Duduroa Dhargal
Aboriginal Corporation

Indigenous Plants and Animals of the Upper Murray

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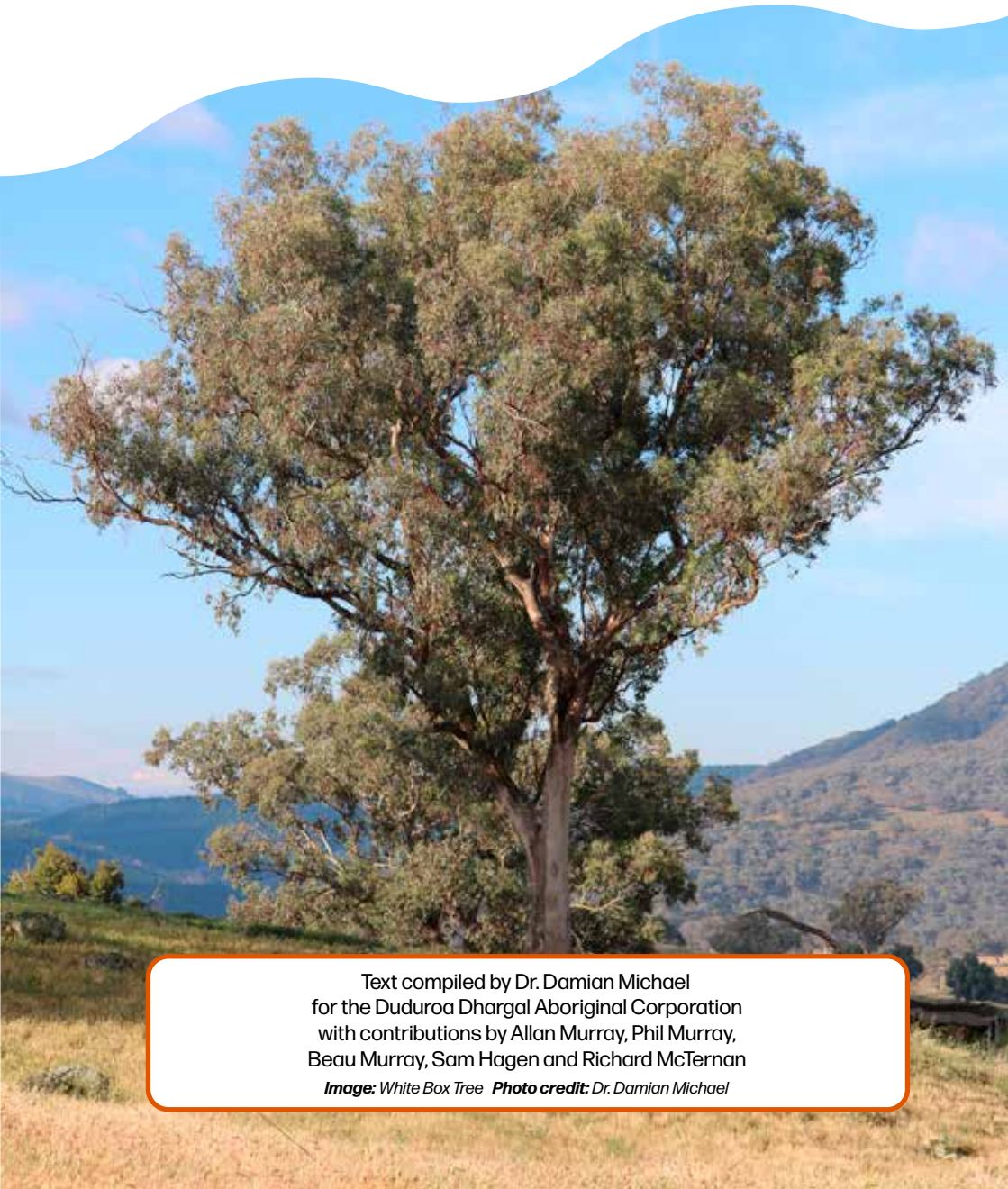
Disclaimer

This publication on Indigenous plant uses is intended to serve as a resource for those interested in learning about the traditional uses of plants by Indigenous communities in the Upper Murray. The information presented in this book is based on research, publicly accessible resources and interviews with Indigenous people, and every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy and authenticity. This publication may be of assistance to you, but the authors, including the Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information presented in this publication. Some plants and their parts are poisonous and may have harmful effects if not prepared correctly. Do not eat wild plants unless you have experience in identifying and preparing them for safe consumption. Any proposed disturbance to plants in National Parks and conservation reserves in Victoria requires prior approval. Readers are encouraged to respect and honour Indigenous communities and their knowledge, and to seek guidance from knowledgeable Indigenous Elders and cultural leaders before using any plants or engaging in traditional practices.

Cover image: *Tom Groggin* ***Photo credit:*** *Beau Murray*

Indigenous Plants and Animals of the Upper Murray



Text compiled by Dr. Damian Michael
for the Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation
with contributions by Allan Murray, Phil Murray,
Beau Murray, Sam Hagen and Richard McTernan

Image: *White Box Tree* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

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It would not have been possible to have put this project together without everyone's contribution towards it, DDAC cannot thank-you all enough.

"You don't live in an environment for thousands of years without knowing how to use it."

- Dr. Beth Gott AM

The information on the use of plants and animals in this publication was collated from a wide range of sources, including local traditional knowledge, online websites and primary literature, including the Flora of Victoria volumes and pioneering research published by the late Dr. Beth Gott AM. Key references and further reading are provided in the bibliography.

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VICTORIA State Government | Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation

Charles Sturt University

Contents

The Bushfire Recovery Project

"Our stories and our ancestors for a couple of hundred years now are not lost, they are still there, and you can feel it when you are on site"

- Minda Murray – Duduroa Dhargal Traditional Custodian

Our key aims of the Bushfire Recovery Project are to:

- Increase Duduroa Dhargal people's knowledge and skills to work on Country and to be better informed to make recommendations of future management.
- Address biodiversity outcomes that are a priority to both land management agencies and Traditional Custodians.
- Improve community relations and understanding of Aboriginal culture within the fire affected areas.

One on-ground activity DDAC members have been involved with is restoring native 'bush gardens'. Native bush gardens are places with a rich diversity of culturally significant plants, especially edible species or plants with special uses or medicinal values. These areas are often found along song lines or pathways used to move between valleys or Ceremonial areas. In many cases, these areas were actively managed through small-scale mosaic burning practices, harvesting and tilling soil, and wildlife management.

