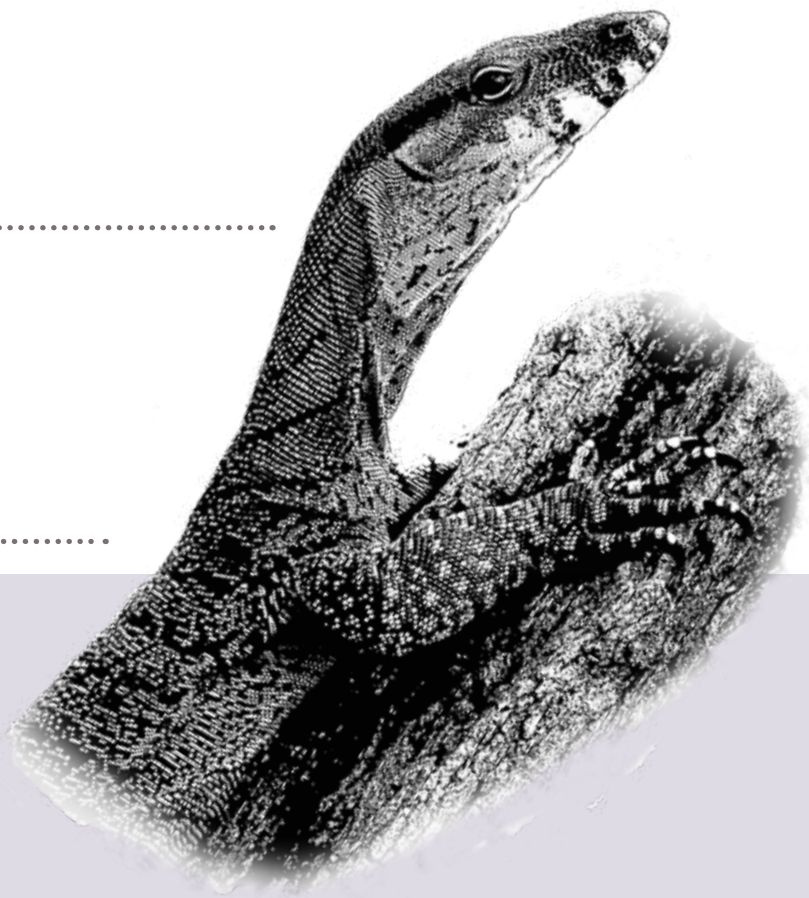




Wii (Fire)



Tingha Fire and Seasons Calendar

DECEMBER - JANUARY

NHIMIN (KURRAJONG), BAAN (MISTLETOE)

'The chocolate lily flowers come up during the hot time' – Greg Livermore.

'If there was a lightning strike, once it started going they would burn back to it. All the hills, they used to burn them. It would take them a month just to burn the hill. If it was January, they would go up the top and set it alight and let it burn down. Then they would go to the next hill and burn it. If you are going to do a burn it doesn't matter whether it is hot, cold or not. If you know what the ground is like and how high the grass is, you can burn anytime...' – Jimmy Connors.

The nhimin (kurrajong), Blakely's red gum, chocolate lily flowers and prickly pear are flowering. The baan (mistletoe) is fruiting. The seeds of the nhimin (kurrajong) can be eaten. You can also empty a kurrajong pod, put some stones in, close it back up and use it as a rattle for kids. The native raspberry and cherry produce fruit during the warm weather. Following a gentle cultural burn, many plants regenerate such as eucalypts and wattles.

'We called the mistletoe fruit and seed, snottygobblers. There is one mistletoe for eucalypts (box trees) and one for the kurrajong. You can eat them both' – Jimmy Connors.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

GUDA (KOALA), BUUBUMURR (PLATYPUS), MULINDJAL (RUFOUS WHISTLER)

'We need rain in October to get sap flowing in the trees so we can cut a coolamon from the bark. Bushfires burn the bark which makes it difficult to get bark for the coolamon' – Greg Livermore.

Guda (koalas) usually breed between September and February–this important animal is a totem for some Aboriginal people. Buubumurr (platypus) breed in spring, there are at least two pairs that usually live in the creek at Bassendean.

The black orchid is flowering, we use the stems to keep our mouth moist when we are walking in the bush, and eat the stems to treat diarrhoea. We eat the gum leaf to get rid of the doughy texture. The Austral indigo is flowering. For some Aboriginal people, this plant was used as a medicine, or the leaves were crushed and added to water to kill or stun fish.

As the weather warms up, migratory bird species arrive to breed over summer, including the mulindjal (rufous whistler), sacred kingfisher, striated pardalote, channel-billed cuckoo, white-throated gerygone, black-faced cuckoo-shrike, cicadabird, grey fantail and leaden flycatcher.

'If you were in charge of the fire, you had a great responsibility. We need to realise the importance of this' – Dick Blair.

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

BIRRAA GARARRANGAN, BIRRAAY, GARRANGAN (GRUB), YARRAN (GUM FROM TREE), GURAYN (FLOWER), BULAMIN (NATIVE APPLE TREE)

'We had a good knowledge of what wood would burn at what temperature. We had hot burns and cool burns' – Jimmy Connors.

