



The Herb Age



APRIL/MAY 2021

NO 426



I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best.
Oscar Wilde

THE HERB SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC

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AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

- ☼ To act as a forum for all persons interested in herbs for their mutual benefit and fellowship.
- ☼ To further the education of the public in the use, value and growing of herbs.
- ☼ To promote and encourage the organic growing of herbal plants.

Patron: Penny Woodward

HSOV COMMITTEE

President	Vacant
Vice President	Nigel Holmes
Past President and The Herb Age Editor	Meridith Hutchinson
Committee Secretary	Graham Ellis
Treasurer	Carmen Hollway
Membership Officer and Library Coordinator	Marie Baker
Committee	Robin Calabrese
Committee	Jill Bryant
Committee	June Valentine
Committee	Jan Illingworth
Committee	Heather Davies
Committee	Lesley Northey

HSOV MEETINGS

General meeting

is on the first Thursday of every month, from February to December, open 7.00pm for 7.30pm start.

At: Room MB10 Main Building. Burnley Horticultural College campus, 500 Yarra Blvd Richmond MelRef: 45 A12

Parking inside the grounds is often limited so, if possible please park on Yarra Blvd and walk in.

Next Meetings: See Page 4

The Hills Branch

meets on the third Wednesday of the month from February to November at 7.45pm at various locations.

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THE HERB AGE

*Official Newsletter of the
Herb Society of Victoria*

Six issues published per year, covering:

- ✿ February/March
- ✿ April/May
- ✿ June/July
- ✿ August/September
- ✿ October/November
- ✿ December

Members' original contributions are warmly welcomed.

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THE HERB AGE

APRIL/MAY 2021

Contents

	Page
Our Next Meeting Details	4
Past President's Report <i>by Meridith Hutchinson</i>	5
Welcome to our New Committee	6
Growing Sweet Peas <i>by Jill Bryant</i>	7
A Picnic with Bunyas <i>by Meridith Hutchinson</i>	8
Feijoa Chutney <i>by Robin Calabrese</i>	9
What Fruit am I?	9
Burnley Book Launch <i>by Michele Adler and Meridith Hutchinson</i>	10
Word Search Puzzle	11
Patron Saints of Gardeners <i>by Colline Muir</i>	12
Past President's Report continued	13
Zucchini Bread <i>by Mary Dawson</i>	14
Word Search Puzzle solution	14
Karkalla <i>supplied by Jan Rosenberg</i>	15

Cover Pic and Quote.

Famous poet and author, Oscar Wilde is all about (good) taste. Feijoa flowers, pictured on the cover are the prelude to the delicious tasting fruits, which are featured in a chutney recipe from Robin Calabrese this issue. Turn to page 9 to reveal how you can make this. And the Burnley Gardens featured often in the issue. Bellow picture was from our picnic meeting in February.





Our Next Meetings

Burnley Horticultural College Campus
and Gardens, Burnley Mel Ref 45 A12

Parking inside the grounds is limited so, if possible
please park on Yarra Blvd and walk in.

Tea will be provided. Please BYO cup. No Supper please, during COVID restrictions.

Thursday 1st April 2021

General Meeting - Please be seated 7.15 for 7.30 pm Start

Guest Speaker: *Craig Wilson from Gentiana Nursery in Olinda*

Topic: *Rare and unusual Cottage Garden Plants*

BONUS: *Plants for Sale*



Craig is a dedicated nurseryman and regular presenter on 3CR's gardening program, with over 30 years' experience, he is both extremely knowledgeable and passionate.

His nursery propagates robust plants in natural conditions on site, while avoiding chemicals, with the goal to provide healthy, sustainably managed plants, so that your plants from Gentiana Nursery flourish. Also see their website: gentiananursery.com.au

Thursday 6th May 2021

General Meeting - Please be seated 7.15 for 7.30 pm Start

Guest Speaker: *Jill Bryant*

Topic: *Plants of the First Fleet*

The first fleet to our Great Southern Land brought more than sailors and convicts. They also brought supplies to sustain themselves and grow a new colony, including seeds and plants.

