



Barapa Barapa Cultural Heritage Mapping of Lower Gunbower Island

FIELD SURVEY PLANT GUIDE
FEBRUARY 2014



BARAPA BARAPA
WATER FOR COUNTRY PROJECT



Acknowledgement

Barapa Barapa people have walked this land we now know as Gunbower Forest for thousands of years as far back as the dreaming.

To the Barapa people the Forest is our oxygen. We feel the presence of our old people being there. We have a spiritual connection to everything; the animals, the plants, the land and the water. We are the custodians of the land for future generations. When you visit our Country, you share this responsibility with us.

We pay our respects to the Elders, past and present.

This plant pamphlet, compiled by the Barapa Culture team and North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) endeavours to share the work of the Barapa Culture Team for the benefit of Barapa Barapa people and the broader community. In doing so, we hope to promote understanding, knowledge and respect for Barapa Barapa cultural heritage. It is important that knowledge is only used in accordance with the wishes of the custodian of that information.

Our cultural heritage is important to Australia as a reminder of the efforts of men and women to make a living over the generations. It is important to us Barapa, for the insight of how our ancestors lived. It is our duty to record that past; to protect and conserve its history and culture for our future generations and to educate the public, from school kids to tourists.

Photo credits

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Robyn McKay, Ian Higgins.

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the North Central Catchment Management Authority and its employees and agents do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.



Gunbower Barapa Culture and Heritage knowledge exchange

In July 2013, the North Central CMA received funding from the Australian Government through an Indigenous Heritage grant to assist Barapa Barapa people to work with CMA interests to identify and map both the culturally important plants of the Gunbower Forest, and the archaeological record of our ancestors. The project received significant in-kind support from the Living Murray Indigenous Partnerships Program co-ordinated through the Murray Darling Basin Authority. This pamphlet covers the plants identified as culturally important for their ability to provide food, fibre and medicine – a healthy forest offers the resources of a supermarket, chemist and hardware shop.

Barapa Culture Team

The Barapa Culture Team undertook field survey work between 3 and 21 February 2014, assisted by archaeologist Colin Pardoe and three ecologists from Rakali Consulting – Damien Cook, Douglas Frood and Kate Bennetts with support from North Central CMA staff Robyn McKay, Bambi Lees, Anna Chatfield and Trent Gibson.

Many thanks to Sharnie Hamilton (Team Leader), Aunty Esther Kirby, Laura Kirby, Chris Webster, Harold Webster, Joshua Brown, Jason Brown, Shae McCulloch, Harry Hamilton, Jack Hamilton, Zoe Hamilton, Glen Galway, Uncle Neville Whyman, Shanice Whyman, Clinton Jones, Tom Kirby, Tracy Hamilton, Aunty Barbara Hamilton and Uncle Ron Galway for their participation.

We are grateful for their commitment to the project and its outcomes, especially the young people who earned much respect as the upcoming custodians of their culture.

The Barapa Culture Team and North Central CMA also thank Eddie Monro for generously sharing his knowledge of Gunbower Forest.

Very few language names used by Barapa were recorded so some Wamba Wamba names from Deniliquin (Wamba and Barapa Country) have been used.



Austral Bugle

Ajuga australis

DESCRIPTION

Small herb with soft leaves and purple flowers like mint – short lived

USE

Leaves used for medicine to bathe sores, boils, stings and scratches (Gott)

HABITAT

Grassy woodland



Berrigan

Eremophila longifolia

DESCRIPTION

Medium sized with tubular red flowers
And yellow berries with large seeds

USE

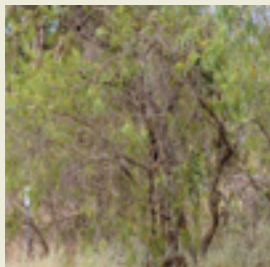
Medicine

HABITAT

Dry woodland

SEASON

All year Fruit in summer



Berry saltbush

Atriplex semibaccata

DESCRIPTION

Widespread, sprawling groundcover with small silvery leaves and red berries

USE

Fruit ground, cooked, also leaves.
Leaves for medicinal wash (Gott)

HABITAT

Woodland



Black Box

Eucalyptus largiflorens

DESCRIPTION

Tree with rough 'box' bark to ends of branches

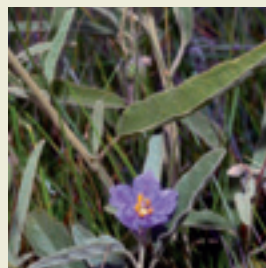
USE

Seed eaten, gum as cement(Gott) Bark removed from the tree may be used for stretching boards for possums skins, shields, coolamons or canoes

