

JANUARY















Wii (Fire)

Gamilaraay Welcome to Country

I represent the Aboriginal community of Tenterfield, one of many tribes from within the Kamilaroi nation. Yaama, nginda. Ngiyani winangay ngiyaningu I take this opportunity to pay my respects to our dhilaag yinarraa yilambu.gu ancestors and the Traditional Owners of the land. Nhalay ganungu dhawun ngiyani yanay.ga yaray I also take this opportunity to pay my respects to our Elders, past, present and future. ngay niyani giirr Kamilaroi barra wurrugga

FEBRUARY - MARCH

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she is pretty deadly. It is magical what she provides for us. She is always teaching us something' - Dolly Jerome.

(FRESHWATER CRAYFISH), GANAY (DIGGING STICK), GUNDEREBA (BLACK DUCK)

GUDUU (MURRAY COD), DHAGAAY (YELLOW BELLY), GAYGAY (EEL TAILED CATFISH), YURRANDAALI (GOANNA), YABAA (CARPET SNAKE). BULAMIN (NATIVE APPLE). BIBIL (BOX TREES). GIIRRAY / GINNON, GOONOOL. INGA

'The strawberry gum flowers in February. This eucalypt is only found near Tenterfield and it is a special bush tucker and medicine

plant. We use the strawberry flavour from the leaves in our food and this plant can be used to treat chest infections. When it rains,

the aroma of the strawberry gum can be smelled through the bush' - Matthew Sing. We harvest seeds of summer flowering

plants, such as bulamin (native apple), bibil (box trees), eucalypts, wattles and wildflowers during March. We use these in our

for medicinal purposes, and was potable in times of drought⁶. The **native olive** is fruiting. The **grass lily** is flowering, it produces

nursery to grow native plants or we eat them as bush tucker. The sap of the native apple was used by the Ngoorabul and Jukambal

tubers which were eaten from March to June. Wombat berries are eaten from March to July. Sometimes, seeds were roasted before

'This is what Mother Nature provides for us-

Hello, welcome to you.

Moombahlene (Tenterfield) Fire & Seasons Calendar

DECEMBER - JANUARY

GULI (NATIVE MILLET), GARAARR (KANGAROO GRASS), MILAAN (TUBER/YAM), NHIMIN (KURRAJONG), GAAGUL (YOUNG ROOT OF THE KURRAJONG), YAPPAR (FIBRE FROM THE INNER BARK), MUYAAN (TREE), OPARRA JIJIMAN (NATIVE CHERRY), GEEBUNG (NATIVE GOOSEBERRY)

'After the fire, I was happy to see the regrowth of the Dianella (flax lily), Lomandra (mat rush) and native grasses, and how healthy and bulked up there were' - Helen Duroux. Grasses such as native sorghum, guli (native millet) and garaarr (kangaroo grass) were harvested and used to make flour for damper.

'We use the **Dianella (flax lily)** berries as dye and you can eat them too' - Dolly Jerome.

Flax lily leaves were split into 2 down the midrib and rolled in the manner of string to make a tie¹⁵, or leaves were woven to make a dilly bag or basket¹³. Flax lilies are flowering and starting to fruit during the warm time. 'When we were walking through the scrub as kids we'd pick the

wild parsnip, dig them up and eat the roots' - Helen Duroux. Chocolate wattle nhaaduu (seeds) taste like chocolate. We roast the seeds and eat them whole or grind them. We use them as coffee or put them in ice cream and biscuits - they can be used for sweet or savoury. The chocolate wattle flowers during winter and spring, and fruits afterwards. Wild parsnip has a thickened taproot which is edible raw or cooked, it tastes like a parsnip or a carrot, and is said to be one of Australia's tastiest bush tucker foods. The **common** fringed lily has roots that swell into milaan (tuber/yam) which can be dug up with digging sticks. The roots and base of the stem can both be eaten. A hard shell surrounds the roots, which splits open when the tuber is cooked in hot ashes. If eaten raw, the yam is said to be crisp and juicy¹²