Our much loved and long serving committee member with a wealth of knowledge will explore (all pun intended) these plants and their voyage of thousands of miles and several months at sea. Some many surprise you!



Past President's Report

In the absence of an elected President at the latest AGM, I will make the report for this issue. The main work the committee has been involved in getting the Herb Society back to meetings. This has been in consultation and in conjunction with the Melbourne University. I must thank Andrew Smith and Dr Lisa Wittick from the university, who been very supportive of the Herb Society and helpful with preparing the required documentation, as well as making themselves available to meet. Marie Bake and I recently met with Andrew and Lisa, to clarify our meetings on site.

Each year, we submit a request to book the MB10 room at Burnley for use for committee and genera meetings. It is usually a formality to ensure the room is booked into their schedule, but of course, this year there is much more involved.

We have submitted the Victorian Government COVID safe plan, which provides actions required to mitigate assessed risks and the spread of COVID 19. Following our meeting the other day, we are also working on documentation for each event (ie meeting), which will be submitted shortly. These require assurances and compliance from the Herb Society of Victoria, some of which have been already mentioned in previous THA. When we any HSOV member or guest uses the University campus, we must:

- Register with the QR code.
 - Originally we thought that it was enough to sign our attendance book, but we have been requested that all participants must sign in with a QR code for contact tracing.
 - The QR code is on the Green sheet and available in the room, as well as in the main corridor. Do not use the pink sheet QR code, as this is for university staff and students and requires a login.
 - If you are not able to sign in to the QR code or unfamiliar with it, all is OK. Please just let the person on the welcome desk (usually Carmen) know and we will organise to have you logged in as a guest.
 - Please also sign the attendance book as we need this for insurance purposes
 - Please only enter via the door with the welcome desk, so we can ensure everyone is properly registered.
- If anyone who has attended a HSOV meeting is diagnosed with COVID 19, you must notify the HSOV committee and the committee must notify the University asap. The committee will also assist with government contact tracing, as required.
- Please remain seated where possible and wear a mask when social distancing is not possible.
- Hand Sanitiser stations are provided throughout the University corridor so please use these as required.
- Alcohol wipes are also provided by the University and once again, please use as required.

Thankyou everyone for your patience with this. We have been a on quite a learning curve with this. A small price to pay for the ability to meet again, really. So, having said that, how wonderful that we have been able to meet again. Our picnic meeting in February was a good start, but our first indoor meeting in March was the real test. This was our AGM and a presentation from June on Herbs, both going well, apart from technical issues. That issue has been reported by Lisa to the IT department for repair.

Continued Page 13.

Welcome to our New Committee

Welcome to our new Committee

The 2020 AGM was finally run successfully at our March meeting and we would like to announce the latest committee. It was fantastic to see some newer members joining the committee in Nigel Holmes and Lesley Northey and welcome back to Graham Ellis who has already been very active of the committee and in the Herb Society.

All committee members from the previous year offered themselves for re-election in the same positions except:

- ✿ Neville Kelly has stood down from the role of Membership Officer, after several years.
- ✿ Meridith Hutchinson did not nominate for President, having completed a 2-year term.
- ✿ Marie Baker nominated for Membership officer, vacated by Neville Kelly
- ✿ Graham Ellis nominated for Committee Secretary
- ✿ Nigel Holmes nominated for Vice President
- ✿ and Lesley Northey nominated for a Committee position.

Committee positions were filled as following:

- ✿ President: Vacant
- ✿ Vice-president Nigel Holmes
- ✿ Past president and THA Editor Meridith Hutchinson
- ✿ Committee Secretary and HSOV Secretary Graham Ellis
- ✿ Treasurer Carmen Hollway
- ✿ Membership Marie Baker
- ✿ Library coordinator Marie Baker
- ✿ Committee members
 - ✿ Jill Bryant
 - ✿ Robyn Calabrese
 - ✿ Heather Davies
 - ✿ Jan Illingworth
 - ✿ Lesley Northey
 - ✿ June Valentine

Many thanks to Beverley Narandja for chairing the AGM election of committee positions and who also suggested that the position of President be resolved by the committee. More to be advised on that.

