements.

To treat broken bones a piece of bark, from the larger roots, can be removed from the tree and while wet, be bound around the broken limb. As the bark dries it moulds to the shape of the limb, acting as a splint and holding the broken bones in place.

The bark is also useful for making torches to carry fire or provide light.







River Sheoak

Casuarina cunninghamiana

Bilawi is a tall graceful tree ranging in height from 15 to 35 metres. Growing on the edges of rivers and wetlands Bilawi is an important tree to Aboriginal people as it provides resin, seed cones, seed, wood and habitat for Budyaan.

Empty seed cones are used as toys for children, jewellery for adults and for ceremonial purposes.

The seeds are used for food by crushing them into a paste, as well as attracting a wide range of animals, including Mandiyaba and Wayimaa, that also provide food for the Aboriginal people.

Grubs found boring in the tree are another source of food.

Bilawi is another source of wood and resin that is used to make and repair tools and implements such as boomerangs, shields and clubs. Some parts of Bilawi are also used as medicine.







Argyle Apple

Eucalyptus cinerea

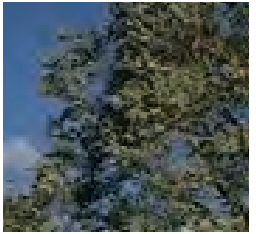
Gundhay is partly identifiable by its red-brown to grey-brown, fibrous or rough stringy bark. The bark is deeply cracked, giving it an “ironbark” look.

Gundhay has a wide range of uses, providing bark and timber to make tools, string and rope, shelters and make fire.

The wood is reddish in colour, long lasting and very easy to work, making it highly suitable for Traditional use.







Bimble Box • Poplar Box

Eucalyptus populnea

Bimbul is found in the Western woodlands of the Murrumbidgee catchment. It is easily recognized by its rounded shiny leaves, similar to the European poplar tree, giving it one of its common names.

Bimbul forms a similar role to Birribee (Grey Box) and the rough bark is used to make a range of tools and implements, from small coolamons to large canoes. The hollows of older trees are widely used by many Budyaan and Aboriginal people find that Bimbul is good source of Buyaan and Gabuga for food.

The resin from Bimbul can also be used for many purposes including sealing coolamons and containers so that they are watertight. Aboriginal people use Bimbul for medicine as well, some parts of the tree that are used are fresh, young leaves.







Black Box

Eucalyptus largiflorens

Pulty is a floodplain tree and occurs in areas that are flooded, but less often than Binyal (River Red Gum).

They are smaller than Binyal and have a rough, dark grey bark. Pulty often forms a ring of trees around shallow swamps and along the edges of dry creek beds. Aboriginal people use Pulty in a similar way to Binyal, including the wood, bark, leaves and sap. Bark could be removed and made into coolamons and small canoes. The hollowed branches are used to make small didgeridoos and the suckers are utilised for spear making in some parts of the Murrumbidgee catchment. Huts and shelters can also be built using the wood and bark, string to bind the shelters together can also be made using the fibrous layers of bark, found by stripping away the rough outer layer and resin can be used to glue and waterproof the buildings.

Pulty provides food through its use by native animals such as Mandiyaba and Dharrungarrung, the Warrul produced by Dharrungarrung is amber coloured and very sweet. Small branches are picked and used as decorations at ceremonies such as corroborees.







Black Sallee

Eucalyptus stellulata

Guulany is a common name for many types of tree in Wiradjuri language.

This Guulany is a woodland tree growing to around 15 metres. It has glossy green leaves and a canopy that is denser than most box and gum trees. It is resistant to frost, snow and biting cold winds.

Growing at the top of the Murrumbidgee catchment this Guulany is use to make tools and implements as well as raiding Budyaan nests and Dharrungarrung hives for food. Wilay and Gugaa can also be hunted by the Aboriginal people.







Grey Box

Eucalyptus microcarpa

Birribee is often found in woodlands mixed with Baagang (Yellow Box) and Garraa (White Cypress Pine) and on sandhills or red soils above the floodplain.

The bark of Birribee is one of the easiest to remove to make coolamons, shields, canoes and bark slabs for shelters and today many Birribee trees still bear the scars of Aboriginal people use over many generations.

The wood is also considered long lasting and useful in tool making. Hollows in Birribee make excellent hives for native Dharrungarrung and is know by Aboriginal people as a good Warrul yielder.







Mallee

Eucalyptus species

Bandhuwang is a common reference to all mallee, growing from a large tap root and usually branching out with many small trunks from a single base.

These thin, straight, trunks are ideal for didgeridoos. Aboriginal people select hollowed trunks, then encourage termites to further enlarge the hollow until they are satisfied that the trunk is suitable to be made into a didgeridoo.