Young stems chewed for moisture

HABITAT

Floodplain



Bush Tomato

Solanum esuarale

DESCRIPTION

Small bush with grey leaves and little yellow berries

USE

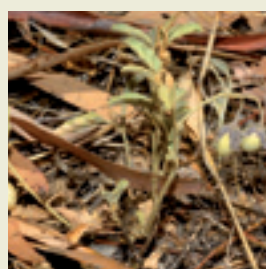
Fruit eaten only when ripe

HABITAT

Woodland

SEASON

Summer





Common Reed

Phragmites australis
Djarg (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Tall reed with broad leaves along stem and feathery seed heads

USE

Use stem for spear shafts (traded), skinning knives and friction sticks to make fire.

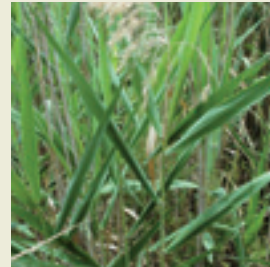
As food can eat young underground shoots, stems and leaves for weaving baskets and rope, cut stems threaded to make a necklace (Gott)

HABITAT

Deeper swamps and creek lines

SEASON

Spring to summer



Cumbungi

Typha spp.
Wurt-wurt (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Tall rush with long strap like leaves and rod-like flower spikes.

USE

A staple food.

Rhizomes (underground stems) usually cooked and chewed for food value as well as to make fibre for string to make nets, bags, brow bands and bindings, leaves for weaving. New shoots and developing flower stems eaten raw. Burned off in winter for new growth.

HABITAT

Deeper swamps and creek lines

SEASON

All year

Wongul (old rhizome, water gone), Gumbung (rhizome), Boortitch (old rhizome cooked), Jeerk (old rhizome, after fibre)
- Wamba names



Dwarf Cherry Ballart

Exocarpus strictus
Bullyang (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Medium shrub virtually leafless with succulent fruit stalks

USE

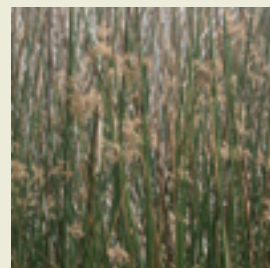
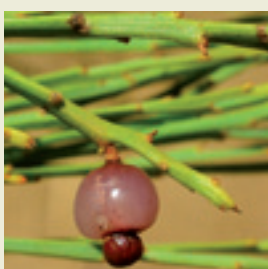
Woodland

HABITAT

Fruit medicine

SEASON

Summer for fruit



Giant Rush

Juncus ingens

DESCRIPTION

Very tall rush with drooping brown flowers

USE

After scraping the pith from the stems, they could be woven into fibre for string or rope, make matting for bed.

HABITAT

Swamps and creeks

SEASON

All year





Golden Wattle

Acacia pycnantha

DESCRIPTION

Small tree or shrub with glossy green 'leaves' and yellow ball followed by long seed pods

USE

Young seed roasted, gum dissolved for drink and mixed with ash for glue, bark infusion as medicine (Gott)

HABITAT

Forest or woodland

SEASON

Flowers -winter-spring, seed - summer



Grassland Woodsorrel

Oxalis spp.

DESCRIPTION

Widespread herb

USE

Leaves eaten raw (sour), Root tubers eaten (Gott)

HABITAT

Woodland

SEASON

All year



Hedge Saltbush

Rhagodia spinescens

DESCRIPTION

Saltbush shrub with grey-green leaves and red succulent berries

USE

Small red fruit eaten, also red paint for face (Gott)

HABITAT

Forest or woodland



Leafless Ballart

Exocarpus aphyllus

DESCRIPTION

Medium shrub virtually leafless with succulent fruit stalks

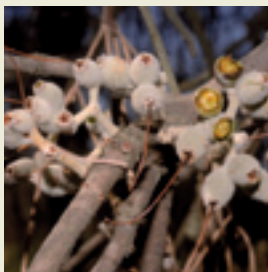
USE

Fruit eaten

HABITAT

Woodlands





Mistletoe “Snottygobbles”

Amyema spp.