"We put that charcoal back on the ground to protect the soil, and all the little things that make the dirt under the ground for the trees, the shrubs and general use plants we use, the fruit trees, the nut trees, the yams, the herbs, spices, vegetables – we got everything here – except we got to burn it to encourage it back out here"
Uncle Rod Mason – Traditional Knowledge Holder

"We would like to see a lot more of it happen, a few more Landcare groups taking it on to get a few more cultural burns happening"
Uncle Allan Murray – Duduroa Dhargal Traditional Custodian

"We noticed the first year after the bushfires, all the native orchids came back"
Uncle Allan Murray & Uncle Phil Murray – Duduroa Dhargal Traditional Custodians

"Fire opens up Country, so you can see what's down below. You might find artefacts and tools used by the old people that have long since been hidden, because of overgrowth in the landscape."
Uncle Phil Murray – Duduroa Dhargal Traditional Custodian

"It's been such a privilege to work with my Uncles and to have this opportunity to learn from them and with them. It's built a stronger connection between us all and for me personally, a stronger connection to my roots and to Country. It amazes me all the knowledge that our old people had of all the local plant species and their own individual uses and benefits to our people's health, knowledge that is slowly being lost. It's so important not to lose that knowledge of our old people, to lose that special connection that most people don't have to our native plants."
Beau Murray – Duduroa Dhargal Traditional Custodian

"It's important to get Traditional Custodian's back working on Country, so when anyone asks about a particular subject, we can give them info that we maybe didn't know before. It's about getting out on Country and learning as you go, teaching the young ones and getting them ready to be our next generation of knowledge holders and teachers."
Richard McTernan – Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation

Purpose of the Booklet

This booklet, prepared by DDAC, aims to increase awareness and understanding of culturally significant plants in the Upper Murray region among Aboriginal groups and the wider community. It also aims to foster an appreciation of the roles that certain animals play in the recovery of the land, following fires. While not intended to be a comprehensive guide to 'bushtucker', it provides an overview of the different types of plants that were traditionally used for food, implements, tools, or medicinal purposes. It is important to note that some species have multiple uses but, in this booklet, they are listed under a key plant part. The booklet also highlights the important role animals play in shaping the environment, and so, totemic species and those that provide significant functional roles in the recovery of ecosystems are presented. The species listed in this booklet are not restricted to the Upper Murray region, with many having broader distributions in south-eastern Australia. The publication is also not intended to provide detailed accounts on how plants were prepared.

Map of North-East Victoria showing major towns, water courses, farmland, native vegetation and areas impacted by the 2019/20 Black Summer fires. The Upper Murray region extends east of Tallangatta to Corryong (Produced by Craig Poynter, Spatial Data Analysis Network, CSU).

Native Vegetation

The native vegetation in the Upper Murray is shaped by a range of factors, including topography, climate, fire regimes and most importantly, traditional land management practices.

The region can be divided into three main bioregions based on climate, geomorphology, geology, soils and vegetation. These bioregions include the **Northern Inland Slopes, Highlands – Northern Fall and the Victorian Alps**.

Each of these bioregions support a diverse range of vegetation types called ecological vegetation communities (EVCs), based on plant species, structure and other ecological features. These three bioregions occupy a gradient in elevation with majestic River Red Gums fringing the rivers and valleys in the west and stunted Snow Gums capping the summits in the Victorian Alps in the east. Tall wet forests dominated by Eurabbie Blue Gum, Alpine Ash and Narrow-leaved Peppermint flank the sheltered slopes in montane areas, whereas dry, north-facing slopes are dominated by Black Cypress Pine, Drooping Sheoak and Blakely's Red Gum, often growing on shallow, stony soils.

Bioregions and main ecological vegetation communities in North-East Victoria.
https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/bioregions-and-evc-benchmarks

Bioregion	Main EVCs	Dominant tree species
Northern Inland Slopes	Grassy Dry Forest, Box Ironbark Forest, Granitic Hills Woodland, Heathy Dry Forest, Shrubby Dry Forest, Herb-rich Foothill Forest, Grassy Woodland, Valley Grassy Forest, Plains Grassy Woodland, Floodplain Riparian Woodland, Riverine Grassy Woodland, Riverine Sedgy Forest and Wetland ecosystems	Grey Box, White Box, Red Box, Yellow Box, Apple Box, River Red Gum, Broad-leaved Peppermint, Blakely's Red Gum, Brittle Gum, Red Stringybark, Red Box, Bundy, Cherry Ballart, Silver Wattle, White Cypress Pine, Black Cypress Pine, Mugga Ironbark, Drooping Sheoak, Kurrajong, Lightwood, Buloke
Highlands – Northern Fall	Herb-rich Foothill Forest, Shrubby Dry Forest, Montane Dry Woodland, Heathy Dry Forest, Grassy Dry Forest and Valley Grassy Forest	Broad-leaved Peppermint, Mountain Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Eurrabie, Candlebark, Brittle Gum, Manna Gum, Swamp Gum, Red Stringybark, Messmate Stringybark, Blackwood, Mountain Tea-tree, Alpine Ash, Shinning Gum, Mountain Swamp-gum
Victorian Alps	Sub-alpine Woodland, Treeless Sub-alpine Mosaic, Sub-alpine Grasslands, Montane Dry Woodland, Montane Damp Forest, Montane Wet Forest and Montane Grassy Woodland	Candlebark, Mountain Grey-gum, Alpine Ash, Shinning Gum, Snow Gum, Mountain Swamp-gum, Blackwood

Fire in the Landscape

Fire is a natural part of Australian ecosystems and can play an important role in shaping native vegetation, maintaining plant communities and wildlife populations. However, fire frequency has increased in Australian forests. Too many fires in quick succession are not good, nor are too infrequent fires. Fires are also becoming more severe, often burning through forest canopies and burning for weeks or months on end. These changes can be linked to climate change and human activities and have significant impacts on the environment.

Some trees such as eucalypts can resprout from dormant buds protected beneath thick layers of bark, but other species such as Black Cypress Pine only regenerate from seed. Frequent fires can therefore alter the forest structure and in some cases create more fire prone landscapes.

In 2019/2020, several large-scale fires referred to as the Black Summer fires burnt through extensive parts of North-East Victoria and more than half of the Upper Murray region. The fires burnt for many weeks and affected approximately 1,502,000 ha of vegetation in the Upper Murray, impacting towns such as Walwa, Tintaldra, Towong, Cudgewa, Colac Colac, Corryong and Nariel Valley.

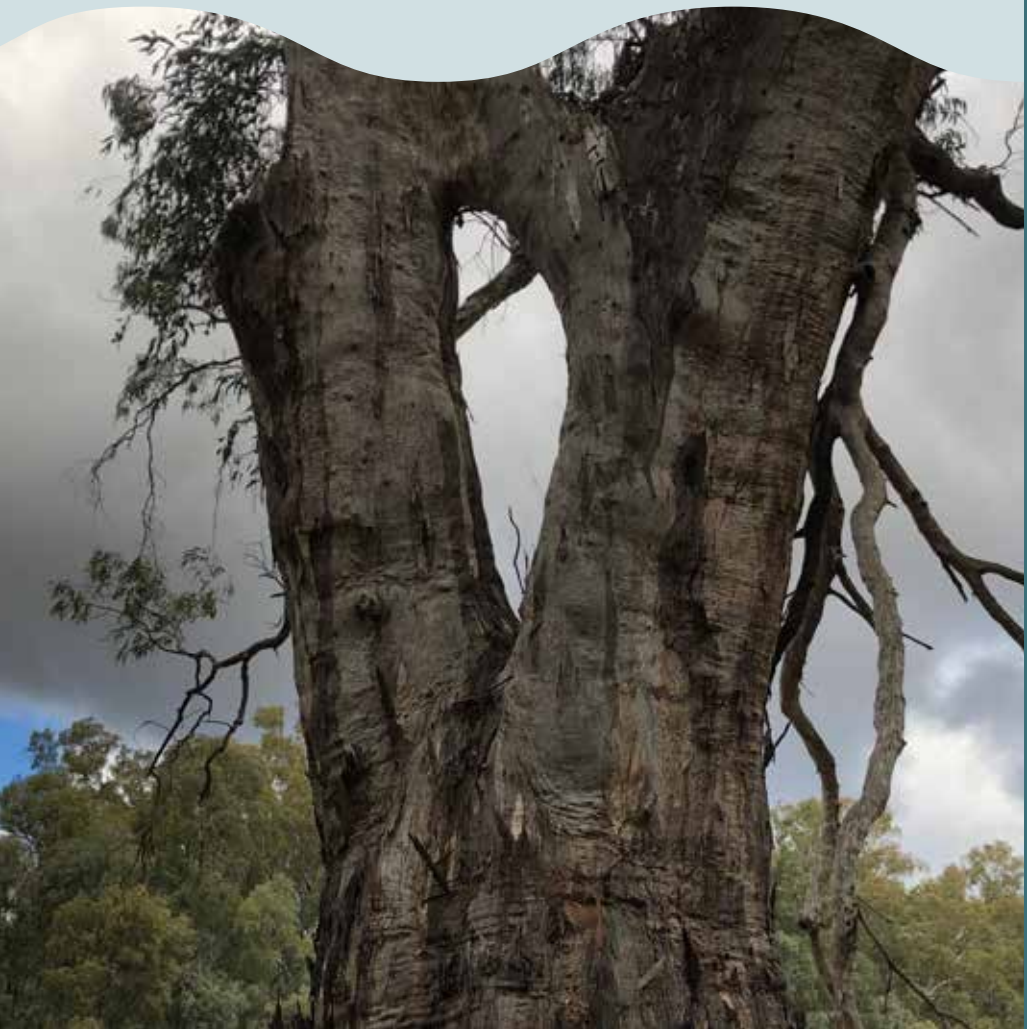
In response to the increasing threat of fire, many forests in Victoria are managed using fire management plans that aim to reduce the risk of fire and minimize its impacts on forests. These plans involve controlled burning, fire break creation, and fuel management to reduce fuel loads, which can help to prevent large, intense fires from occurring. However, reinstating cultural burning practices by Traditional Custodians is also required to help improve the health and resilience of native vegetation in the Upper Murray.