Neville Kelly was not able to come to the meeting that night, but many thanks also to Neville, who has retired from the position of membership officer after many years of service.

On behalf of all our members, congratulations to our all committee members for stepping up to help drive the future direction of the Herb Society of Victoria. Your dedication and enthusiasm are very much appreciated.

Please make them all welcome in their new or familiar roles.



Growing Sweet Peas

Tradition states that Sweet Peas must be planted on St. Patrick's Day, the 17th of March. I try to keep to that date; however in Melbourne Australia as long as seeds are sown by ANZAC Day, April 25th, I have had fine crops. Buy fresh seeds. New seeds are usually more reliable to produce flowers. However even bought seeds can be a disappointment.

My best ever blooms were Winston Churchill, brilliant crimson flowers, but little perfume. I bought the packet, by mail for \$5.50, from Lambley Nursery at Ascot near Ballarat. The scent is measured: 3 is little and 6 is perfume perfection. Each year I grow sweet peas up the arch near the front door. Facing east with some northerly sun is ideal, as sweet peas are native to Sicily and of course grow brilliantly in Britain and New Zealand. Many of the commercial seeds are from NZ, as its moderate climate is ideal for large plantings.



Sweet peas need moisture; dry conditions cause bud drop. They also like plenty of nitrogen for growth and potash for flowers. Dig the ground over and if possible, dig out a trench or a flat-bottomed hole to a depth of 45cm (18") or so and fill with a layer of compost with fish, blood and bone mixed in or well-rotted manure. A swifter way is to fill the trench with a whole bag of cow manure and some blood and bone. Add to this some powdered lime, definitely needed to ensure more flowers. Backfill with soil mixed with good potting mix or garden compost. Water well. Soak the seeds overnight in a cup of water. They will swell and even the seed skin may break. Do not soak longer and next morning, plant seeds along your trench about 7-8 cms apart.

You can use a large tub with new manure, soil, compost and potting mix and the powdered lime. Water only a sprinkle, after just pressing each seed under the soil by an inch. Do not water again, for a week as the seed may rot. It is usually eight or nine days before seeds sprout above ground. They are very weak, so watch out for snails and slugs. Wait till they grow secondary leaves then pinch off the top. This strengthens the seedlings. I try to water the soil, not the stems. Wait patiently. In 2020 the La Nina cool damp weather meant very slow growth. Sun in winter does ensure stronger vigorous plants.

The pictures of red flowers and purple/puce blooms in jugs on my window sill are 2020 sweet peas. The red had long stems peas bloomed earlier, whereas the sweet perfumed purple/magentas were later, had very short stems and far less perfume than usual.

The arch of dark red Winston Churchill's in 2017, meeting the red flowers of the red carpet climbing rose is my Pièce de Résistance. This photograph on my little I-pad received over 7000 likes on Face Book and a message of congratulation in a post from FB. I used the photo as my Christmas Email. All the best for success in 2021!!



Jill Bryant

Ed note: Jill does grow absolutely beautiful sweet peas, which she has often brought into meetings with just a hint of well-deserved pride. Thanks Jill for these tips from many years of experience so we can all have a truly sweet addition to our spring gardens.

A picnic with Bunyas

This year, we were able to kick off our year with our regular picnic meeting around the Sugar Gum tree table at Burnley Garden, near the Herb Garden. We definitely lucked it with the weather, as it was a Goldilocks beautiful night, neither hot, nor cold...just right!



Of course we were not able to share, as it was a BYO picnic only, but how fortunate we were to be able to meet at all. The gardens were looking lush with the cooler and wetter La Nina summer. The Thyme between pavers near the near Wisteria pergola was spilling over the path. Tall lilies reached for the sky and the pineapple sage was massed in the Herb Garden. It was all rather serene, belying the dreaded overhead attacker that loomed a few hundred meters away.

