

FRESH! For all tropical, subtropical and warm climate gardens

STG

*sub*Tropical
Gardening
and landscaping in warm climates

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**local advice for
local gardeners**

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COLLECTOR



N. talangensis x *N. mira*. (Image courtesy Sam Cowie)

The pitchers of *Nepenthes* are wide and varied in size, colour and form. *Nepenthes* species such as *N. truncata* and *N. merrilliana* readily have pitchers up to 50cm in length. *Nepenthes albomarginata* has pitchers that range from black or dark red, through to pure green. *Nepenthes ampullaria* is known for its squat pitchers that are almost round.

Even the pitchers are a fascinating study, with everything from nectar producing glands around the peristome (pitcher rim), strong UV contrast patterning, scent production, microscopic wax plates, and digestive glands. The pitcher fluid is highly acidic, with some recorded with a pH of 1.9, and is also thought to contain wetting agents which make escape harder. *Nepenthes* form two types of pitchers, low or terrestrial pitchers are usually large, colourful and squat in appearance, whereas upper or aerial pitchers are usually narrower and trumpet shaped.

N. spectabilis x *N. aristolochioides*. (Image courtesy Sam Cowie)



N. maxima x *N. spectabilis*.



N. ventricosa. (Image courtesy Sam Cowie)



Seedlings of *Nepenthes*.

A lush water garden featuring a waterfall on the left, a stream of water flowing over large, flat stone steps, and a pond filled with koi fish. The garden is surrounded by various tropical plants, including large green leaves and yellow-green foliage. The overall scene is vibrant and serene.

WATER GARDENING

IN WARM CLIMATES

Bushfoods

Australian Native Foods



Image courtesy of Tukka Restaurant.

The indigenous people of Australia have long survived on the local plants and animals from which they obtained their necessary dietary sustenance. To the average Australian of today these plants may be 'in the backyard' but are far from the kitchen table. Ironically these bushfoods are making their way onto tables and spice racks around the world.

Bushfoods span a range of meats and vegetables. This magazine will focus on the plants.

The Australian bushfood industry is relatively young with passionate growers and users of the products. Although perceived by many consumers as more of a gourmet ingredient, they are in fact becoming more readily available and reasonably priced. Processed as packaged spices, chutneys and jams this seems to reassure consumers that the products are suitable for their consumption. Consumers are now seeking out these plants to try themselves both as a garden plant and for the culinary experience.

Not all bushfoods come from the outback. Most of the traditional bushfoods mentioned in media and recipes are from drier regions (refer to box at right) whilst others are from more tropical and subtropical rainforest environments.

Did you know?

According to the 1997 RIRDC report Bush food industry in Western Queensland the top eleven raw product/species used nationally were:

- bush tomato (*Solanum centrale*)
- Illawarra plum (*Podocarpus elatus*)
- Kakadu plum (*Terminalia ferdinandiana*)
- lemon aspen (*Acronychia acidula*)
- lemon myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*)
- mountain pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*)
- muntries or munthari (*Kunzea pomifera*)
- quandong (*Santalum acuminatum*)
- riberry (*Syzygium luehmanii*)
- wattleseed (*Acacia victoriae*)
- wild limes (*Eremocitrus glauca*, *Microcitrus* spp.)



Emerging flower spike with colourful protective bracts *Banksia robur*.
(Photo Renee Dillon)



Mature flower spike *Banksia robur*.
(Photo Renee Dillon)



Five stages of maturity of *Banksia integrifolia*.

effectively lighting up the tree or shrub with their yellow 'candles'. *Banksia spinulosa* var. *collina* is even known as 'Golden Candlesticks'. These flower spikes are rich golden yellow with hook-shaped styles a contrasting darker colour. Spikes of all species progressively change to brown and finally grey as they age. Old spikes, particularly those with mature woody fruit, or follicles, are a feature of several species and may remain on the plant for several years as the seed ripens. *Banksia aemula* has particularly large follicles which protrude from the old grey whiskery stamens.

Banksia integrifolia spikes show several colour changes as they mature, adding to the interest of this species. Once the flowers are fertilised the stamens and stigma are shed leaving attractive soft green protruding follicles. Each spike slowly changes to a rich reddish brown at which time the follicles usually open to release two winged seeds and the whole spike ages to soft grey. *Banksia integrifolia* is a common component of the flora behind our coastal dunes and may grow to twenty-five metres although it is often smaller in exposed positions. It is found at least as far north as Proserpine and is an excellent tree for coastal gardens with its natural resistance to salt spray. Two very similar subspecies are found in the drier forests of the



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...pot up a mini vegetable garden:

1 Treat all vegetable seedlings with a good drench of seaweed solution. For added boost include some liquid fish fertiliser or chicken manure.



2 Place top quality potting media (Australian standard ticks) into the pot. Use gloves.



3 After deciding on placement, plant each specimen into the pot firming around each plant.



4 Water plants in with the remainder of the drenching liquid of seaweed and added boost nutrients.



...prune an overgrown hedge:

1 Many hedges outgrow their gardens and may require a pruning to re-invigorate and reshape the plants.



2 Hedge specimens overcrowded by nearby plants become sparse. Prune surrounding plants then heavily prune the hedge to encourage fresh growth.



3 Usually a light trimming of the new growth is sufficient to maintain a healthy and full hedge using shears. While there inspect the plant for insect damage and overall vigour.



4 In severe cases heavy pruning may be needed. Assist the plant to recuperate by ensuring adequate soil moisture. A weak dose of seaweed solution will aid the plant at this stage.