Image: *Resprouting trees* ***Photo credit:*** *Beau Murray*

Trees

Trees have played an integral role in the lives of Indigenous Australians for over 40,000 years, providing not only fuel for fire, food and shelter but also holding spiritual and cultural significance. Indigenous peoples used the bark, leaves, wood, and roots of various tree species for a range of purposes. In Victoria, River Red Gums were used for making canoes, shelters, and containers, while the leaves of various other eucalypt species were used for medicinal purposes. In some areas, fires were lit at the base of large gums to create large cavities, which were used as shelters, birthing places or to store implements. Trees also played an important role in Indigenous spirituality, with many trees considered sacred and used in ceremonies and rituals. The Upper Murray region supports approximately 30 different eucalypt species, many of which retain the scars of past occupation and use.

Image: *Indigenous Ring Tree* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*



River Red Gum

Duduroa Name: *Kumbarro* **Botanical Name:** *Eucalyptus camuldulensis*

Habitat	This species grows along major water courses.
Uses	The dried timber was an important source of fuel, bark was used for constructing canoes, coolamons and a range of other vessels. Hollow trunk cavities were used as shelter and birthing sites. Branches were trained to form rings by binding them together with twine fashioned from Cumbungi reeds. Ring trees signify boundaries or special areas on Country and are often associated with the junction of water courses, campsites and burial areas.
Wildlife	Flowers attract a wide variety of insects, nectar is sort after by the Grey-headed Flying Fox, gliders and possums. This tree forms numerous hollows which provide denning sites for possums, gliders, Carpet Python and Tree Goanna. Bark ribbons are used by tree frogs, Crevice Skink and microbats. Fallen branches provide habitat for antechinus, lizards and invertebrates. Trees that topple into the water provide habitat for fish and Rakali.

Image: *Seeds and flowers*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *River Red Gum with canoe scar*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Manna Gum or Ribbon Gum

Duduroa Name: *Dandikala* **Botanical Name:** *Eucalyptus viminalis*

Habitat	This species grows in moist forested gullies.
Uses	The dried timber and ribbon bark was an important source of fuel, and the bark was used for constructing shields and bowls. The sap which is sweet and crumbly is called manna and was eaten during the summer months.
Wildlife	The leaves are an important food for Koalas and the sap is consumed by the Yellow-bellied Glider and Krefft's Glider during the summer months. The ribbon bark provides a productive foraging environment for forest birds and the Agile Antechinus.

Image: *Manna Gum buds*
Photo credit: *Catherine Clowes @ Flickr*

Image: *Manna Gum tree*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Blackwood, Australian Blackwood, Hickory or Mudgerabah

Duduroa Name: *Badalwa* **Botanical Name:** *Acacia melanoxylon*

Habitat	This species grows in the moist gullies of wet forests in higher rainfall regions.
Uses	The wood is hard and was used to make spears, spear throwers (woomera), throwing sticks, boomerangs, clubs and shields. Twine was made by peeling strands of the inner bark. The bark has pain relieving (analgesic) properties and was soaked in water to make an infusion used to treat aching joints. The bark is rich in tannin, an astringent used to treat gastric conditions and internal bleeding. The bark was also used to poison fish.
Wildlife	It is one of the first species to recolonise bare earth after a fire where it helps to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere via root nodules produced by bacteria living in the soil. Insects are attracted to the flowers and gliders feed on the sap. Wood boring grubs live inside the trunk and are highly sort after by Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. Food source for caterpillars of the Moonlight Jewel, Silky Hairstreak and Caper White.

Image: *Acacia flowers*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Acacia Tree*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Kurrajong

Duduroa Name: *Bibanba* **Botanical Name:** *Brachychiton populneus*

Habitat	Found in a wide variety of vegetation types, especially rocky areas.
Uses	The flowers and young 'carrot-like' tap roots are edible and in some regions the seeds were removed from the pods, cleaned, roasted and ground into flour. The bark was used to make fibre, rope and twine for fishing, weaving baskets or nets to catch birds as well as implements such as shields. Aside from being a source of food, holes were carved into the soft bark to access water stored between the inner bark and the trunk.
Wildlife	This species is relatively tolerant to fire, can withstand low intensity burns and is often the only green plant remaining after a bushfire. It is the host of the Orange and Kurrajong Mistletoe. The flowers attract a wide range of birds and insects, especially butterflies such as the Tailed Emperor. The seeds are eaten by the Australian Raven and Magpie.

Image: *Kurrajong tree*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Image: *Kurrajong seed pod*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Silver Banksia or Honeysuckle

Duduroa Name: *Murrka* **Botanical Name:** *Banksia marginata*

Habitat	A relatively uncommon shrub or small tree found in a wide range of vegetation types.
Uses	The flowers were steeped in water to extract the nectar and used as a drink. The wood was used to make needles and the dried flowers were used as a strainer to purify water for drinking. Dried cones were also used to transport hot coals from one area to the next.
Wildlife	The flowers provide abundant nectar which attract a wide range of insects and birds such as lorikeets and honeyeaters. Small mammals such as Agile Antechinus, Bush Rat, Krefft's Glider and the Feathertail Glider are also attracted to flowering plants. The seeds are eaten by the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. Food source for caterpillars of the Double-headed Hawkmoth Butterfly

Image: *Banksia flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Banksia flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Drooping Sheoak

Duduroa Name: *Wundju* **Botanical Name:** *Allocasuarina verticillata*

Habitat	Commonly found on shallow soils, upper slopes and ridges of woodland and dry forest vegetation types, often forming dense stands.
Uses	The stems, needle-like leaves and young cones (called oak apples) were chewed to relieve thirst or soaked in water to produce a lemon-flavoured tonic as they are high in vitamin C. The foliage was used for smoking Ceremony, and also chewed to treat dysentery & diarrhoea, and an infusion of the inner bark was used as a gargle for toothache. Seeds were ground to make flour. The wood was used to make boomerangs, shields, spears, spear throwers, digging sticks, clapping sticks and clubs.
Wildlife	The seed cones are eaten by corellas and cockatoos, including the threatened Glossy Black Cockatoo. It is also an important food source for Koalas.