DESCRIPTION

Small shrub which grows on other plants and takes its water from them

USE

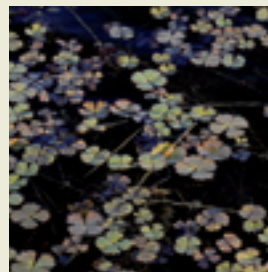
Fruit is a bush lolly

HABITAT

Each type has particular hosts including; Gum, Box, Buloke, Wattle, Emu-bush and other Mistletoes

SEASON

Fruits ripen from summer (Buloke Mistletoe) to Autumn (Box and Fleshy Mistletoe)



Nardoo

Marsilea spp.

Talem-talem (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

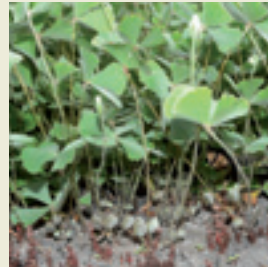
Small wetland plant that looks like a four-leaved clover that sometimes has a reddish tinge

USE

“Seed pods” used as flour. Must be treated properly or is POISONOUS

HABITAT

Areas that flood



Native Mint

Mentha spp.

DESCRIPTION

Small herb with paired leaves it has mauve to white flowers and mint scented leaves

USE

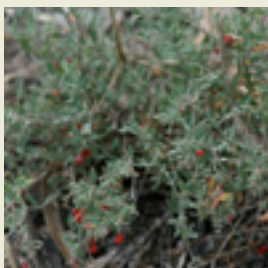
Medicine, used in earth ovens

HABITAT

Wood land and Forest

SEASON

All year



Nodding Saltbush

Einadia nutans

DESCRIPTION

Low growing sprawling saltbush with green ‘spade’ shaped leaves and red or orange berries

USE

Leaves eaten raw or cooked, red fruit used as face paint, hair dye (Gott)

HABITAT

Grassy Woodland



5 different kinds of Mistletoe occur on Gunbower Island: Fleshy Mistletoe, Box Mistletoe, Buloke Mistletoe, Drooping Mistletoe, Wire-leaf Mistletoe.



Old Man Weed

Centipeda spp.

DESCRIPTION

Upright herb to 30cm tall with ball-like flowers and toothed leaves. Leaves are strongly scented when crushed.

USE

Medicinal; used as a wash for skin conditions, and for colds and flu

Can eat the leaves fresh

HABITAT

Drying mud on the edge of wetlands

SEASON

When wetlands are drying; mostly summer but could be almost any time



Pig Weed

Portulaca oleracea

DESCRIPTION

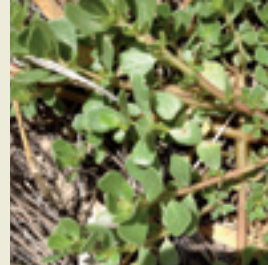
Spreading herb with succulent leaves and yellow flower

USE

Root, leaf, seed eaten, seeds stored, root and leaf medicinal "blood cleanser" (Gott)

HABITAT

Often grows in disturbed areas



Pink bindweed

Convolvulus spp.

DESCRIPTION

Small twining herbs with narrow entire to divided leaves. Pink flowers with petals joined together

USE

Food, roast the roots, kneaded into dough

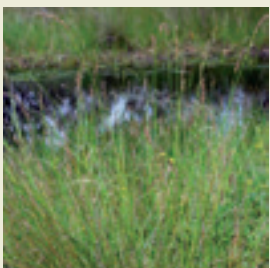
HABITAT

Red gum woodland

Dry land

SEASON

All year



Poong'ort

Carex tereticaulis

Pungurt (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Rush with round leaves, the stalks of the flower heads are triangular

USE

Young stems chewed for moisture.

Weaving

HABITAT

Swamps and creeks

SEASON

All year



River Red Gums are a common tree on Gunbower Island



River Red Gum

Eucalyptus camaldulensis
Bael (Barapa) **Piyal** (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Tree with smooth pale bark and distinctive red timber.