Dinawan callers were also made using shorter hollowed trunks. These are used to hunt Dinawan and as musical instruments at ceremonial occassions.

Bandhuwang is also a source of food for Aboriginal people, highly regarded as a good Warrul yielder.

The roots of dead trees, when available, make great, slow burning hot stumps that can provide extra warmth on cold winter nights.







Mugga Ironbark

Eucalyptus sideroxylon

Magga has a hard, dark brown to black, deeply cracked bark for the entire length of its thick straight trunk and branches, giving the impression that it has been recently burnt.

The wood is hard and used by Aboriginal people for a range of tools, including clubs for hunting and shields for fighting.

The resin from Magga is also used as glue in tool making and repairing implements, the resin is also mixed with ochre to stain rocks for communication and ceremonial purposes.







Red Stringybark

Eucalyptus macrorhyncha

Gundhay is identifiable by its rough stringy bark. It is grey on the outside, but a reddish brown when the outer layer has been removed, the bark is deeply cracked, giving it an “ironbark” look.

Gundhay has a wide range of uses, providing bark and timber to make tools, string and rope, shelters and make fire.

The wood is reddish in colour, long lasting and very easy to work, making it highly desired by Aboriginal people.







River Red Gum

Eucalyptus camaldulensis

Binyal is a large tree with a large spreading crown of fine drooping dull grey green leaves; new growth may be a pinkish colour. The bark is rough and dark at the base, smooth else were with patches of grey and cream, the smooth outer layer of bark was considered the best material for the building of large bark canoes and coolamons.

Binyal is wide spread across the Murrumbidgee catchment. This tree is usually found along the edge of rivers, creeks and wetlands on floodplains. Floods are important for Binyal to enable seedlings to grow.

Aboriginal people use many parts of this tree, including the wood, bark, leaves and sap. The hollowed branches are the used to make small didgeridoos and the suckers are used for spear making. Binyal provides food through its use by native animals such as Mandiyaba, Dharrungarrung and Budyaan, it is known as a good Warrul yielder. The Wilburgil (Snotty Gobbles / Mistletoe) that grows on the tree is also utilised, including picking the fruit to suck, similar to chewing gum.

Binyal is often used as a marker tree along the Murrumbidgee River, marking boundaries and other important areas, such as birthing trees. The large hollows in the base of very old trees caused by fire and termites over the centuries are used as shelters when travelling.







White Box

Eucalyptus albens

Birri is a common woodland tree. Birri forms a similar role to Birribee (Grey Box) and the rough bark was used to make a range of tools and implements, from small bowls to large canoes.

The hollows of older trees are widely used by many Budyaan and Aboriginal people find that Birri is good source of Budyaan and Budyaan Gabuga for food.

The resin from Birri could also be used for many purposes including sealing bowls and cups so that they were watertight.

Aboriginal people use Birri for medicine as well, some parts of the tree that are used are fresh, young leaves.







Yellow Box

Eucalyptus melliodora

Baagang reaches around 25 metres when fully grown and is a tall, graceful tree. The bark is brown, rough and fibrous on the lower trunk but becomes creamy and smooth on the higher branches.

The wood is used by Aboriginal people to make a range of tools and implements. Baagang is also known to be used as a medicine tree.







Yorrell

Eucalyptus gracilis

Bandhung is a mallee, growing from a large tap root and usually branching out with many small trunks from a single base. These thin, straight, trunks are used for didgeridoos.

Aboriginal people select hollowed trunks, then encourage termites to further enlarge the hollow until they are satisfied that the trunk is suitable to be made into a didgeridoo.

Bandhung is also a source of food for Aboriginal people, highly regarded as a good Warrul yielder, with the fruits used for a variety of purposes.







Native Cherry

Exocarpos cupressiformis

Mambarra produces a round nut attached to a stem which is green at first, later becoming red, succulent and more egg shaped, this fruit is eaten by Aboriginal people.

In spring when Mambarra is flowering white butterflies are attracted in large numbers, which in turn provides the Aboriginal people with another food source as Budyaan and Gurudhaany are attracted to the butterflies.

Mambarra also attracts large numbers of Dharrungarrung when flowering and produces a lot of Warrul. The timber is used to make tools such as small clubs and digging sticks. It is also considered a very good shade and shelter tree on hot days.

The sap of Mambarra is used for medicinal purposes.

Aboriginal people also have ceremonial uses for Mambarra.







Wilga

Geijera parviflora

Wilgaa has a large dense canopy of leaves, aromatic when crushed, reaching more than 10 metres tall, with the leaves and branches often drooping down to ground level.