Image: *Drooping sheoak tree* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Seeds

Unlike other more arid regions of Australia, seeds did not form an important component of the diet of the Indigenous people of Victoria. In dry regions, the seeds of different grass species were ground into flour, then baked in the coals. The fern, Nardoo was only occasionally used in Victoria, and was often regarded as a 'fallback' resource, and one that required special preparation. It was once thought that Burke and Wills died from eating the spores of Nardoo, which contain a high level of an enzyme that breaks down vitamin B1 in the body. However, other factors, such as malnutrition, dehydration, and exposure to harsh weather conditions, were also likely to have played a significant role. The following accounts are examples of plant species which yield high amounts of seed and were likely ground into flour and baked in coals or made into 'porridge'.

Image: *Nardoo* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Kangaroo Grass

Botanical Name: *Themeda australis*

Habitat	A widespread and common tussock-forming species found in a broad range of grassland and open woodland vegetation types.
Uses	The leaves and stems were used to make twine for fishing nets and baskets. The grains were harvested and ground into flour to make bread, which formed a staple food source. The leaves were used to treat a range of ailments, such as fevers, colds and sore throats. They were also used as a poultice for wounds and sores.
Wildlife	This species thrives in environments with frequent fires, as the ensuing regrowth attracts a diverse range of herbivores, such as the Common Wombat, Black Wallaby, and Eastern Grey Kangaroo. In addition, various reptiles and small mammals seek shelter in the tussock bases, including the Olive Legless Lizard, small skinks and Long-nosed Bandicoot. The seeds are a crucial food source for finches, parrots and cockatoos.

Image: *Kangaroo Grass seeds*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Kangaroo Grass*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Grass Tree

Duduroa Name: *Djandjamba* **Botanical Name:** *Xanthorrhoea australis*

Habitat	Found on poor nutrient soils in woodland and dry forest vegetation types, often in areas subject to frequent fire.
Uses	This species has multiple uses. The seeds were collected and ground into a flour and cooked in fire to make bread. Tubers of young plants and leaf bases were eaten, and the flower spike were used to extract the nectar to make a sweet drink. Leaves were used to cut meat and the flower stalks were used to make spears. The dried flower stalks were also used as a drilling stick to start fires. Resin from the leaf base was used as an adhesive to make spears and hatchets, and to waterproof canoes. The flower heads and bark were burnt, and the smoke was inhaled to cure cold like symptoms.
Wildlife	A wide variety of insects and birds such as honeyeaters are attracted to the flower spikes. Small mammals such as the Agile Antechinus, Bush Rat, Common Dunnart, Long-nosed Bandicoot and Eastern Pygmy Possum shelter or nest beneath or within the grass skirts.

Image: *Flower stalks*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Grass trees*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Spiny-headed Matrush, Long-leaved Matrush or Basket Grass

Botanical Name: *Lomandra longifolia*

Habitat	Found on shallow soils in woodland and dry forest vegetation types, often in rocky or hilly areas. Several other species in the region.
Uses	Nectar was harvested from the flowers and the leaves were used to weave baskets, eel traps and nets. The base of the leaves was also chewed and the seeds ground to make flour or mixed with nectar or honey. The roots have medicinal properties and were used to treat insect bites,
Wildlife	This tussock forming ground cover provides shelter for a wide range of small mammals and reptiles. The flowers attract insects. It quickly regenerates after fire providing wildlife with cover.

Image: *Seeds*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Image: *Spiny-headed Matrush*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Common Nardoo

Botanical Name: *Marsilea drummondii*

Habitat	A small aquatic fern that grows on the mudflats of swamps, wetlands, small depressions and along streams.
Uses	This species can be toxic to animals and humans if not prepared correctly. The nut-like spore capsules (sporocarps) were collected, roasted to the remove the poisonous compound thiaminase and then ground into flour to make dough or a gruel.
Wildlife	This species can become dominant during flood years. It provides nursery habitat for small wetland fish and tadpoles of pond breeding frogs. Although it is fatal to mammals, Nardoo is an important food source for ducks.

Image: *Nardoo*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Nardoo*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Fruits

Indigenous communities in Victoria have a long history of using native fruits for their nutritional, medicinal and cultural significance. The region is home to a wide variety of fruiting plants, some of which are used commercially such as the coastal Muntries. These fruits are rich in essential vitamins and minerals and are used in traditional Indigenous diets to supplement protein and carbohydrate sources. Native fruits also hold significant cultural importance and are used in Ceremonies and as a symbol of connection to the land. The utilization of native fruits by Indigenous communities in Victoria highlights the importance of sustainable agriculture practices and the preservation of local ecosystems, which are essential for maintaining the cultural practices and food sources of the region's Indigenous communities.

Image: *Muntries in flower* ***Photo credit:*** *Friends of Aldinga Scrub @ Flickr*

Native Cherry or Cherry Ballart

Duduroa Name: *Mamong or Berrwa* **Botanical Name:** *Exocarpos cupressiformis*

Habitat	Commonly found on shallow soils in woodland and dry forest vegetation types. Young plants parasitise the roots of other plants, particularly wattles and eucalypt trees.
Uses	The wood was used as fuel and to make spear throwers. It produces a fleshy red swollen stem (pedicel) which resembles a small cherry and was eaten raw. The sap was used to treat snakebite. Foliage was used in cleansing Ceremonies and as an insect repellent. The twigs were used as bitter tonic and astringent.
Wildlife	Seed eating birds such as Mistletoebird and Bronze-wing Pigeon are attracted to this tree. Once consumed, the hard nut is weakened by the birds digestive acids allowing the seeds to germinate more easily. Other species reported to be attracted to this species include possums, echidnas and the Black Wallaby. Host to a variety of moths and butterflies.

Image: *Cherry Ballart*
Photo credit: *Igor Makunin/igomak @ Flickr*

Image: *Cherry Ballart tree*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Prickly Currant Bush

Botanical Name: *Coprosma quadrifida*

Habitat	Grows in montane and wet forests where it is a common understory species.
Uses	The large orange-red berries were eaten as were the fruits of its relative, the Rough Coprosma. The roasted seeds make a coffee substitute.
Wildlife	Fruit-eating birds such as the Satin Bowerbird feed on the ripe berries. Possums and small mammals also feed on the fruits.

Image: *Prickly Currant Bush* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Apple Berry or Apple Dumplings

Botanical Name: *Billardiera scandens*

Habitat	A sprawling ground cover, small shrub or vine found in woodland and dry forests.
Uses	The fruit was eaten raw when they turned from purple to yellow and fell to the ground. The fruit is aromatic and has a similar taste to kiwi fruit. The green unripe fruits were roasted.
Wildlife	Honeyeaters such as the Eastern Spinebill are attracted to the tubular flowers. Many other birds also feed on the fruits and assist in its dispersal. In summer, the fruits are eaten by the Long-nosed Bandicoot.

Image: *Apple Berry flower*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Image: *Apple Berry fruit*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Native Raspberry or Small-leaved Raspberry

Botanical Name: *Rubus parvifolius*

Habitat	This climbing shrub is found in moist gullies and damp areas.
Uses	The sweet berries are high in antioxidants and were eaten raw. Leaves were infused in water to make a tonic used to treat stomach complaints and diarrhea.
Wildlife	This species provides habitat for birds and small mammals. Fruits are eaten by a wide variety of wildlife.