The **nhimin (kurrajong)** is flowering. Nhimin is best eaten as a food from May to November. The gaagul (young root of the kurrajong) is eaten, it has a taste and texture like coconut. We boil the seeds and wait for the hair to come to the top. Then we dry roast and eat them, like raw nuts. We also grind the seeds and make coffee or damper. Yappar (fibre from the inner bark) can be used as twine to make nets for catching fish, waterbirds, kangaroos and even emus. In some areas, Aboriginal people made a net from yappar and strung it up between two muyaan (trees). Waterbirds were frightened into the net by boomerangs thrown above them to act like birds of prey. Yappar twine can also be used to make dilly bags, rope, waistbelts, hair nets and cords for necklaces. Jijiman / oparra (native cherry) is producing fruit. The **geebung** (native gooseberry) is flowering and

Giirray / ginnon, goonool, inga (freshwater **cravfish)** are active after releasing their young. We see the **yellow-tailed black cockatoo** eating seeds from the she-oaks and hakeas, and digging grubs out from under the tree bark. The blue tongue lizards have their babies in December.

will produce fruit that we can eat in coming months.

OCTOBER NOVEMBER

DHALAN (GRASSTREE), **BULUURR (TAWNY FROGMOUTH),** GUGURRGAAGAA (KOOKABURRA), GAWU (INSECT), GUBIYAAY (ORCHIDS), NHAADUU (SEEDS), GUNI (SUGARBAG / NATIVE BEE), NARROW / NARU / NGAROO MOOMBILLEEN, MOOMBAHLENE (TENTERFIELD)

'Wii (fire) helps to regenerate the country that is the way it has been for millennia We use the fire and other animals use it too. We have got to not fear the fire, we have to respect it. It is more than heat and burn and damage, it brings new life. It is like a garden, we use all of those resources for our life- the whole country is our garden. We use it for food and medicine, even ochre...

We take a little bit from here, a little bit from there, that way the bush grows back' - Dolly Jerome.

Many wildflowers and guumay (ground orchids) flower during the warmer months, such as the hyacinth orchid. The **gubiyaay** (black orchid) is flowering, it is an important medicine plant. The endangered **Tenterfield** mint-bush flowers from August to November. This bush is very rare, only found on a single granite outcrop in the Tenterfield area.

Seedlings regenerated after the wii (fire) from our cultural burning stimulated them to grow. After the bushfires, the dhalan (grasstrees) were flowering and fruiting abundantly.

As the weather warms up, gawu (insect) populations increase. Guni (sugarbag / native bee) narrow / naru / ngaroo (honey) was collected whenever possible, mostly during spring and summer. Elaborate methods of tracking bees to their hives were employed. During spring 'girroo', (honey made from the blossum of the grass tree) was an important resource in the western fall of the Tablelands. Individuals would sometimes go off to collect it by themselves but collecting this food was also a group activity¹⁰. According to one source, the Aboriginal name for Tenterfield was 'Moombilleen', which means 'place of wild bees' 6. Some of our Elders passed on the information that Moombahlene /

Gugurrgaagaa (kookaburras) breed from September to January. Pairs bond for life and young chicks are cared for by all members of the family. Buluurr (tawny frogmouths) sing to each other during the breeding season. 'Buubumurr (platypus) are important in the river system- if the platypus aren't there, the rivers aren't healthy. Over winter, we don't see much of the platypus but when the weather warms up, the mother platypus comes out and introduces her new babies' - Dolly Jerome. A Dreaming story tells that the platypus was created from a father who was a water rat and a mother who was a wood duck.

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

Moombilleen means 'dry, windy place'.

BING-ING (SHORTNECKED OR MACQUARIE TURTLE), GAWU / GABUYN / KABOA (EGG), WII (FIRE), MUDGERIBAR (GREEN WATTLE TREE), GURAYN (FLOWER)

'When the wattle flowers, bing-ing (shortnecked or Macquarie turtle) are full of eggs' - Dolly Jerome.

'The coastal and inland turtle hunters are connected through wattle. Some turtles are found around Tenterfield. We eat turtle with damper and johnny cakes- the tradition and hunting of freshwater turtle continues today down at Jubullum. The young boys dive into the creek and catch turtle. They wait until after the first big storm finishes before they go hunting for bing-ing - this gives them a chance to lay their eggs. If you want freshwater or sea turtle, relatives will bring it uphere for you' - Dolly Jerome.

