Main Topic: Ecology
Sub Topic: Bush Foods

- Discuss what is meant by the terms ‘bush foods’ and ‘bush medicines’.

- Read the Scholastic big book *What is Bush Food?* and look at the posters from the *Bush Food Poster Kit* or another similar resource, to stimulate discussion.

- The *Lower Primary Teachers Resource Book* of the Scholastic ‘Reconciliation Kit’ has many good teaching ideas related to the *What is Bush Foods?* book.

- The same resource book also has activities related to the book *Fishing in the Torres Strait*, in the same series.

- Episode 3 of ABC TV’s *Many Nations One People* is titled *Bush Foods and Medicine*. Teachers notes are at: [www.abc.net.au/schoolstv/nations/ep3.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/schoolstv/nations/ep3.htm)


- The 6 books in the *Message Stick* Non-Fiction series: *Bush Tucker, Hunting, Fishing, Tracking, Games We Play and Weapons* all show contemporary scenes of young Aboriginal people.

- Organise a local Aboriginal guide to take students on a bush walk to identify bush foods in your local area. Community schools will have local guides at hand. Others can use the GECKOS Guest Presenter Program to access a guide or a centre for an excursion eg Herdsman Lake, the Spectacles or the Hills Discovery Centre, in Perth; Wardan Aboriginal Cultural Centre for those Schools in the Bunbury Diocese; teachers in the Geraldton Diocese can access information through the *Geraldton Diocesan Directory*.

- Collect samples where possible and take photos for each one identifying the following:
  - names – Aboriginal, common, botanical
  - parts - leaves, flowers, nuts, roots
  - uses – food, medicine, making things
  - season - what time of year it is ready for eating or using

- If you are unable to go to the bush, bring the bush to you via a DVD or video.
  - *Bush Tucker Man*
  - *Noongar Bush Tucker with Ken Colbung*
  - *Nature’s Wealth: Using Indigenous Plants*

- *The Yongka Hunt* is a DVD about a family going kangaroo hunting in Noongar country. The narrator explains that this is not only a way of providing food for the family but also a tradition with many cultural implications.

- Remember to always check *Australian Screen Online* (ASO) for film clips related to the topics being studied.
○ Listen to women talking about the different types of food available to them from the film Narbalek at: http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/narbalek/clip3/

○ In a clip from Living Country, viewers see women digging for Honey Ants with digging sticks and talking about the foods they hunt: http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/living-country/clip3/

○ See what else can be found!
  
  ● Use books to enrich the study of the bush foods that are available in your local area.
    ○ Yamaji Bush Tucker and Medicine describes some bush foods in Yamaji country
    ○ Mayi: some bush fruits of the West Kimberley describes just that
    ○ Tree Talk: Minyirr Park trees, shrubs & Aboriginal culture gives clear, visual photos and descriptions of plants and their uses in the area of Minyirr Park bush and coastal park
    ○ The Yawuru Seasons resource is a comprehensive guide for the Broome area.

  ● Young children in the south west will want to go looking for bush tucker after reading Bush Tucker with Pop Jack.

  ● Watch Josie Boyle and her mother Mary McLean digging for bush food in the storyteller section of stories told by Josie Boyle, from the Goldfields region on The Dreaming DVDs.

  ● Ian Abdullah’s book Tucker, tells of his family feeding themselves from the surrounding landscape of the Murray River region in the 1950s.

  ● Discuss the impact of colonisation on the availability of bush foods and medicines in your local area. Document your findings through notes, recordings or photographs.

  ● Discuss how traditionally Aboriginal people had no shops to buy food. They had to hunt and collect food and they were careful in moving on to ensure there was no over hunting. They were a Calendrical society in that they moved on within their Country as the seasons and resources permitted. They were not nomadic.

  ● Read picture books which tell contemporary stories of bush food collecting and hunting.
    ○ Crabbing at High Tide
    ○ Going for Oysters
    ○ Pigs and Honey
    ○ Kooyar the Frog (NNBNN Kit)
    ○ Corroboree
    ○ You and Me: Our Place

  ● Create a bush tucker gathering game or utilise the Going to the Ceremony board game in the NNBNN Kit.

  ● Make a collage of leaves, nuts and fruits that depicts the bush foods and medicines.
- Make cards of bush foods and medicines which can be used to play concentration or a matching game. Include the Aboriginal name to extend into LOTE.

- The Wangkanyi Ngurra Tjurta Aboriginal Corporation in Kalgoorlie has produced some cards to go with their Wangkatja counting book *Kutju Kutjarra Marnkurra*...*Pimi* (1,2,3...Many) and animal book *Tjina* (Tracks), ready to use in your classrooms.

- *Exploring woodlands with Noongars* contains a section on Bush Food activities.

- Invite an appropriate person from the local community into your school to demonstrate how to find and prepare bush foods and medicines.

- Students video, photograph and record the process of preparing the bush food or medicine for viewing and presentation to another class or at assembly.

- Invite a local community member into your school to cook damper. Birrirr Ngawiyi School, Ringer Soak did this and the book *Rosie Makes Damper* (from the *Stories from Kimberley Catholic Schools* series) describes the process in words & pictures.