Image: *Native Raspberry* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Hairy Geebung or Rigid Geebung

Botanical Name: *Persoonia rigida*

Habitat	A small erect shrub found in woodland and dry forests.
Uses	The fruits were eaten raw usually when they dropped to the ground. String and fishing lines were soaked in water with an infusion of Geebung bark to help prevent fraying.
Wildlife	The hard stones of this species are dispersed by emus and possums.

Image: *Hairy Geebung* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

Urn Heath or Honey-gland Heath

Botanical Name: *Melichrus urceolatus*

Habitat	A small prickly shrub found in woodland dry forests.
Uses	The small translucent berries were eaten raw straight from the plant. The berries of several other heath species in the region such as Daphne Heath, Peach Heath and Common Beard Heath were also eaten.
Wildlife	Flowers are eaten by a wide range of birds including the Crimson Rosella and the nectar attracts honeyeaters and insects.

Image: *Urn Heath* ***Photo credit:*** *Donald Hobern @ Flickr*

Leafless Sour-bush or Sour-bush

Botanical Name: *Omphacomeria acerba*

Habitat	This erect parasitic shrub grows in montane and dry forests often on shallow, stony soils.
Uses	The green to purplish berries have a sour taste and were eaten raw.
Wildlife	Berries are eaten by birds and possums.

Image: *Leafless Sour-bush fruit*
Photo credit: *Oor Woolie @ Flickr*

Image: *Leafless Sour-bush*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Kangaroo Apple

Botanical Name: *Solanum aviculare*

Habitat	A large spreading shrub found in dry and wet forests often in moist areas.
Uses	The large fruits were eaten when they were ripe, turned orange-red and fell to the ground. Unripe fruits are poisonous. Over-eating could lead to stomach ache, due to the amount of tannins in the fruit. Women would create a drink out of the boiled unripe fruit, which would act as a contraceptive. The fruit was also used a poultice on swollen joints. The plant contains a steroid which is important to the production of cortisone.
Wildlife	The fruits are eaten by a wide variety of birds which disperse the seeds in new areas. It germinates following fire.

Image: *Kangaroo Apple flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Kangaroo Apple fruit*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Coarse Dodder-laurel or Strangle Vine

Botanical Name: *Cassytha melantha*

Habitat	A partly parasitic climber that attaches to its host and may completely cover small shrubs and trees. Often found growing on Acacia species and eucalypt trees. Found in woodland and forest vegetation types.
Uses	The fruits were eaten when they turned brown and ripened. Other species of Cassytha had medicinal properties and were used to treat fever.
Wildlife	This species provides food for caterpillars and is the main host for species such as the Western Dusky-blue. Hemi-parasites like Dodder transfer and redistribute resources from the host to understory species, increasing local diversity.

Image: *Course Dodder-laurel flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Course Dodder-laurel*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Elderberry Panax, Small Basswood or Elderberry Ash

Botanical Name: *Polyscias sambucifolia*

Habitat	A tall shrub or small tree found in montane, wet forest and rainforest. The leaves can vary in size and shape.
Uses	The translucent fruits were eaten when they ripened and turned a translucent mauve to blue.
Wildlife	Several bird species eat the fruits including the Pied Currawong. The leaves are the preferred food for the Elderberry Panax Leaf Roller, a moth which lives in communal shelters made of leaves stitched together with silk.

Image: *Elderberry Panax fruit*
Photo credit: *John Tann @ Flickr*

Image: *Elderberry Panax foliage*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Drooping Mistletoe or Snotty Gobbles

Botanical Name: *Amyema pendula*

Habitat	A hemi-parasitic plant found in a wide range of habitats often growing on River Red Gum and other eucalypt species and occasionally Acacia species. There are at least six other different species of Mistletoe in the region.
Uses	The fruit was chewed to produce saliva and quench thirst. The leaves of some species were used to make a tonic to treat colds and fever.
Wildlife	Mistletoe provides nesting sites for a wide range of birds. Many honeyeaters feed on the nectar and possums and gliders feed on the flowers. The Mistletoebird and Painted Honeyeater are dependent on the fruits of Mistletoe for their survival. Larvae of the Satin Azure and Jezabel Butterfly also depend on Mistletoe leaves as food.

Image: *Drooping Mistletoe flower*
Photo credit: *Roger Fryer & Jill Newland @ Flickr*

Image: *Drooping Mistletoe trees*
Photo credit: *Dr. Damian Michael*

Roots and Tubers

The Indigenous peoples of Victoria have a rich history of utilizing the roots and tubers of various plants for food throughout the year. One species in particular, the Yam Daisy was an extremely important food source, and the tubers were harvested in large quantities during certain times of the year. Other plants such as the Common Everlasting were used for their medicinal properties, while the underground corms of the Common Reed were used to make a type of flour.

"In the higher rainfall areas of south-eastern Australia, plant underground storage organs -"roots" in the broad sense - constituted the staple foods. The advantage of "roots" as staples is that they were available virtually year-round" - Gott (2008).

Image: *Yam Daisy* ***Photo credit:*** *Dirkus @ Flickr*

Austral Bear's-ear

Botanical Name: *Cymbonotus preissianus*

Habitat	Found in grasslands, open woodlands and dry forests where it may be locally common.
Uses	The tap root was cooked and eaten. The leaves were also eaten raw.
Wildlife	The yellow flowers attract insects and provide nectar for butterflies.

Image: *Austral Bear's-ear* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Yam Daisy or Murnong

Botanical Name: *Microseris walteri*

Habitat	Found in grasslands, open woodlands and dry forests where it may be locally common.
Uses	The 'radish-like' tubers were eaten raw or cooked and were a stable food source high in carbohydrates such as fructan. The leaves were also eaten raw. This species was managed and cultivated using fire, gathering and digging but has declined due to sheep grazing and competition with exotic broad-leaved weeds.
Wildlife	The yellow flowers attract insects and provide nectar for butterflies.

Image: *Yam Daisy*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Yam Daisy*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Chocolate Lily

Botanical Name: *Dichopogon strictus*

Habitat	A perennial plant found in grasslands, open woodlands and dry forests where it may be locally common. Other similar species in the region include Pale Vanilla-lily and Small Vanilla-lily
Uses	The 'radish-like' tubers were eaten raw or cooked. These edible tubers usually grow to around 3.5 cm in length and grow around 15 cm below the surface. Flowers have a subtle chocolate scent and were eaten raw to help cleanse the blood.
Wildlife	The lilac-blue flowers attract insects and provide nectar for butterflies. Bees are the main pollinator of this species.

Image: *Chocolate Lily* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Yellow Bulbine-lily or Native Leek

Botanical Name: *Bulbine bulbosa*

Habitat	A perennial plant found in grasslands, open woodlands and dry forests where it may be locally common in moist areas. The similar Rock Lily grows around rock outcrops on moss mats or seepage areas.
Uses	The plump rounded corms are high in calcium and iron and were cooked and eaten. They were considered the sweetest of all the lily plants. The seeds were also harvested and eaten although seed output is generally low.
Wildlife	The yellow flowers attract insects and provide nectar for butterflies. Insects are the main pollinator of this species.

Image: *Yellow Bulbine-lily*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Yellow Bulbine-lily flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Milkmaids or Star of Bethlehem

Botanical Name: *Burchardia umbellata*

Habitat	A perennial plant found in grasslands, open woodlands and dry forests where it may be locally common. It is often found with the similar looking Early Nancy.
Uses	It has 'potato-like' tubers that were eaten raw or cooked and provided a year-round food source. They are described as being fleshy, white structures about 5 mm thick, full of starch with a nondescript flavour.
Wildlife	The white flowers attract insects and provide nectar for butterflies. Insects are the main pollinator of this species.