Wilgaa is widely known as a shelter tree for most native animals, so is an ideal place to hunt for food. The leaves can also be pulled off and laid under the tree to make a mattress to sleep on, under the warm, sheltered tree.

The flowers are attractive to Dharrungarrung and, despite the unpleasant smell, produce a sweet Warrul, which is also collected for food.

The bark and roots are used to make splints to treat broken bones.

The Wilgaa wood is also used to make boomerangs.







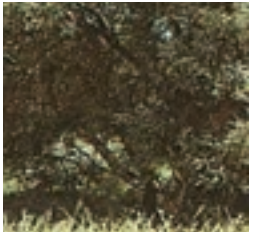
Moonah • Black Tea Tree

Melaleuca lanceolata

A small tree, only reaching about 7 metres, Mudha has a range of uses known to Aboriginal people.







Butterbush

Pittosporum angustifolium

The trunk of Dhingarang is whitish with spots, it has drooping branches which are laden with small orange fruit in spring. These fruit dry and split, revealing small red seeds that are coated in a sticky pulp.

The light coloured wood is very hard and is used to make small tools, such as stone axe handles and shields. The sticky seeds are dried and ground into powder that has aphrodisiac powers.

Aboriginal people also use Dhingarang for medicine, boiling leaves, twigs and seeds in water and then drinking like tea to treat internal pains and cramps.

Dhingarang is known as a spiritual tree to many Aboriginal people.







Quandong

Santalum acuminatum

Guwandang is only a small tree, rarely reaching 5 metres tall, but produces one of the most obvious and tasty fruits used by Aboriginal people.

Guwandang is partly parasitic and requires other trees nearby for it to attach its roots to and source water and nutrients.

The fruit may be fully ripe when it is a yellow, through to a deep red colour, it is a sweet tasting, delicious fruit and is a well known food source for Aboriginal people.

The large seed inside the fruit is used as a toy and ornament once the outer layer of fruit has been eaten.

Guwandang was also used for medicine and ceremonial purposes.







Silver Banksia • Honey Suckle

Banksia marginata

Berre has many uses for Aboriginal people.

Branches which are curved are shaped into boomerangs.

The flower heads can be removed and soaked in water to remove the nectar, leaving a sweet tasting, energy boosting drink.

While fresh the single flowers can be removed from the flower head and used as brushes to apply ceremonial make-up or painting.

Old, dry, flower heads can also be used as strainers and used to carry fire from one campsite to the next.







Prickly Bottlebrush

Callistemon brachyandrus

Often not growing much more than 2 metres high, this type of Galgang has stiff pointed leaves. A series of bright red flowers form in dense clusters along the branches, giving the “bottlebrush” look.

These flowers attract many Budyaan, including Bulanbulan and Dhalaruk, to collect the nectar. The Galgang is also known to attract Gadi, such as Yaba.

Both Budyaan and Gadi were desirable foods for Aboriginal people and when flowering the Galgang provided them with an excellent source of food.







Hopbush

Narrow-leaf, Broad-leaf and Wedge-leaf

Dodonaea viscosa

Growing 3 metres tall Bururr has extremely dense wood, making it very hard and durable.

Bururr is highly desirable for Aboriginal people and is used to make clubs which will not break easily when used for striking, or throwing at, animals when hunting.







Pituri

Duboisia hopwoodii

With slender, drooping branches Bidyuri can produce small black berries for most of the year.

It is highly desired by Aboriginal people and traded throughout the Murrumbidgee catchment.

Bidyuri's uses included being chewed to help overcome thirst and fatigue, as a narcotic for medicinal use and as a fish poison.







Emu Bush • Berrigan

Eremophila longifolia

Yadhandah is a common species, particularly in the Western part of the Murrumbidgee catchment. It has spotted pinkish to reddish-brown flowers occurring most of the year, the flowers can be pulled off and have the nectar sucked out of them.

The fruit produced by Yadhandah range from black to a purple colour and form a staple part of the Aboriginal peoples diet.

Yadhandah also has medicinal uses to treat skin problems and stomach ulcers.







Eurah

Eremophila bignoniiflora

A tall shrub, even a small tree, this Galgang is widely known for its medicinal values.

The pale green leaves can be crushed and used as a laxative to aid in digestion and cure constipation.







Scotia Bush

Eremophila scoparia

Usually no taller than 2 metres, this Galgang's leaves have sharp, slightly hooked tips.

While little traditional knowledge about this plant is known it has cultural significance to Aboriginal people in the Murrumbidgee catchment







Hill Indigo

Indigofera australis

A small shrub requiring some shade to survive the hot summer, this Barrinan was an important source of fish poison for Aboriginal people.







Tea-Tree

Leptospermum species

Bimbun rarely reach much more than 5 metres tall. They have very showy flowers and attract Dharrungarrung for their nectar.