Bird gawu / gabuyn / kaboa (eggs) were also eaten

The gurayn (flower) of the false sarsaparilla were useful as a medicine to treat chest infections and were made into a mouthwash which was gargled to treat mouth ulcers. The climbing stems, which are long and flexible, can be used as rope or as string to make baskets. In some areas of Australia, Aboriginal people know when they see false sarsaparilla start to flower, that is it time to go to the rivers and lakes to catch fat fish. In Tenterfield Park, plants such as the

gumby gumby, Darling pea and wonga wonga vine are flowering. The greenhood orchids start to flower in September. The dollarbird arrives in northern and eastern Australia in September each year to breed. In March or April the birds return to New Guinea and adjacent islands to spend the winter. Bagandi (spotted tail quolls) breed into winter and have young with them at this time of year. The Tenterfield region is a stronghold for the threatened spotted-tailed

TOO WET TO BURN

ripe, husks also eaten. The burst berries of wombat berry contain a tiny amount of crisp white pulp, which was eaten by Aboriginal people¹⁰. The roots swell into small earthen-coloured tubers, 1-3cm long, which taste sweet and juicy, unless dry weather has shrivelled them and made them bitter. Aboriginal people also ate these, although they are not easy to dig from the hard soil in Reptiles are in their prime during the summer and autumn months while building up stores of fat to hibernate. The yurrandaali (goanna) is a special animal to us and we eat it. Yurrandaali meat was roasted over coals, and

yurrandaali oil was rendered by cooking the fat with the meat, or by placing the fat on a rock or piece of corrugated iron that had been heated by the sun. The oil was rubbed on the skin as a cosmetic, and was also used as a treatment for arthritis or sore joints⁶. The **yabaa (carpet snake)** is also important. 'Yabaa was tucker for the old people, the Elders - they would eat it and just give you a taste' -Fish are also important animals, including dhagaay (yellowbelly perch), **guduu**

COOL WEATHER

THE FIRST

07

swamps and lagoons of the Tablelands with ganay (digging sticks). During the wetter months **gundereba** (black duck) and waterfowl are plentiful. Traditionally, waterfowl were caught using various techniques, such as by knocking them down using boomerangs and waddies, a man diving underwater and pulling a bird down, or being hunted

(Murray cod) and gaygay (eel-tailed cat fish). We fish for guduu when they are

to come. Giirray / ginnon, goonool, inga (freshwater crayfish) and yabbies were

not spawning (December to October) so that there are fish for generations

also eaten and used as bait to catch cod. Large crayfish were dug from the

APRIL - MAY

into nets across a watercourse¹⁰.

WII (FIRE), WIIMALI (LIGHT A FIRE), DIMAN (ASH), INGALL / NINDORE / NULLO (DILLY BAG), DHINAWAN (EMU)

After the first frosts come in late April, it is a good time to wiimali (light a fire) and start cultural burning. Autumn to Winter is usually the best time to burn as the weather is cooler and there might be more during this time. If you wait until Spring, there might be animals with young and birds nesting, so it is better to burn before then. 'Timing is critical. You don't need to burn the whole thing, you just need to break it up. If you cultural burn each year, the build up won't be there'

> 'Black, white and grey stain from the **diman** (ash) of our cultural burning can be used to make paint'

- Dolly Jerome. We weave baskets, mats and ingall / nindore / nullo - Jukumbal (dilly bags) from mat rush, flax lily and grass leaves.

'Wii (fire) is good for weaving because it gets rid of dead leaves and you can use the green leaves to weave. You can also use the dry winter grasses as stuffing to weave around'

- Dolly Jerome. We eat the root of the **native carrot** - it is an annual herb that grows to 45cm and is found

'When the fogs start, the **dhinawan (emus)** start to breed' - Wally Binge.

around the Bluff Rock area.

'The whitefellas are jumping on board now. I don't care if it's yesterday, today or tomorrow. If we work together it is a partnership, a two way street. From little things, big things grow' - Dolly Jerome.

'It is going full circle. Our grandparents did this, and now these young fellas are out here burning the Country. The circle never stops, it just keeps going. Like the tree dropping the seed and then growing to make another tree- it is all regeneration. Aboriginal culture, cultural burning, reconciliation. Like the ashes, two colours together- black and white. It is vitally important for our children to learn. A never ending cycle'

JUNE - JULY

JUBUL / BIRRAA / GARARRNGAN / DJUBERA (WITCHETTY GRUB), BIGIBILA (ECHIDNA), BANDAARR (EASTERN GREY KANGAROOS), YULAMA (WALLAROO), MUDHAY (BRUSHTAIL POSSUM), GARRAWIRR (RINGTAIL POSSUM), DHIINAA (HONEYSUCKLE BANKSIA)

'When I went to the cultural burn, I was sad because I had never had the opportunity to learn how to burn. But I am learning now' - Helen Duroux.