Image: *Milkmaids* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Rosy Hyacinth Orchid

Botanical Name: *Dipodium roseum*

Habitat	A tall, leafless, plant that grows to 80 cm and is found in dry and wet forests, often on shallow soils near the bases of eucalypt trees where it extracts nutrients from their roots via fungal associations. There are several other Hyacinth Orchid species in Victoria, including the endangered Yellow Hyacinth Orchid from Burrowa – Pine Mountain National Park.
Uses	The large tuber was eaten raw or cooked.
Wildlife	The flowers attract native bees and wasps possibly by flower mimicry, whereby insect pollinators are enticed to visit the flower and successfully pollinate it with no reward of food to the pollinating insect. Flowers are eaten by wallabies and possums. It regenerates after fire.

Image: *Rosy Hyacinth Orchid*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Rosy Hyacinth Orchid flowers*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Pink Fingers

Botanical Name: *Calendenia carnea*

Habitat	A small, slender orchid found in grassland, open woodland and dry forests. Often on well-drained soil. There are a wide variety of other orchids in this group which are similar in appearance.
Uses	The tuber was eaten raw or cooked of this species and many orchid species in the region.
Wildlife	The stingless Sugarbag Bee is one of the main pollinators of this species. Wasps and bees are attracted by chemical emissions that may smell like insect pheromones.

Image: *Pink Fingers* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Small-leaved Clematis, Old Man Beard or Headache Vine

Botanical Name: *Clematis microphylla*

Habitat	A woody vine found in wet and dry forests often sprawling over shrubs and into the trees. A similar, larger-leaved species, grows in higher rainfall areas.
Uses	The leaves and flowers are poisonous. The roots were eaten raw or cooked. Root fibres were used to make string for decorations such as making headbands. Leaves were crushed and inhaled to treat headaches or steamed and placed on the skin to relieve aching joints.
Wildlife	Many birds use the fluffy seedheads to line their nests.

Image: *Small-leaved Clematis* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Black-anther Flax-lily, Spreading Flax-lily or Blueberry Lily

Botanical Name: *Dianella revoluta*

Habitat	A common and widespread species found in a broad range of habitats, especially in rocky areas where it grows from small cracks. Several other Flax-lily species are found in the region.
Uses	The roots were pounded, cooked and eaten. Both the roots and leaves were used to make a tonic to treat headaches and colds. The berries and leave bases were eaten raw, and the leaves were used to make nets, bags and other materials. The base of the plant was folded and used as a whistle to imitate an injured bird. The distress calls are reported to have lured snakes out of hiding which then were hunted for food. The similar-looking Tasman Flax-lily found in higher rainfall areas was not eaten.
Wildlife	This hardy tussock-forming ground cover provides habitat for small mammals and reptiles. It is buzz-pollinated by the native 'sweet' and 'digger' bees.

Image: *Black-anther Flax-lily flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Black-anther Flax-lily bush*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Common Reed

Botanical Name: *Phragmites australis*

Habitat	A tall semi-aquatic native grass found along streams and the edges of wetlands on poorly drained soils where it may form extensive reed beds.
Uses	The shoots and underground stems (called rhizomes) were eaten raw or cooked, or dried and ground to make a porridge. Leaves were used to weave baskets and nets. The stems were used to make light-weight spears or woven together to make rafts to collect food from wetlands
Wildlife	This species plays important functional roles in maintaining the health and stability of wetland environments. Its helps to stabilise soil and provides habitat for a wide range of aquatic species. Dense thickets provide important nesting sites for the Australian Little Bittern, Australasian Bittern and other wetland birds.

Image: *Common Reeds* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Cumbungi, Broad-leaved Cumbungi or Bulrush

Botanical Name: *Typha orientalis*

Habitat	A tall semi-aquatic native reed found along streams and the edges of wetlands on poorly drained soils where it may form extensive reed beds.
Uses	The underground glutinous tubers (rhizomes) were eaten raw or cooked. Young shoots were eaten raw and young flowers were steamed and eaten. Tubers and leaves were used make string for nets and baskets. The pollen has medicinal properties and was used to treat a variety of ailments in different parts of the world.
Wildlife	This species plays important functional roles in maintaining the health and stability of wetland environments. Its helps to stabilise soil and provides habitat for a wide range of aquatic species. Dense thickets provide important nesting sites for the Australian Little Bittern, Australasian Bittern and other wetland birds.

Image: *Cumbungi* ***Photo credit:*** *John Tann @ Flickr*

Medicinal Uses

Information on the use of plants for medicinal purposes in Victoria is extremely limited. However, a wide variety of plants were likely used to treat a wide range of different ailments, from stomach upsets to snakebite. One of the most widely used plants was the leaves of different types of eucalypts, traditionally used to treat respiratory infections and coughs. Plants which produced tannins were used to aid digestion and plants with high antiseptic properties, such as tea tree, were used as an antiseptic to treat skin conditions and wounds. Wattles were often used to treat headaches and fever and the sap from the Native Cherry Ballart was used to treat snakebite. The following accounts provide some examples of the different types of plants that were used to treat certain conditions. Further research and documentation are necessary to learn and understand more about the history and use of plants in traditional medicine in Victoria.

Image: *Cherry Ballart* ***Photo credit:*** *Igor Makunin/igomak @ Flickr*

Bracken Fern or Common Bracken

Botanical Name: *Pteridium esculentum*

Habitat	A common understorey species found in woodland, montane and forest vegetation types where it may form dense thickets in moist areas.
Uses	Young leaves were crushed and rubbed on the skin to treat insect bites. This species grows in other parts of the world where a tea was made to treat stomach cramps, chest pains, internal bleeding, diarrhoea, colds and to expel worms.
Wildlife	The dense cover provides shelter for a wide range of animals and quickly regenerates after fire.

Image: *Bracken Fern*
Photo credit: *John Tann @ Flickr*

Image: *Bracken Fern*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Purple Coral-pea, Native Sarsparilla or Native Lilac

Botanical Name: *Hardenbergia violacea*

Habitat	A sprawling vine found in woodland and dry forests where is forms a vigorous ground cover or creeps over shrubs and small trees.
Uses	The flowers and leaves were used to treat mouth infections. A warm tonic was made to treat chest infections and stomach cramps.
Wildlife	A wide variety of native insects are attracted to the leaves. It also attracts butterflies and is food for caterpillars. Small birds such as thornbills and silvereyes nest in the dense foliage.

Image: *Native Sarsparilla flower*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Image: *Native Sarsparilla*
Photo credit: *Colleen Miller*

Broad-leaf Hopbush

Botanical Name: *Dodonaea viscosa*

Habitat	A small to medium-sized shrub found in heathland, woodland and forests. There are several different species in the region including the Endangered Hairy Hopbush which is only known from a small number of locations in the Upper Murray.
Uses	This plant had many uses which may have differed between regions. The leaves and stems were primarily used to treat earaches, toothaches or sore throats. It is now widely used for its therapeutic uses in Western science as an antioxidant and wound healing agent.
Wildlife	Ants are attracted to the small black seeds when they fall to the ground. Small birds such as thornbills, robins and honeyeaters nest in the dense foliage and parrots eat the seeds.