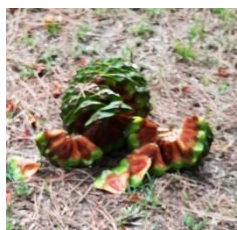
As we entered the picnic spot from the main entrance and car park area, part of the gardens had been cordoned off with warnings of the Bunya. The Bunya tree (*Araucaria bidwillii*) cones are truly enormous, much larger and heavier than the average human head and prone to damaging a noggin were one to fall on it. It fruits every 2 to 7 years, depending on climate and conditions. While native to the warmer Queensland region, the tree still does well in Victoria.

Indeed, more than one great thud could be heard during the picnic, as the huge Bunya Pine cones came crashing to earth, causing great fascination for our group. Many cones lay on the ground, some whole, with others split to show the nuts inside. They can have up to 100 kernels which are once again, enormous. The picture shows one nut segment the size of my palm with the majestic tree in the background (apologies for the quality of the pic, but you get the idea!).

The Bunya is an ancient tree, eaten by prehistoric creatures; it is believed some of the large dinosaurs ate the fruits whole. Native fauna like cockatoos and possums love to prize them apart for a snack. Not surprisingly, Bunya nuts were an important food source for the indigenous peoples. They stored well and are versatile, being eaten raw, boiled, roasted on a fire or ground into a paste or flour and cooked into little cakes. Apparently it tastes similar to chestnut. The tree has sacred status and the abundance of the food also focused significant gatherings with strict protocols.

For our picnic, we stuck to our BYO meals on that just right night, to the music of the Bunya cones bump to earth.

Meridith Hutchinson



Feijoa Chutney

Its harvest time of the year and here's a recipe for using those plentiful Feijoas.

Ingredients:

1.5 kg feijoas	450 grams raisins
1 kg white onions	450 grams pitted dates
4 ½ cups of vinegar	450 grams brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cloves	1 tablespoon curry powder
30 grams ground ginger	¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
100 grams salt	



Method:

Scoop the flesh from the feijoas.

Peel the onions.

Mince the feijoas, onions, raisins and dates.

Add all the dry ingredients, then the vinegar.

Bring to the boil – and cook slowly, stirring constantly, for two hours.

Bottle into sterilized jars, cap while still warm.

Robin Calabrese

What Fruit am I?



- | | |
|----------|--|
| 5 points | I'm from a flowering plant in the Myrtle family |
| 4 points | A native to Brazil, I grow easily in Victoria |
| 3 points | My abundant fruit are full of Vitamins C, E, K and many of the B's |
| 2 points | They are also delicious, tasting similar to apple or pineapple. |
| 1 point | And they make great Chutney! |

I am _ _ _ _ _

Burnley Book Launch



The Burnley Gardens were officially opened in 1863. Much of the original orchard area was devastated in late 1863 by floods, and had to be re-established. The area known as the Orchard is now known as the Field Station. Several of the original trees in the Ornamental section of the Gardens survived including the Californian Pine (*Sequoia sempervirens*), which is still gracing the gardens and one of its tallest trees. From early days, the Burnley Gardens were used for study and to trial productive trees and plants. It quite deservedly, became the site of Australia's first horticultural school in 1891 and has continued to educate ever since.

In 2013, the HSOV and similar organisations were approached to back a new book celebrating 150 years of the Burnley Gardens. The committee felt it fitting to support the place that has provided so much to the Society, its members and all Victorians over the years and approved a sizable donation. Unfortunately, the project started rather shakily, missing intended deadlines. It lost direction and much of the early work had re-written but new works set it on the right path to completion.

So the book itself can somewhat be likened to building a garden, indeed even the Burnley Gardens themselves, where the best laid plans don't always flourish, as it finds a natural rhythm with a bit of tweaking and a lot of hard work along the way. As it continued to be nurtured, grow and mature, we have been rewarded with something quite beautiful for all to enjoy.