They provide niche uses for Aboriginal people needs which are held closely by knowledge holders, likely to have medicinal uses, similar to the way Tea-tree is used in alternative medicine today.







Peach Heath

Lissanthe strigosa

This Galgang forms sweet, honey-scented, flowers in spring, with small berries ripening in early summer.

The fruit of the Galgang is edible and is also an important food source for many woodland Budyaan.

Aboriginal people are able to use this plant for not only its berries, but also to hunt the small Budyaan that were also attracted to the fruit.







Gee Bung

Persoonia curvifolia

Only a small shrub but Bumbadula is important spiritually to Aboriginal people, it is considered a magic tree.

It also has medicinal uses, where the inner wood of the stem of a young tree is shaved and mixed with breast milk for use as eyewash to treat conjunctivitis in babies. The unripe fruit are also used to treat burns, scratches and rashes.

The flesh around the seeds, when succulent is eaten straight from the tree and is also used to produce dye to colour baskets and other woven implements.

The older, hard fruits are roasted, cracked and the nut inside is eaten, or mixed with other plants to form a complete meal.







Grass Tree • Black Boy

Xanthorrhoea glauca

Maybal is widely used by Aboriginal people for many purposes. With a trunk reaching up to 5 metres tall it is topped with lots of fine strap-like leaves and a tall, usually straight flowering stalk.

The flower head is covered in small creamy coloured flowers in late winter and spring and is a good indicator of Dharrungarrung hives in the area, with the seeds only released after fire.

Resin oozing from the trunk is used for many purposes, including waterproofing, fixing flint tips to spears. The resin is also used to colour tools and implements.

The long straight flower head stalks make excellent spears and are also used, by rubbing vigorously with other wood to make fire.

The serrated leaf edges are used as temporary knives, and are also used to make baskets.

The flower heads and bark are also used by tossing them onto fires, the smoke is then inhaled and aids in recovery from colds.

Maybal is also a source of food with leaf bases, young flowers and shoots all eaten.







Creeping Saltbush

Atriplex semibaccata

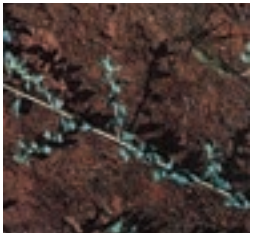
Barrinan is a small saltbush that spreads across the soil surface, as its common name suggests.

The name Barrinan is a common reference to all small shrubs and bushes.

Typical of saltbush it is a greenish-grey and has leaves with a white tinge, especially in drier times, of hairs.

The small fruits produced mostly in the summer and autumn are used as a dye and for food.







Old Man Saltbush

Atriplex nummularia

The largest of the saltbush, Bulaguy was once widespread across the Riverina plains. Bulaguy can be found across the landscape but prefers temporary wetlands and is often associated with Pulty (Black Box) or by itself in low lying depressions.

Used by Aboriginal people as a herb for medicinal use it is also recognised as a place that Ganhur and other animals would rest, making it an ideal place to find food.

On the plains wood can be scarce and these large woody bushes provide wood for campfires.







Cottony Saltbush

Chenopodium curvispicatum

This Barrinan produces small bright red berries that are used by Aboriginal people for food and medicine.

The bush has distinctive shovel or club shaped leaves and occurs in the Western part of the Murrumbidgee catchment.







Nitre Goosefoot • Indigo Bush

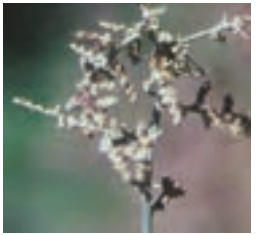
Chenopodium nitrariaceum

A large bush that grows in areas that are flooded on a regular basis. Galgang means any shrub or bush, there is no specific Wiradjuri name for Nitre Goosefoot.

When it forms thickets in creek beds it is called Birgu, the Wiradjuri word for dense stands of bushes, making it ideal habitat for a range of native animals.

Aboriginal people recognise its importance as a haven for a wide range of Budyaan as well as larger animals such as Ganhur, Wambuwuny and Dinawan.







Ruby Saltbush

Enchylaena tomentosa

This Barrinan is still commonly found in lightly grazed areas underneath box trees across the Murrumbidgee catchment, their seeds distributed by Budyaan.

The small berry can vary in colour when ripe, from deep purple, through bright pink and red, to a golden yellow and orange.

Because of the wide range of colours the berries are sometimes used to make dye.

The fruit is also well known as a traditional food, they have a soft, sweet flesh around a small hard seed, similar to a pomegranate.







Black Bluebush

Maireana pyramidata

Galgang is still widespread across the Western part of the Murrumbidgee catchment.