USE

Nectar, seed eaten, gum and bark for medicine (Gott) Young stems chewed for moisture. Saplings used to make spears by straightening in the fire, then burn and roll the end to create a sharp point. Bark for canoes, or containers

HABITAT

Watercourses and swamps

SEASON

All year. Seed - autumn to spring



Riverina Bittercress

Cardamine moirensis

DESCRIPTION

Small annual with divided leaves and white flowers

USE

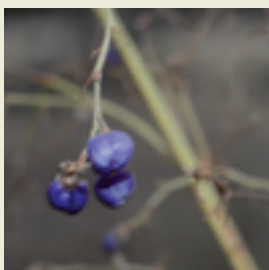
Food - leaves eaten raw

HABITAT

Red gum where flooding occurs

SEASON

Winter to early spring



Riverine Flax Lily

Dianella porracea

DESCRIPTION

Tussock-forming plant with broad, strap-like leaves. Flower stems to a meter tall stick out above leaves.

Becoming rare in the local area

USE

Fruit used for dye. Not eaten as they are poisonous.

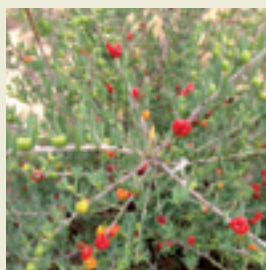
Leaves used as rope and for weaving into baskets and mats.

HABITAT

Dry woodland in areas that don't flood

SEASON

Summer for fruit, leaves available anytime



Ruby Saltbush

Enchylaena tomentosa

DESCRIPTION

Low-growing shrub with small fleshy leaves and small yellow, orange or red berries

USE

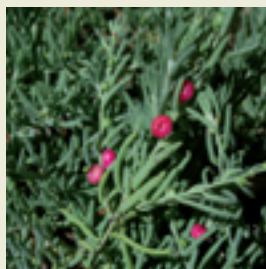
Fruit eaten raw or soaked for drink, leaves possibly also, and boiled and eaten

HABITAT

Woodland

SEASON

Spring, summer



Silver Wattle

Acacia dealbata

DESCRIPTION

Small tree or large shrub with silvery leaves made up of small 'leaflets'

USE

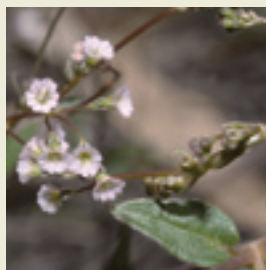
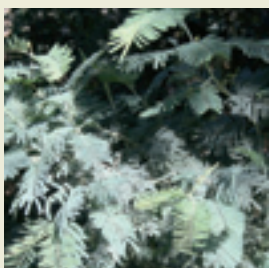
Bark cut to make fibre for axe handles and buckets, gum eaten and with ash on wounds

HABITAT

River edge

SEASON

All year



Tah Vine

Boerhavia dominii

DESCRIPTION

Twining herb leaves paired and paler underneath. Has small pink flowers

USE

Possible food. Roots roasted

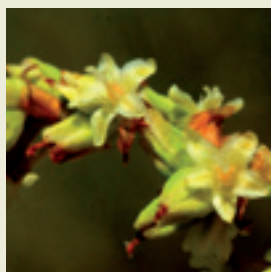
HABITAT

Dry woodland

SEASON

All year





Tangled Lignum

Duma florenta

DESCRIPTION

Tangled shrub

USE

Seed ground (Gott), stems for switches

HABITAT

Floodplains

SEASON

All year



Turkey Bush

Eremophila deserti

DESCRIPTION

Medium sized shrub with small white flowers in clusters

USE

Fruit possibly eaten but care required possibly poisonous in large amounts

HABITAT

Dry woodland

SEASON

Summer



Umbrella Wattle

Acacia oswaldii

DESCRIPTION

Rounded shrub 0.5 to 8 meters tall. Twisted woody pods with large black seed with an orange stalk

USE

Seeds as food

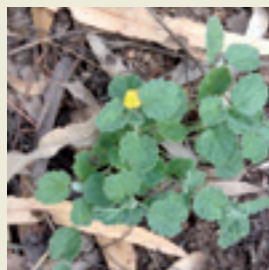
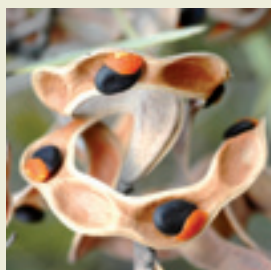
Gum as food and adhesive, clubs, boomerangs

HABITAT

Black Box Woodland on higher country

SEASON

Summer



Variable sida

Sida corrugata

DESCRIPTION

Low-growing herb

With yellow flowers.

