

ABORIGINAL BUSH RESOURCES SELF-GUIDING PLANT TRAIL

WARNING: This is an environmental park and no plants or animal material may be eaten, damaged or removed. Some plants are poisonous, some materials need treatment before consumption and information in this brochure regarding the sign-posted plants is not exhaustive.

TAKE NOTHING BUT LITTER, LEAVE NOTHING BUT FOOTPRINTS AND LEAVE THE TRAIL AS YOU FOUND IT FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW TO ENJOY.

The post and boardwalk were constructed in 1986 by Community-based learning students of Pimlico and Town High Schools. Guidance was provided by members of the Town Common Natural History Association. The numbered posts have corresponding information as listed below.

REDISCOVERING COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The Town Common is rich in food, water, medicinal and manufacturing resources. Aborigines from the language group Wulguru Kaba had intimate knowledge of the natural environment here. Unfortunately their language was never recorded so the names used to identify the plants are European in origin.

Funding for this project was provided through the Aboriginal and Islander Education Department, Queensland.



The Cupania Tree or Beach Tamarind (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*) bears bright orange fruit that is edible when ripe.



The Sandpaper Fig (*Ficus opposita*) had a manufacturing use. Its rough leaves were used for final smoothing of wooden tools and weapons.

3



AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE

Cocky Apple (*Planchonia careya*). In summer the flowers of the Cocky Apple can be seen on the ground in the morning, as this tree only flowers at night. Their random occurrence may be accidental, however aborigines practiced agriculture by spreading seeds of some species where they could make use of them at another time. Like many plants it had more than one use. The fibrous twigs once pounded, could be teased out to make a brush for painting or make twine. The large fruit are edible.

4



The **Red Ash** (*Alphitonia excelsa*) has poisonous sap in its leaves (as does the Cocky Apple) and can be used to treat sore eyes or as a bath for a sick patient, and when rubbed vigorously in water, produces a soap-like leather. Its medicinal uses extend to making an infusion of bark and roots to form a liniment or gargle for relief of toothache. You will find small examples of this plant on various parts of the walking track.

5



THE TRACK GOES BUSH

Moreton Bay Ash (*Eucalyptus tessellaris*). Gum trees are renowned for their eucalyptus oil. Crushed leaves in hot water provide relief from colds and their timber was valuable for making hardwood tools. Moreton Bay Ash is very common in this area and this particular tree marks the start of the "off-road" part of the trail.

6



ONE SPECIES, MANY USES

Screw Palm (*Pandanus sp.*). Certain species were useful for more than one purpose. For example, the fruit and nuts inside the fruit of the Screw Palm were sources of food. The leaves were woven to manufacture mats. Here in the cool underbush sheltered by the natural ceiling of paperbarks and Leichhardt Trees we can see the richness of the resources that allowed the land to support a large number of aborigines.

7



Cloudy Tea Tree (*Melaleuca dealbata*). The flowers of the Cloudy Tea Tree provided nectar, the leaves were used as a medicine and the bark was useful as insulation on cold nights or for making a coolamon for carrying food and water.

8



Weeping Tea Tree (*Melaleuca leucadendron*) provided the same uses as the Cloudy Tea Tree.

9



The Leichhardt Tree (*Nauclea orientalis*) also had multiple uses. An infusion of crushed leaves was used to treat "sore belly" by inducing vomiting. The bark was prepared to relieve rheumatic pain and bruising. The trunk was used to make canoes and the leaves were used to protect damper from ashes. Its spectacular flowers develop into edible fruit.

10



Paper Bark (*Melaleuca viridiflora*). A different and smaller paperbark is growing along this part of the track. See if you can spot all three different types of paperbark.

21



Crabs Eyes (*Abrus precatorius*). The hard seeds were used by Aboriginals to decorate Ceremonial objects. they are extremely poisonous.

12



Bulrushes (*Typha sp*). The next section of the trail skirts around the edge of a sedgeland area. As you face the number 12 post, look about 20m ahead to a group of Bulrushes. They are dry brown in the dry season and the young shoots were eaten raw and the roots were roasted. Pollen from the flowers was eaten raw or baked. The sap provided protection against leeches.

13



FOOD, WATER AND DECORATION

This **Wattle** (*Acacia crassicarpa*) had edible gum which was soaked in water with honey to form a toffee. The roots were cooked and eaten and the wood was used for manufacturing weapons and tools.

14



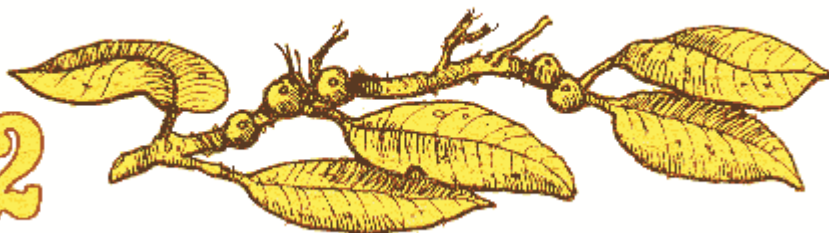
Jungle Currant (*Antidesma ghaesembilla*). Here on the hillside you can see a number of useful species close together. The Jungle Currant produces currant-like fruit that provides an acid pulp around a central stone.

18



The **Peanut Tree** or **Monkey Nut** (*Sterculia quadrifida*) had medicinal manufacturing and nutritional use. The leaves and bark was made into twine and nets. Its most striking feature is the peanut-like seeds in leathery pods in the Spring. The next post number 19 is located further down the track into the park and on the right handside.

22



The **Rock Fig** (*Ficus platypoda*) provides edible fruits that are rather dry and tasteless unless soaked in water to make a pulp.

16



The roots of the **Wattle** (*Acacia leptocarpa*) were, like the **Batwing Coral Tree**, a source of water.

17



The fruit of the **Burdekin Plum** (*Pleiogynium timorense*) is still a popular food source.

Here in the shade of the Fig Tree clinging to its rocky base, you will have reached the outer limit of the Bush Resources Circuit. However, this is not the full extent of the usable plants on the Town Common. The wetlands, salt-pans and ranges contain many more resources. The wealth of the resources that of the thousands of years, was managed for perpetual usage. Is there a message here for us?