Due to the changed land uses since early settlement much of the more desirable grasses and saltbushes were grazed out and this Galgang became more dominant.

It is used by Aboriginal people as a herb when cooking and also as a medicine.







Rosy Bluebush

Maireana erioclada

This Barrinan can produce many seeds. These seeds and its leaves are used as a herb in traditional medicine.







Silky Bluebush

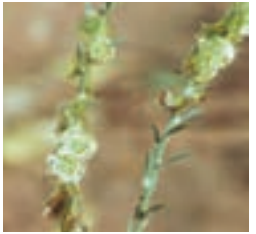
Maireana villosa

This Barrinan is a small bush with densely hairy stems and leaves.

Aboriginal people use the plant for its herb like qualities when preparing food and medicine.







Three-winged Bluebush

Maireana triptera

A small shrub, sometimes found in dense groups, Barrinan is found mostly in the Western part of the Murrumbidgee catchment.

It is used by Aboriginal people but the specific use is not known.







Dillon Bush

Nitraria billardieri

Dilangi is a large bush that today occupies large areas of the Western Riverina, where it has replaced areas of more desirable plants such as Bulaguy (Old Man Saltbush), since grazing has removed these other plants.

Dilangi is an important food source for Aboriginal people for the fruit that it produces.

Dilangi also shelters a wide range of native animals, Ganhur, Wambuwuny, Dinawan and other large animals would use the Dilangi bush as shade during the long, hot, summer days and a wide range of Budyaan nest in the thorny branches, providing Wangaay and Gabuga for most of the year.







Thorny Saltbush

Rhagodia spinescens

The dark red fruit of this Galgang is a food source for Aboriginal people.

The berries could also be used to make an attractive dye used in ceremonies.

Spread by Budyaan, it is a common understorey in woodlands, ripening berries indicate to Aboriginal people that other food sources, such as Budyaan could be nearby.







Roly Poly • Buckbush

Salsola kali

A spiny annual shrub, this Barrinan is widespread across the Western grasslands. When dead the Barrinan breaks away from its roots and becomes mobile, being blown around by winds until it finds something to stop it, such as a tree or fence.

Its traditional uses are not widely known but it is utilised by Aboriginal people.







Windmill Grass • Umbrella Grass

Chloris truncata

Bugaru, Bunguwiny and Gungil refer to all grasses, including Windmill Grass.

It occurs annually, growing from late autumn through to late spring. It can also grow given good summer rains.

The seeds are used as food when plentiful.







Native Millet

Panicum decompositum

Growing after good summer rains Gulaa can produce large amounts of seed.

When ripe the seeds are harvested and ground into flour to make bread which are cooked on the coals of open fires, or on hot rocks.







Tarvine

Boerhavia dominii

Koonpinya is a small herb that has a large taproot. This root stores energy for the plant during drought.

This fleshy taproot contains water and energy, it sustains Aboriginal people in dry times and forms an important component of the diet.







Bulbine Lily • Native Leek

Bulbine bulbosa

Galagang is typical of many lilies found across the Murrumbidgee catchment. Its bulb is an important food source for Aboriginal people, which is dug up and roasted on the campfire.







Purplish Beard Orchid

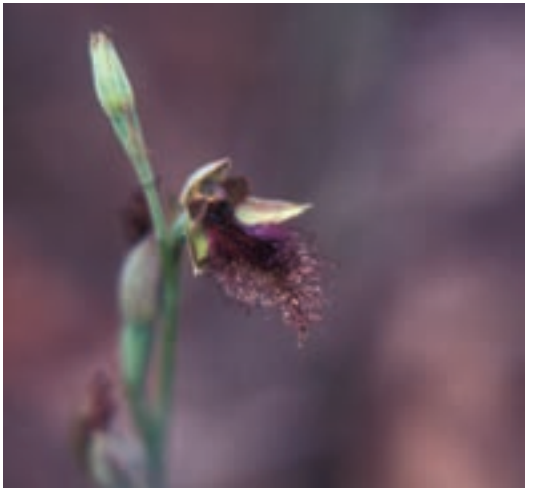
Calochilus robertsonii

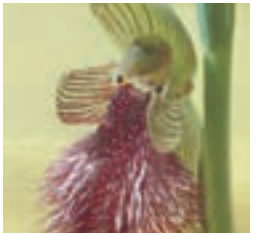
Dirramaay is a name used by the Wiradjuri to describe all edible herbs. This Dirramaay is found in dry, hilly areas, often in Magaa (Mugga Ironbark) and Garraa (White Cypress Pine) woodlands.