Michele Adler from Friends of Burnley Gardens (FOBG) and Andrew Smith from Melbourne University, Burnley Campus have confirmed that book, celebrating 150 years of the Burnley Gardens, is ready for printing. There will be an official launch later in October this year, and the best part is that we are invited to the party!

The launch date of the book is Saturday October 9th and all herb Society members are warmly invited to attend. The event will be with FOBG and AGHS (Australian Gardens Historical Society), and HSOV members from 2pm to 4pm at Burnley Gardens. The format will be the book launch and afternoon tea, as well as other talks and walks which are to be announced.

Details and agreement is still being worked, but keep this date penciled into your calendars. More information will be provided in the Herb Age, as it becomes available and closer to the date.



As a further note, Michele is doing the last finishing off of the book and also creating new self guided walks with points of interest in the gardens. She pointed out that it should include a small piece about the commemorative plaque and Golden Hornet Crabapple tree in memory of HSOV founding member Marjorie Hutchinson (mum), since it is in the Burney Gardens Herb Garden. Michele and I have had email discussions regarding this where she has requested some information and is hoping to add it in both the book and the walks.

Michele Adler and Meridith Hutchinson

Word Search Puzzle

Find the herbs in the above puzzle.
Words may be up, down or diagonal.

Herbs & Spices

O	R	L	G	E	M	T	U	N	N	U	G	T	L
A	R	E	A	E	F	T	A	P	E	G	A	S	P
L	R	E	P	P	E	P	L	P	I	P	B	A	E
L	T	N	A	R	I	C	S	A	H	L	A	K	L
S	F	E	C	E	U	Y	T	L	S	L	Y	I	E
P	F	A	R	M	A	L	A	B	O	I	L	R	R
I	E	B	I	E	E	E	R	C	N	S	E	P	O
C	N	N	N	I	M	N	A	I	A	A	A	A	S
E	N	O	A	Y	F	R	N	N	G	B	F	P	E
S	E	T	H	C	E	L	I	N	E	B	S	E	M
I	L	T	G	G	Y	S	S	A	R	A	S	R	A
G	E	I	N	L	S	L	E	M	O	A	L	N	R
I	N	I	I	A	G	T	I	O	D	I	L	L	Y
S	G	S	E	V	O	L	C	N	B	T	N	S	A

Thyme
Salt
Bay Leaf
Paprika
Ginger
Allspice

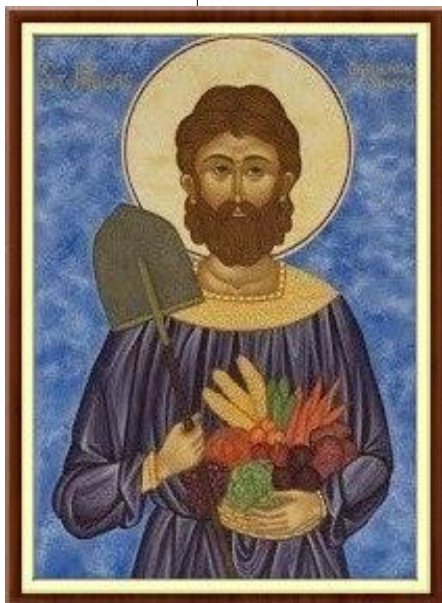
Basil
Cloves
Rosemary
Oregano
Fennel
Pepper

Cumin
Cinnamon
Nutmeg
Star Anise
Sage
Dill

Source: thewordsearch.com/puzzle/35/herbs-spices/

Patron Saints of Gardeners

Recently I had a delightful experience when I received book from Peggy Gibson, one of our foundation members, long time committee member and Herb Age editor. The book is called *The Glory of the Garden*, by M. G. Kennedy, 1923. This book explores garden history, myth legend, often expressed in verse and poetry.



There is a section about two Patron Saints of gardens and I have found more on Google. Here they are. If you would like to have a little garden saint statue in your own garden, you could order one through a web search or even your local nursery might help.