Leaves slightly toothed

USE

Food, eat roots

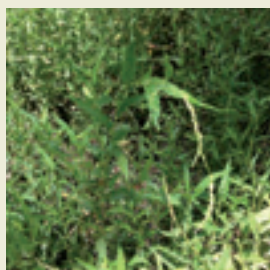
Baked roots

HABITAT

Dryland

SEASON

All year



Water Pepper

Persicaria hydropiper

DESCRIPTION

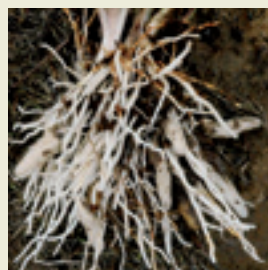
Large herb with green and white flowers

USE

Fish poison, stem roasted and peeled (Gott), numbing medicine

HABITAT

Waterways



Water Ribbons

Triglochin spp.

Ngareli (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Aquatic herb with ribbon-like leaves

USE

Important food plant – Eat the flowering stalks and tubers

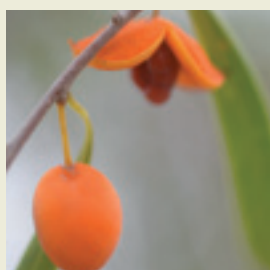
string – flatten the leaves by pulling over a stick first

HABITAT

Water

SEASON

All year



Weeping Pittosporum

Pittosporum

angustifolium

DESCRIPTION

Medium sized shrub with orange fruit that splits to show clusters of red seeds

USE

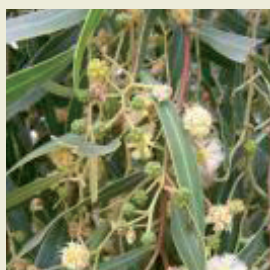
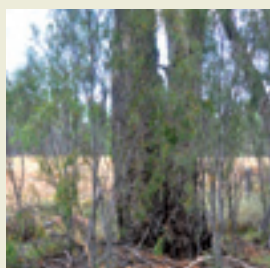
Seeds, stem and leaves as medicine

HABITAT

Dry woodland

SEASON

All year and fruit only in summer



Willow Wattle

Acacia salicina

DESCRIPTION

Tree with drooping foliage and pale yellow wattle flowers followed by long seed pods. Black seeds have a red 'stalk'

USE

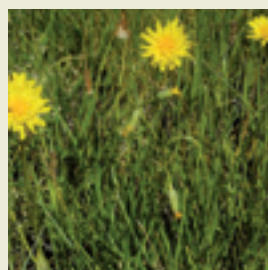
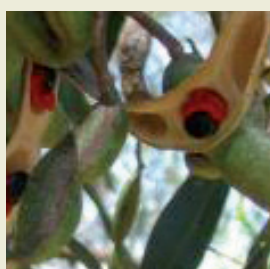
Leaf for wounds, bark for fish poison (Gott)

HABITAT

Floodplain

SEASON

Seed pods ripen over summer



Yam Daisy, Murrnong

Microseris spp.

Mirrwan (Wamba)

DESCRIPTION

Small herb with yellow flowers. Distinguishes from similar weed species by the 'nodding' flowers

USE

Tuber probably eaten

HABITAT

Open grassy areas

Barapa Water for Country Project

The Barapa Water for Country project aims to understand Barapa Barapa's cultural values to improve the outcomes and management of environmental water on Gunbower Island.

The term 'Aboriginal environmental outcomes', is used to describe cultural benefits from environmental water. It is different from a 'cultural flow' which has been defined by the Murray Lower Darling Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) as:

"Water entitlements that are legally and beneficially owned by the Indigenous Nations and are of a sufficient and adequate quantity and quality to improve the spiritual, cultural, environmental, social and economic conditions of those Indigenous Nations. This is our inherent right".

The term 'Aboriginal water' may be used more broadly to encompass both 'Aboriginal environmental outcomes' and 'cultural flows'.

It is fully acknowledged that the Barapa Water for Country project only focuses on the use of environmental water and does not encompass the full spectrum of the cultural flows concept as conceived by MLDRIN and other Traditional Owner groups.

The project is delivered through North Central CMA with funding from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. In the longer term, the project will help inform how CMAs across Victoria can develop environmental and cultural watering priorities that reflect Traditional Owner values and aspirations.

For more information visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au
or www.mldrin.org.au



BARAPA BARAPA
WATER FOR COUNTRY PROJECT



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People