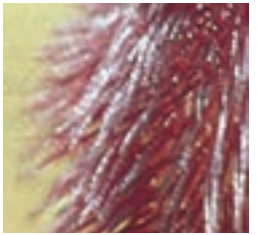
It has a tuber from which it grows each year. This tuber is dug up and used by Aboriginal people for food.

The small seeds are also known to be ground using stone tools to make flour that is used to make bread.

The leaves are also used to make fibres for string making and other tools and implements.







Old Man Weed •
Common Sneeze Weed

Centipeda cunninghamii

Budhaay, commonly known to current Aboriginal people as Old Man Weed is one of the most important medicine plants known. It grows to only 20 centimetres high and has long, bright green leaves just 1 to 3 centimetres long.

Many parts of the plant, including stems, leaves and seeds are all use, and have a wide ramge of uses.

It can be found in areas that are occasionally flooded in many areas of the Murrumbidgee catchment.

It is still used today and is believed to be a “cure-all” for a wide range of health problems, including arthritis.







Native Carrot • Australian Carrot

Daucus glochidiatus

This Dirramaay is widespread across the Murrumbidgee catchment and has a distinctive carrot-like look and smell. It even has a small root that was picked by Aboriginal people and eaten, much the same as normal carrots are.







Native Flax-Lily

Dianella species

Nidbul occurs in large tussocks, with leaves up to 1 metre long, there are a wide variety of Flax-lilies and similar Lily plants.

These plants were used for many reasons, with leaves, berries and tubers all used by Aboriginal people.

The leaves have strong, silky fibres and are commonly used by Aboriginal people to weave baskets.

The berries are blue through to purple when ripe and are also used as a food source.







Smooth Flax-Lily

Dianella longifolia

Nidbul occurs in large tussocks, with leaves up to 1 metre long. These leaves have strong, silky fibres and are commonly used by Aboriginal people to weave baskets.

The berries are blue when ripe and are also used as a food source.







Spreading Flax-Lily

Dianella revoluta

Nidbul occurs in large tussocks, with leaves up to 1 metre long. These leaves have strong fibres and are commonly used by Aboriginal people to weave baskets.

The berries are purple when ripe and are also used as a food source.







Chocolate Lily

Dichopogon strictus

Growing from a tuber each year this Dirramaay has strong chocolate scented flowers. The tubers are dug up and eaten raw or roasted on campfires.







Native Geranium •

Australian Cranesbill

Geranium solanderi

This Dirramaay is common in woodlands and grasslands and given a wet season will spread quickly. It has a small tuber which it grows from each year.

Aboriginal people use the underground tuber, leaves and flower petals as food.

The Dirramaay has medicinal purposes as well, the leaves can be squashed and applied to burns and blisters and the raw tuber can also be used as medicine for internal complaints.







Peppercress

Lepidium pseudohyssopifolium

This Dirramaay can flower most of the year, depending on the season. It is used as a herb by Aboriginal people and can be eaten raw, or roasted to provide extra flavour to food.







Wild Flax

Linum marginale

Warrug is a multi-use plant for Aboriginal people.

The leaves, which can be over 20 centimetres long, are useful for weaving and can be used to make a variety of implements, such as baskets and disposable cups.

The fibres in the leaves are also worked to make string and rope.

The seeds and stem of Warrug are also eaten by Aboriginal people.







Wattle Mat-Rush

Lomandra filiformis

Like Warrug (Wild Flax), this Dirramaay is a multi-use plant for Aboriginal people. The leaves, which can be over 30 centimetres long, are useful for weaving and can be used to make a variety of implements, such as baskets, mats and food containers.

The fibres in the leaves were also worked to make string and rope for necklaces and armbands.

The seeds and leaves of this Dirramaay are also eaten by Aboriginal people, the young juicy leaves resemble celery.

The root also provided traditional medicine for the treatment of bites and stings.

It also indicates small animals, such as Ngalugan and Bilbi, that burrow under the bushes can be found for food.







Native Yam • Black Fellows Yam

Microseris lanceolata

Ngarridyu is one of the most important food sources of the Wiradjuri nation. Aboriginal people were known to cultivate areas of land and plant Ngarridyu to ensure a crop the following season.

The roots have large tubers, when dug up can be eaten raw, or roasted on campfires to supplement other food. Ngarridyu, which has a sweet coconut flavour, was used in a similar way to potatoes, providing a staple to the diet of Aboriginal people.







Pig Face

Sarcozona praecox

Biradur is often found growing underneath saltbush. It has fleshy, succulent leaves and bright purplish-pink flowers in late winter and spring.

Aboriginal people apply juice from the leaves to burns and blisters, in a similar way to Aloe Vera.

The flowers and sweet white flesh of the fruit are often mixed with other plants, like a salad, and eaten raw.