Saint Phocas is the patron saint of gardeners and sailors (on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean). He lived near the end of the third century, near the gate of Sinope, near the city of Pontus. He earned his living by growing vegetables. Tradition has it that his plants grew better than anyone else. He is remembered by a statue in St Mark's, Venice where he is depicted with a flowing beard, dressed as a gardener with a spade.

He died as a martyr during the Diocletian persecution in 303. The heathen rulers of Pontus heard that he (Phocas) was a Christian, a party was sent out to kill him. They could not find his house, but by chance they called at his house, asking for shelter. They were invited in and given shelter for the night, Phocas asked their mission and they told him. He said he would help them in the morning.

When they had gone to bed, he dug his own grave in his garden then prepared his soul for death. He arranged for his possessions to be distributed to the poor. When the guests were about to depart, Phocas told them they need look no further as he was the one for whom they searched. They did not want to kill the man who had been their host, but they had to carry out their orders so they cut off his head, making him a martyr.

Saint Phocas is also patron saint of sailors in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, for it is said that he has been seen at night waking a sleepy steersman at the rudder, or other ship saving acts. A custom developed for the crew to save a portion of their meal for the saint, or donate a small coin. At the end of the voyage the donations were distributed to the poor.

Saint Serenus the Gardener (another martyr) was born in Greece in the 4th century. He decided to live a celibate life in penance and prayer so he emigrated to Simium where he lived off his garden. He was known for his horticultural skills. One day he apparently rebuked the wife of a Roman Imperial Guard for walking through his garden with her daughter without a male companion as custom required. After much ado the Governor, suspecting that Serenus was a Christian for refusing to sacrifice to the Roman gods, the Governor had him decapitated on 23rd February 307.

Saint Dorothy of Caesaria is Patron Saint of horticulture, brewers, brides, florists and gardeners, as well an association with fruit trees. She was martyred in 311.

A number of saints were of local concern, probably little known beyond their own area of influence. Such a one may have been Saint Isadore of Madrid, the Patron Saint of farmers, animals, and he was good to the poor.



Saint Urban was Pope from 222 to 230. He was Patron Saint of vineyards and grape growers. Saint Francis of Assisi is too well known to need introduction here. He lived from 1195 to 1226 and was Patron Saint of animals and plants.

Saint Anthony of Padua, 1195 to 1231 was Patron Saint of (Portuguese) harvests and lost animals and finder of lost objects.

A Saint of perhaps more contemporary interest, although with less romantic responsibilities is Saint Bonaventure Patron Saint of bowel issues.

Colline Muir

Ed Note: Thanks Colline and really great to see you are recovering so well that you back to writing articles for the Herb Age again. Always interesting, thought provoking and welcome! I just had to have a better look at Saint Bonaventure, as who would have thought there was a patron saint of bowel issues (and what could he have done that relegated him to such a patronage!). He was a theologian, philosopher and Cardinal during the 13th century, known for his compassion and canonised in 1484. He is the Patron Saint of bowel disorders, as it is believed that was the cause of the childhood illness that nearly took his life. It was recovery through prayer of this illness that led him to dedicate himself to service in the Franciscan order.

Past President's Report continued

Thankyou to the committee members, new and previous who have nominated for this year's committee and I am looking forward to working with you all. Thank you also to Neville Kelly who has stepped down from the membership office after a number of years.

Thankyou also to June and her hubby for the wonderful and witty presentation on herbs after the AGM. Special thanks to John Valentine for coming in from home to resolve the technical issue we were experiencing, so we could run the presentation. It was a very entertaining presentation, complete with Trump Toads, Monty Python Spanish Inquisition and Wash Balls. If you there, you know what I mean! But it didn't stop there, June had a fabulous display.

I especially love the way she literally has potted herbs for cooking....herbs growing in an old saucepan! And the snail shaped pot...mmm well I wonder if she would notice if it went missing!! Only kidding. Her talk included many handy hints for using herbs, as well as discussing locally made products that contain herbs and are available on the supermarket shelves.



These include Grant's toothpaste made in Huntingdale, Natures Organics shampoo and beauty products made in Ferntree Gully, as well as Olieve and Olie from the Mornington Peninsular who hand make skin products, including an amazing lemon myrtle hand lotion. Thanks June and I still owe you a Tussie Mussie ☺.