- Explain to students that damper or a similar type of food was part of the staple diet and was made from grinding seeds binding together with water and cooking in the ground or open fire. However, today we use wheat or other grain which we buy already ground into flour or made into bread which has been baked in a baker’s oven.

- The students from Holy Rosary School, Derby demonstrate how to make Boab Nut Pudding in their book from the *Stories from Kimberley Catholic Schools* series.

- Create a recipe card outlining the procedure for making damper.

- Make Johnny Cakes using the recipe found in the Poster *Making Johnny Cakes with Nan Lisa* from the kit *Moorditj Noongar Koolunga Kaadadjiny : Strong Noongar children listening, Learning and Thinking*. Schools in the south west will have this resource.

- Find recipes using bush tucker ingredients and try creating your own, eg
  - Damper
  - Wattle seed pancakes
  - Quandong jam
  - Kangaroo stew

- *Exploring woodlands with Noongars* contains some recipes using bush foods.


- The Year 6 students at St Mary’s College in Broome made a cookbook of their favourite recipes, using local ingredients, like fish and mangoes. *Cooking*
in Broome is one of the series Stories from Kimberley Catholic Schools.

- Read a bush foods cookbook by an Aboriginal chef, such as Mark Olive’s Outback Café or look at his Black Olive website for ideas: http://www.blackolive.net.au

- Through cooking activities, discuss the need for:
  - nutritious foods
  - safety around fires / cooking areas
  - cleanliness and the need for hygiene around food to stop spread of disease.

- Invite an appropriate member of your local community into your class to discuss with students the fact that bush foods include many native animal species such as the kangaroo, goanna, dugong, fish, turtle or duck and that Aboriginal people hunt these animals in a sustainable way to ensure the resource is available for the many generations to come. Use the GECKOS Program for support.

- Invite an appropriate community member into your school to assist students identify, label and graph the different animal species in your local area and how they are hunted. Use the GECKOS Program for support.

- Invite a member of the Aboriginal community into your class to discuss the ways in which Aboriginal people fully use all parts of an animal, including skins, bones, teeth and sinew to make tools and clothing. Use the GECKOS Program for support.

- Invite an Elder or local community member into your class to share information in regard to how an animal is divided and shared amongst the community according to certain cultural protocols. Use the GECKOS Program for support.

- Research the expanding contemporary bush food and medicine industry. The Black Olive website or the Canberra Times Bush Food Poster kits are useful resources for this.

- Establish a bush garden in your school as a PALS project. Involve local community members as advisors to the students and the gardener. Use GECKOS Program for support.

- If you were lost in the bush what would you do? Using the information gathered make a bush survival plan by making a series of bush survival cards.

- Prepare a hunting board game by drawing a local area map with ‘fire’ as the central feature. Grid and add animal tracks featuring the animal at the end of the track. Display directions of North, South, East and West. Have one die with numbers and a set of direction cards featuring your local Aboriginal language.

- Make a calendar using pictures or photos of your local bush foods and medicines to illustrate the page for each month. Include the use and preparation of the item for use.
• Research and discover any shell middens in your local area or elsewhere. Read the Shell Midden page in the book *Postcards* from the Scholastic *Reconciliation Kit*.

• Read about the middens and other evidence of 30 000 years of Aboriginal history in the Shark Bay area. [http://www.sharkbay.org/default.aspx?WebPageID=141](http://www.sharkbay.org/default.aspx?WebPageID=141)

• Google *CSIRO Native Foods* to find out the latest research being carried out on the special qualities and wide potential of bush fruits and other foods.

**Resources**


• Hall, B. (Comp) *Fishing in the Torres Strait*. Scholastic, Lindfield, NSW, 2002.


• *Bush Food Poster Kit*. Aboriginal Education Resource Unit, East Perth.


• *Stories from Kimberley Catholic schools*. Catholic Education Office of WA, Kimberley Region, Broome,


• *Bush Tucker Man* (DVD). ABC TV, 2004

• *Noongar Bush Tucker* (video). Institute of Applied Aboriginal Studies, Mt Lawley, WA, 12min.


• *The Yongka Hunt* (DVD). Kurongkurl Katitjin, School of Indigenous Studies, Edith Cowan University, Bunbury Campus, 1998. 7min.


• Tree talk: Minyirr Park trees, shrubs & Aboriginal culture. Rubibi Land, Heritage and Development Group, Broome, WA, 2005


• Exploring woodlands with Noongars: teaching activities for primary and secondary schools. Dept Conservation and Land Management, Como, WA. 1998. Download from http://www.naturebase.net/content/view/2265/1090/1/1


• Adams, J. Pigs and Honey. Omnibus, Norwood, SA. 1990

• Adams, J. Going for Oysters. Omnibus, Norwood, SA. 1993

• Wallam, A. & Kelly, S. Corroboree. Cygnet Books, UWA Press. 2004


• Nidja Noongar Boodjar Noonook Nyininy (Kit). Catholic Education Office & Murdoch University, Perth, 2000

• Lau, K, & Hall, B. Postcards. Scholastic Reconciliation Kit. Scholastic, Lindfield, NSW, 2003


• Many nations, one people. ABC TV. 2005.