Nightshade • Potato Bush • Tomato Bush

Solanum species

Miidyum are a range of plants with various common names such as Nightshade, Potato Bush and Wild Tomato. All have purplish flowers and produce cherry sized fruits, some can be spiny, other have velvety, soft, leaves.

Aboriginal people use Miidyum for food and medicine.

Many of these have been found to be poisonous so are treated in various ways by the Aboriginal people to change the poisonous characteristics of the berries, dilute the toxins, or mixed with other plants to achieve the desired effect.







Snotty Gobbles • Mistletoe

Amyema species

Snotty Gobbles are a parasite that grows on the branches of trees. The plant is spread by the aptly named Mistletoe Bird (Dicaeum hirundinnaceum).

Wilburugil are an essential food source for honeyeaters, although if too many Snotty Gobbles are present on a tree then the host will suffer and may kill the host tree.

Aboriginal people use the fruit of Snotty Gobbles in a similar way to chewing gum, by producing saliva they are able to quench their thirst.

They are also considered a treat, like a lolly, particularly for children. The taste has been described like a sweet oyster.

To treat fevers the leaves are bruised between grinding stones and soaked in water before drinking.







Happy Wanderer • False Sarsaparilla

Hardenbergia violacea

Ngawang is a twining climber with leathery leaves and purple flowers.

The flowers are used by Aboriginal people as a mouth-wash for ulcers and to treat chest infections.

The long flexible stems are used for rope and as string to make baskets.

The fruit is collected throughout summer when ripe.

Aboriginal people associate flowering of Ngawang as a time when fat Guya can be caught in rivers and lakes.







Nardoo

Marsilea drummondii

Nagaadha is a fern found in damp and wet areas. It can often form a dense mat on the edge of billabongs and other still areas of water. It has four leaflets at the end of each stem, like a four-leaf clover.

The seeds are collected when they are dry and ground into flour. Water is then added to the flour to make dough for cooking small loaves of bread.

Aboriginal people also use Nagaadha for medicinal purposes.







Lignum

Muehlenbeckia florulenta

Gweeargal is a large shrub found on floodplains and in intermittent wetlands. The straggly nature of the plant makes it a haven for Budyaan such as Burrurgiyan, Durrawiyung and Wululu.

Aboriginal people are able to utilise the Budyaan nests as a food source by collecting Gabuga and young Budyaan during periods of flooding.

Tender young shoots of new growth are also utilised as a food source.

When fresh the branches of Gweeargal are flexible and can also be used for making tools.







Waterpepper

Persicaria hydropiper

Badinbadin is a common term for any type of plant growing in wetland areas. This Badinbadin is a common plant in swamps and other flooded areas.

It has a hot peppery taste when it is chewed.

The leaves are used to make fish poison.







Common Reed • Phragmites

Phragmites australis

Gubudha is found in wetlands and along the edge of creeks and rivers. A tall grass it can reach over 3 metres high. It has a cane-like stem with leaves up to 60 centimetres long, giving the plant many purposes.

Aboriginal people use the strong stems as light spears by joining them together to spear Guya in the nearby wetlands and rivers. The stems are also used to make fire.

The roots of Gubudha can also be dug up and roasted like many other tubers.

One of the most important uses of Gubudha was the use of the long, wide leaves for weaving.

The leaves fibrous nature make them ideal for making baskets, backpacks and other useful carrying implements.







Dock

Rumex brownii and *Rumex Crystallinus*

Bilili is a common plant in wetland areas when there is water available, but in periods of drought it doesn't grow and is not available to Aboriginal people.

Bilili is a significant plant to the Aboriginal people of the Murrumbidgee catchment but the uses are not commonly known.







Cumbungi • Bull Rush

Typha domingensis and *Typha orientalis*

Baaliyan grows in wet areas, requiring long periods of flooding each year. The depth of the water is crucial to how well Baaliyan will grow. It can reach more than 2 metres tall and form almost impenetrable thickets which provide habitat for many wetland animals, making it a great place to hunt and collect animals for food.

Baaliyan roots are dried by peeling off the outer skin, laying it in front of a fire, then after drying, twisting the fibres to loosen the flour-like goodness of the roots, this can then be used to make bread.

The long leaves are excellent for weaving to make mats and baskets. The fibres of the leaves are made into rope and string that can be used for many purposes, including binding together make-shift shelters.

The long straight stems are also used to make light spears for hunting Guya, Budyaan, Gadi and other animals that live in the reed beds.