Image: *Broad-leaf Hopbush* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Dogwood, Common Cassinia, Dolly Bush or Cauliflower Bush

Botanical Name: *Cassinia aculeata*

Habitat	A dense understorey species found in woodland, montane and wet forest vegetation types on sandy or gravely soil. It regenerates vigorously following fire and other soil disturbances.
Uses	The essential oils in the leaves have anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties but may cause allergic skin reactions in some people. Several other species are found in the region and have medicinal properties. The similar looking Curry Bush was used to ease the pain of toothaches, tummy aches, and ease respiratory congestion.
Wildlife	A wide range of seed-eating species including ants and birds such as parrots and rosellas feed on the flowers and small insectivorous species such as thornbills forage in the foliage. A diverse range of insects are attracted to the scented flowers.

Image: *Common Cassinia*
Photo credit: *Beau Murray*

Image: *Common Cassinia*
Photo credit: *John Tann @ Flickr*

Kidney Weed

Botanical Name: *Dichondra repens*

Habitat	This small creeping herb is usually found in shady areas in woodland and forest vegetation types but is also common in lawns and has been introduced to numerous countries around the world.
Uses	The plant has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. In China, it has been traditionally used to treat a wide range of conditions ailments including jaundice, dysentery, urinary tract infection and strains and sprains.
Wildlife	A food source for native ducks.

Image: *Kidney Weed* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Austral Indigo

Botanical Name: *Indigofera australis*

Habitat	Found in open woodland and dry forests often in rocky areas.
Uses	The leaves were crushed and mixed with water to kill or stun fish or eels. In some cases, the roots were also crushed and mixed with salt to poison fish by impairing their ability to absorb oxygen from the water.
Wildlife	The delicate purple flowers attract butterflies and is a food source for caterpillars and other insects.

Image: *Austral Indigo* ***Photo credit:*** *Colleen Miller*

Hop Bitter-pea

Botanical Name: *Daviesia latifolia*

Habitat	Found in woodland and forest vegetation types often forming dense understory thickets.
Uses	The bitter-tasting leaves were infused in water to make a tonic to treat fever. The leaves believed to have medicinal properties, and a decoction of leaves was made by European settlers to expel intestinal worms. The leaves were also used as a substitute for hops to flavour beer.
Wildlife	It provides nectar for a wide range of birds and insects. Its dense foliage provides suitable nesting sites for small birds. As with all species in the 'Pea Family', it fixes nitrogen from the air into the soil.

Image: *Hop Bitter-pea* ***Photo credit:*** *Michael Jefferies @ Flickr*

Fauna

The fauna of the Upper Murray is rich and diverse and supports both arid-adapted and cool climate species. It is often considered to be part of a transitional zone whereby species that are usually found throughout inland Australia migrate to the region in times of drought. During the winter months many high-altitude species migrate to the lowland valleys to escape the snow and harsh alpine environment. One species which has immense cultural value and was a source of Dreaming for Indigenous peoples in the region was the Bogong Moth. This moth migrates annually over a thousand kilometres from its breeding grounds to escape the summer heat by sheltering in the crevices of boulder fields in the Australian Alps. These large moth aggregations were the basis for large-scale annual gatherings of different Aboriginal groups for ceremonies.

Image: *Bogong Moth* ***Photo credit:*** *Donald Hobern @ Flickr*

Eaglehawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle or Bunjil

Duduroa Name: *Wanamurru, Wanamarro, Manamurru or Bunjil*
Scientific Name: *Aquila audax*

Role	Bunjil is a revered ancestral creator figure in the mythology of several Indigenous groups in south-eastern Australia. Bunjil is often depicted as a powerful eagle or a man with eagle-like features, and is associated with the sky, creation, and spiritual guidance. According to the mythology, Bunjil created the land, animals, and people, and taught them laws and customs to live by. He is also believed to have given the people the boomerang and other tools, and to have established systems of knowledge and spirituality that are still practiced today. Bunjil is represented in the sky by the star Altair in the constellation Aquila.

Image: *Wedge-tailed Eagle* ***Photo credit:*** *Laurie Boyle @ Flickr*

Image: *Wedge-tailed Eagle in flight* ***Photo credit:*** *Ron Knight @ Flickr*

Australian Raven, 'Crow', Waang or Waa

Duduroa Name: *Wakarra* **Scientific Name:** *Corvus coronoides*

Role	Colloquially called a 'crow'. Waang (also spelled Wahn and Waa) is a significant figure in the Dreamtime stories of some Indigenous peoples of Australia, including those of Victoria. Waang is a creator spirit associated with the crow and is often depicted as a black bird with red eyes. In some stories, Waang is credited with creating the landscape and all living things, while in others he is seen as a trickster figure who can be mischievous and unpredictable. He is also associated with the cycles of life and death and is said to be responsible for guiding the souls of the deceased to the afterlife. Waang is still an important figure in the spiritual and cultural practices of Indigenous groups, and represents intelligence, adaptability and survival skills.

Image: *Australian Raven* ***Photo credit:*** *Hazel Watson @ Flickr*

Emu

Duduroa Name: *Marriawa* **Scientific Name:** *Dromaius novaehollandiae*

Role	The Emu is significant in Indigenous mythology and is linked to people's culture, identity and economy. It also provided many important resources. Emu meat and eggs provided a source of protein, the bones were used for cutting meat, tendons for twine, feathers for Ceremonial purposes and the oil was used to treat muscle pain and wounds. As a generalist feeder of plants, the Emu also plays an important role in the environment by dispersing plant seeds over long distances. Some of the food items it feeds on in the Upper Murray include the seeds of wattles and heath, as well as crickets and scorpions.

Image: *Emus* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

Greater Glider

Duduroa Name: *Djawa* **Scientific Name:** *Petauroides volans*

Role	The Greater Glider is the largest of the five gliding marsupials found in the region. It is found in wet forests and commonly uses Manna Gum and Mountain Gum as den trees, sheltering in cavities high up in the canopy and emerging at night to feed on the leaves, flowers and buds of eucalypts such as Narrow-leaved Peppermint. Multiple dens are often used within a small home range which varies between one to three hectares. Gliders along with possums not only provided Indigenous people with protein but also materials such as skins for making clothing. This species is Nationally Endangered as it has declined sharply in many regions due to climate change, land clearing, timber harvesting and bushfire.

Image: *Greater Glider* ***Photo credit:*** *Jono Dashper @ Flickr*

Black Wallaby, Swamp Wallaby

Duduroa Name: *Narrawako* **Scientific Name:** *Wallabia bicolor*

Role	The Black Wallaby is common across the woodlands and forests of south-eastern Australia and not only provided Indigenous people with protein but also materials such as skins for making clothing and water carriers. They also play a significant role in the environment by reducing the biomass of shrubs through their generalised feeding behaviour. The fruiting bodies of fungi and underground truffles are also eaten, and their spores can be carried as far as 1 km away contributing to the spread of mycorrhizal fungi through the environment. Mycorrhizal fungi are important because they enable plants to draw more nutrients and water from the soil and increase their tolerance to environmental stresses such as drought or fire.

Image: *Black Wallaby* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

Southern Long-nosed Bandicoot

Duduroa Name: *Dorra* **Scientific Name:** *Perameles nasuta*

Role	The Long-nosed Bandicoot is the only species of bandicoot found in the region. It was once common and widespread across south-eastern Australia but has declined due to loss of habitat and fox predation. In the Upper Murray it is typically found in wet forests often in association with mat-rush plants or dense vegetation where its shelters by day. It plays an important role in the ecosystem by digging holes in the soil and dispersing fungal spores. Many fungi such as truffles provide plants with nutrients via their root systems and require mammals to spread their spores. Healthy ecosystems and plant communities are therefore reliant on the survival of soil engineers such as bandicoots. Indigenous people looked out for bandicoot diggings as signs to obtain edible plant tubers.