Looking forward to our upcoming meetings and to see you soon.

Meridith Hutchinson



Zucchini Bread



Ingredients:

2 cups (210 g) of grated and drained zucchini
 ¼ cup (55 g) melted ghee or butter
 1 ¼ cups (260 g) raw or packed brown sugar
 1 ¼ cups (175 g) white flour (pref. unbleached)
 1 cup (150 g) whole wheat flour
 2 tablespoons arrowroot or cornstarch
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 ½ teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ¼ cup (60 mls) buttermilk
 ¾ cup (95 g) raisins or chopped dates (215 g)
 1 cup (95 g) coarsely chopped pecans

Method:

Preheat oven to 180 c (350 F). Butter and lightly flour a loaf 23 x 13 x 7.5 cm (9 x 5 x 3 inches)

Mix the zucchini, ghee or butter and sugar.

Mix the dry ingredient together. Add the zucchini mixture.

Add the butter-milk and mix just until all ingredients are blended. Stir in the raisins or dates and the nuts.

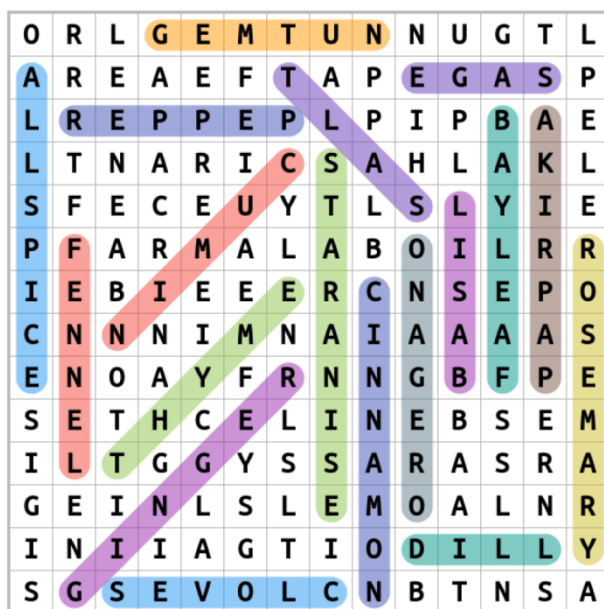
Spoon into the baking pan and spread evenly. Bake for 1 hour.



Mary Dawson

Ed Note: Another great way to use some of the abundant harvest produce. Mary brought this to the February picnic meeting and it looked so fabulous that I had to ask for the recipe.

Word Search Solution



Karkalla

Karkalla, also known as pigface and beach banana is a succulent that is common on the Australian coastline. It has a fleshy texture and light salty flavour, making it great with fish and seafood.

Foraging wild plants is generally illegal, so grow this one in your garden for your own use. A recommended variety is *Disphyma crassifolia* which has slender leaves. This recipe is from Gourmet Traveler magazine.

Pan fried ocean trout with miso butter and Karkalla.

Method:

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium high heat. Add four 160 g boneless and skinless ocean trout fillets, and cook to your liking (1-2 minutes each side for medium rare).

Transfer to a tray, cover with oil and leave to rest while making the sauce. Wipe the pan out with paper towel.

Over a medium heat, add 80 ml sake, 1 tbsp soy sauce and 2 tsp finely grated ginger and simmer until reduced by half (1-2 minutes).

Add 100 g diced chilled butter a cube at a time, whisking until emulsified, then remove from heat and whisk in 1 tbsp shiro miso to combine.

Season to taste. Add 50 g karkalla and toss to coat with the sauce. Spoon over the trout and serve.

Supplied by Jan Rosenberg

What Fruit am I? Answer

Feijoa (*Feijoa sellowiana*)
also called the Pineapple Guava)



If undeliverable, return to:
HSOV
PO Box 396
CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

The Herb Age

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100004717

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Stay Safe and Well 😊