Wiradjuri Words

Badinbadin	Any plant that grows in wetland areas, other Wiradjuri names include Baguwang, Baygurbaygur and Ngurru.
Barrinan	A little shrub or bush, other Wiradjuri names for small shrubs are Dulubi and Yulang.
Bilbi	Bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*), also known in Wiradjuri as Balbu, Barru, Bilbang or Ngundawang.
Birgu	Dense thickets of any shrubs and bushes.
Budyaan	A common word to describe all animals that fly, including birds and bats.
Buguwing	A common Wiradjuri word describing all grasses. Other Wiradjuri names for grasses are Bugaru and Gungil.
Bulanbulan	Crimson rosella (*Platycerus elegans*), a type of parrot.
Burrurgiyan	Ibis such as the Straw-necked Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) are also known as Bururrgan.
Dangur	Catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*), also known as Dhandhaang and Dungur.
Dhalaruk	Red wattlebird (*Anthochaera carunculate*), a type of honeyeater.
Dharrungarrung	Native Bees (*Trigona species*) that make hives in trees that produce sweet tasting honey. Also known as Ngaraang and Ngarru.
Dinawan	Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*).
Dirramaay	Any edible herb, such as orchids and lilies.
Durrawiyung	Grey Teal (*Anas superciliosa*), a type of duck.
Gabuga	Bird eggs, also known as Marrung.
Gadi	A general word for all snakes, another Wiradjuri word for snakes is Dharang.
Gagalin	Yellow Belly or Golden Perch (*Macquaria ambigua*), also known as Bidyin.
Galgang	A common name for a shrub or bush, other Wiradjuri names for native shrubs are Bugulang, Mambal and Milawilang.
Ganhur	Red Kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*), also known as Buringin and Marri. Females, “blue flyers”, are called Bandhaa.

Garal	A common name for all wattles (*Acacia species*).
Gilaa	Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*).
Gugabul	Murray Cod (*Maccullochella peelii peelii*), also known as Gudung, Munyaa and Mungi.
Gugaa	Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*), also known as Girawu.
Guulany	A common Wiradjuri word describing all trees.
Gurudhaany	A goanna, a lizard ranging from 20 centimetres, to over 2 metres, depending on the species.
Guya	A general Wiradjuri name for fish.
Maliyan	Wedge-tailed eagles (*Aquila audax*), also known as Bagadaa, Muliyan and Yibaay.
Mandiyaba	A possum. Many species of possum have their own name, Ring-tailed Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) is known as Gindhaany, Bulgari or Winyarug.
Ngalugan	Native mice, such as the Common Dunnart (*Sminthopsis murina*).
Wambuwany	Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus fulinginosus*) and Western Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*).
Wandayali	Echidna (*Tachyglossus actuleatus*), commonly known by Aboriginal Prople as porcupine. Wandayali is also known by many other names, these are; Bigabilla, Ganyi, Ginaginbaany, Guwandiyala, Wambiyala, Wandhayala and Wandhayirra.
Wangaay	A general term for meat used for food.
Warrul	Honey made by native bees. The honeycomb is called Darga, Ngarrung, Garang or Marin.
Wayimaa	Any type of cockatoo.
Widyagala	Pink Cockatoo, Wee Jugler or Major Mitchell Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*).
Wilay	Brush-tail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*).
Wululu	Pink-eared Duck (*Malachorhynchus membranaceus*).
Yuba	Carpet Snake (*Morelia spilota metcalfei*).

English Words

Annual	A plant that completes its life cycle in one year, or in one growing season.
Forb	A non-woody plant that is not a grass.
Herb	A plant that does not have woody stems, though they may be woody at the base
Medicine	The medicinal uses of each plant are wide and varied. Each medicinal use was prepared in different ways by different Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people. The Murrumbidgee CMA offers no recommendation as to the preparation of these plants or the use they might be prepared for.
Perennial	A plant whose life cycle extends over more than one year, or one growing season.
Resin	A gum / sap extruded from trees. Often oozes out of wounds inflicted by birds and insects, or where a branch breaks off. Very sticky and becomes hard with time. It can be made into glue by heating or chewing, where it can be made pliable to apply as glue or waterproofing, where, upon cooling, it will set hard again.
Suckers	Young trees or saplings, often found growing in large numbers close to an older parent tree.
Tannin	An astringent substance, released from the plant that is used to tan skins, make fish poison and medicinal purposes.
Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people	Traditional Owners have their own rights and obligations under Traditional law and custom in the Murrumbidgee catchment. The laws of Traditional people regulate transmission of property rights, access to land and waters, responsibilities relating to land and waters, use of resources, and a myriad of other rights, responsibilities and community controls. Traditional Owners are not always members of the local Aboriginal communities that exist on their Traditional Country, and not all members of those local Aboriginal communities are Traditional Owners. These different communities of interest must be appropriately represented in the decision-making processes of the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority.
Tuber	An enlarged root or bulb. It is the swollen end of an underground stem which contains water, nutrient reserves and buds for future growth.

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