Image: *Southern Long-nosed Bandicoot* ***Photo credit:*** *Chris Macgregor*

Common Wombat, Bare-nosed Wombat

Duduroa Name: *Dorkurra* **Scientific Name:** *Vombatus ursinus*

Role	The Common Wombat is one of the largest burrowing mammals in the world. They excavate and use multiple burrows which can be 30 metres long. The amount of soil that is turned over from burrow construction can be as high as 9.8 t/ha and the soil in mounds contain increased nitrogen, which also increases herbaceous plant cover. The burrows also serve as places where other forest animals such as bush rats, antechinus and monitor lizards can retreat during periods of bad weather or during a bushfire. Several birds also have increased levels of activity in the vicinity of wombat burrows, including the Grey Shrike-thrush and Painted Button Quail and the pools of water that form near the burrow entrance after rain provides another vital resource used by forest animals.

Image: *Common Wombat* ***Photo credit:*** *Nik Borrow @ Flickr*

Lace Monitor

Duduroa Name: *Kurrudha* **Scientific Name:** *Varanus varius*

Role	Monitor lizards are one of the largest reptiles in the region and were an important traditional food source, commonly represented in Dreamtime stories. These lizards play an important role in the ecosystem by feeding on weak or deceased animals, keeping disease levels low and maintaining the health of wildlife populations. Three different species occur in the Upper Murray region, two of which are threatened with extinction, the Lace Monitor (endangered) and Heath Monitor (critically endangered). These two species lay their eggs in termite mounds which the insects then seal up. The Lace Monitor returns to free the young lizards once they have hatched.

Image: *Lace Monitor* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

Image: *Heath Monitor* ***Photo credit:*** *Mark Jekabsons @ Flickr*

Eastern Long-necked Turtle

Duduroa Name: *Nangwia* **Scientific Name:** *Chelodina longicollis*

Role	The Eastern Long-necked Turtle is one of three freshwater turtle species in the region, the other two being the Murray River Turtle and Broad-shelled Turtle, both of which are predominantly found in the main river channel only venturing onto the land during the nesting season. The Eastern Long-necked Turtle is highly mobile, feeds on fish and crustaceans and can reached densities of over 1000 individuals per hectare where it plays a vital role in consuming biomass and cycling nutrients. Turtles and their eggs were an important traditional food source and were harvested for their protein. However, the introduced European Red Fox is responsible for raiding 95% of turtle nests in a study on the Murray River.

Image: *Eastern Long-necked Turtle* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

Image: *Murray River Turtle* ***Photo credit:*** *smorsebirds @ Flickr*

Murray-Darling Carpet Python, Inland Carpet Python or Carpet Snake

Duduroa Name: *Kangkaia* **Scientific Name:** *Morelia spilota metcalfei*

Role	Snakes symbolise strength and creativity and are an important feature of Creation stories often evoked to explain the formation of landscape features such as rivers and gorges. The Murray-Darling Carpet Python is the longest and heaviest snake species in the region and would have played an important role in regulating populations of rodents, bandicoots, birds and possums. Pythons may have been opportunistically caught for food as they were in other parts of Australia. Today, the species is threatened with extinction in Victoria and is restricted to the granite ranges in the Upper Murray region where it primarily feeds on introduced mice, rats, rabbits and possums.

Image: *Murray-Darling Carpet Python* ***Photo credit:*** *Dr. Damian Michael*

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Yellow Box	*Eucalyptus melliodora*
Yellow-bellied Glider	*Petaurus australis*
Yellow Hyacinth-orchid	*Dipodium interaneum*
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	*Zanda funerea*

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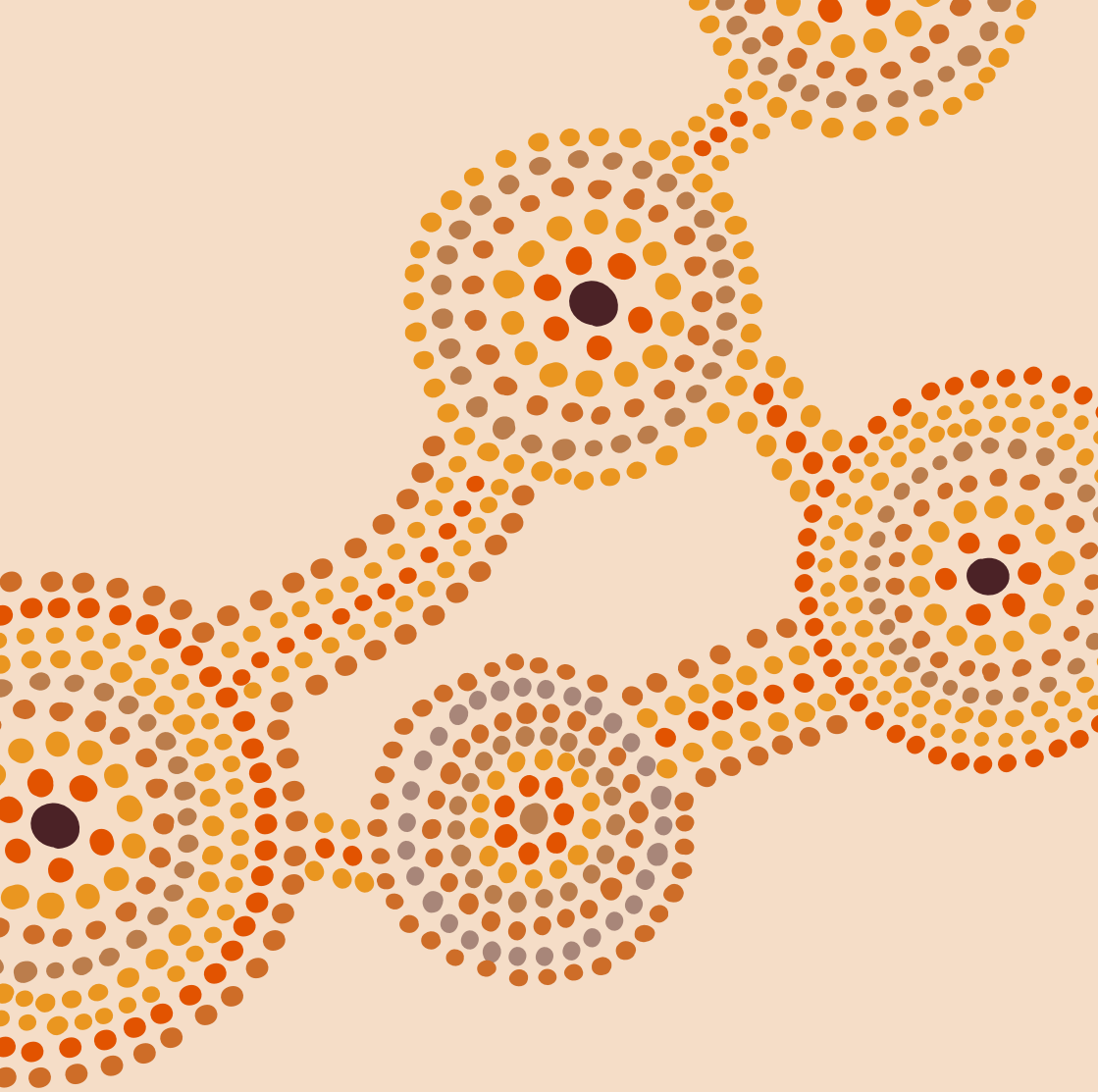

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