Dhiinaa (honeysuckle banksia) flower during winter and provide nectar for wildlife during a harsh time of year. The inside of the flower, after it has died off, can be used as a firestick.

'Cold weather is jubul / birraa / gararrngan / djubera (witchetty grub) time. You can eat the jubul straight from the tree or cook it. Bigibila (echidna) starts to breed when the wattle flowers (after July). They drop their young in December. We don't eat them during breeding time. It is okay to eat them from December to July' - Wally Binge. 'We don't eat bigibila a lot because we want him around' - Helen Duroux.

Traditionally, bigibila was known for its sweet and tender meat. It was rolled in clay before being baked in ashes, so that the quills came off with the clay when it was broken away after cooking⁶. 'During the cold time we collect dhinawan (emu) eggs. The black heads (male emus) look after the eggs. Dhinawan were hunted

JULY

Coldest time, still mornings and windy afternoons

Coldest time, still mornings and windy afternoons hatched, he has got to teach the babies where the tracks are, how to find water...' - Wally Binge. Traditionally, other mammals such as buubumurr (platypus) and guda (koala) were rarely eaten, they were a special treat. Bandaarr (eastern grey kangaroos), yulama (wallaroo) and wallabies were available throughout the year to be hunted and eaten. During winter, kangaroos and wallabies have thick, long, soft fur which is used to make traditional coats. Kangaroo teeth,

feathers and bird claws were used for decoration during battles, corroborees or other grand occasions, as well as red and yellow

but they were a special treat and the Elders were given first pick- "old man's meat". We don't eat the male emus after the eggs have

'We don't eat the big bawurra (red kangaroo)- he is the big man, the boss. He is our protector on country, he shows us things' - Wally Binge.

from animals such as kangaroo. String belts woven out of possum hair were also worn by both men and women⁶.

Mudhay and garrawirr (brushtail and ringtail possums) were an important food resource. Possums were caught by climbing trees notched by hatchets (axes), supported by a vine looped around the trunk and tied around the waist. This left the hands of the hunter free to cut a hole in the tree where the possum was sleeping, enabling them to snare the animal. Aboriginal people moved around to hunt possums and create coats from their fur, which was thickest and best during winter. Possum skin cloaks were made by women, who cured the possum skins by securing them to small sheets of board with wooden pins, and then set them out to dry. When a sufficient number had been collected, they were sewn together with a bone or wooden needle using plant fibres or sinew



WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Moombahlene Local Aboriginal Land Council acknowledges that we operate and function on the lands of the Yukambal¹² people. We pay our respect to these lands that provide for us. We acknowledge and pay respect to the ancestors that walked and managed these lands for many generations before us. We acknowledge and recognise all Aboriginal people who have come from their own country and who have now come to call this country their home. We acknowledge our Flders who are our knowledge holders, teachers and pioneers. We recognise all Aboriginal people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities and acknowledge the negative impact on the Aboriginal community. We acknowledge for many of the children and now adults, removal meant that they have now lost all connection to family, and the life-long consequences for those taken. We acknowledge our youth who are our hope for a brighter and stronger future and who will be our future leaders. We acknowledge and pay our respect to our people who have gone

before us and recognise their contribution to our community.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES The Aboriginal language words included in this calendar are mostly from the Gamilaraay 1,3 language which is a commonly used language in the Tenterfield region of northern NSW. Some Jukumba¹², Bundjalung⁴ and Ngoorabul⁵ words are also included These words are colour coded according to the language they belong to i.e. Gamilaraay (GREEN). Jukumbal (BROWN) Bundialung (BLUE) and Ngoorabul (ORANGE).

Wii (Fire), the Moombahlene (Tenterfield) Fire and Seasons

Calendar, was created by the Tenterfield Aboriginal community and Michelle McKemey. The Moombahlene (Tenterfield) Fire and Seasons Calendar is supported by the Moombahlene LALC, Firesticks Indigenous Alliance, Rural Fire Service Association, Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and the NSW Government. This project is part of the \$19.32 million of Catchment Action NSW investment that Local Land Services is delivering to enable better management of our water, soil, regetation, biodiversity and cultural heritage.



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Kerry Hardy (www.baabaa.net - BlackSheepStudio), Jacqueline Gothe, Sian Hromek and Lyndal Harris.

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