The geebung and bulamin (native apple tree) are fruiting. We crush the seed of the geebung and put in water, then drink it as a healthy tonic. Geebung fruit are not ready to eat until they fall onto the ground. Grinding stones are used to crush the seeds of various plant species.

'When we were kids we used to burn. We just had a knack to it, we knew when to burn. We would just throw a match here and there, it never used to cause any damage' – Dick Blair.

'We boil the young leaves of the bulamin and drink them, they have a lot of vitamins. We grind the seeds for damper and mix them with flour. You can see the grinding holes near the creek where our people used to grind their grains and seeds' – Jimmy Connors.

The wattle is flowering, so we know that the witchetty grubs are good to eat. We use wattle seeds in damper and use the timber to make stick whip handles, clap sticks and spears. The yarran (gum) from the black wattle was a good glue. If we find a T-shaped branch, we turn it in the fire, and use it to make a walking stick. Mookrum fruit abundantly after a good season. Kookaburras are laughing to mark their territory. Many birds are getting ready to hatch their young. Bigibila (echidna) come out of their winter hibernation, they are poor to eat after hibernating but can still be eaten.

'The old men used to do the burning. That's how I learned to make fire with sticks. They were still using traditional fire drill. When it gets like this with long grass over other grass, pull it out of the ground and set it alight, chuck it over there, and it will take off. The old men were burning because it is a traditional thing. When the grass gets too long, up over your shin, the cows won't eat it and it is no good for the kangaroos, they would burn it so the kangaroos can come and get it. They would burn some here, leave it for a couple of weeks then when the grass starts coming back they would come down and shoot a kangaroo, wouldn't have to carry it far. Sometimes they would burn just a little area, sometimes they would let a big area burn and if it went down into the river, they would wait for it to rain and the river would stop the burn' – Jimmy Connors.

'People who know their Country, know when the right time is to do things. That is not my knowledge, I am just passing it on' – Greg Livermore.



TOO WET TO BURN

JANUARY
Rainy, hottest time

FEBRUARY
Rainy, hot

MARCH
Warm

APRIL
Dry, starting to cool down

MAY
Dry, cold

JUNE
Humid, very cold, frosty

JULY
Coldest time. Dry, windy, frosty

LOW INTENSITY FIRE TIME. GOOD TIME TO BURN

AUGUST
Windy time, dry, very cold, frosty

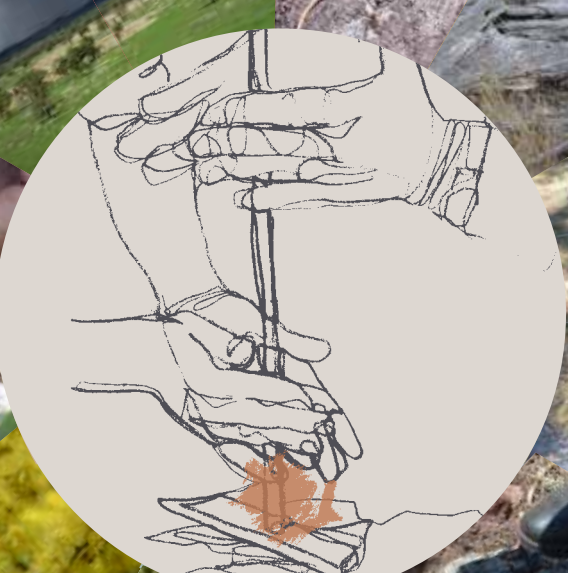
SEPTEMBER
Dry, cold, starting to warm up

OCTOBER
Warm, windy, low humidity

NOVEMBER
Rainy, warm

DECEMBER
Hot, wettest time

BUSHFIRE TIME - DON'T LIGHT FIRES



CULTURAL FIRE PROTOCOLS

We need to burn right country at the right time.

A Mother Fire needs to be started using an Aboriginal fire drill.

Using traditional fire lighting methods and knowing how to burn culturally is important, and helps to revive very important cultural practices.

Firesticks from country (red gum, stringybark, native apple, grey and white box) need to be gathered and placed in the Mother Fire. They must be kept alight and used to ignite the cultural burn.

Remember, fire was so important to our people for many reasons, and everyone involved needs to know that keeping the Mother Fire alight was a big responsibility.

Our Old People knew when breeding times were and when bush tucker and medicines were available, some of this knowledge is shared in this Fire and Seasons Calendar for the Tingha Aboriginal Community. This is knowledge that our community can hold pass on and reintroduce, for our younger generations.

- Greg Livermore

YAMA NGINDA, NGAYA

Nganyi winangay nganyangu dilaag yinnarra yilnabugu

Nhalay ganungu dhuwan nganyi yanayga yaray

Ngay nyanyi giir Gonerai barra wurragga

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

We acknowledge the people from the Kamilaroi Nation who are the traditional custodians of this land.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge our Elders, past and present, and entrust that knowledge to our future leaders, on whose responsibility, the foundation of our culture rests.

On behalf of the Aboriginal community from the Kamilaroi Nation and with specific reference to our friends within the Tingha community, we extend a very warm welcome to you all and invite you to share, learn and enjoy.

Mara Buma-y (Thank you).

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

The Aboriginal language words included in this calendar are from the Kamilaroi language which is used in the Tingha region of northern NSW.

SUPPORT

The Tingha Fire and Seasons Calendar is supported by the Rural Fire Service Hotspots Program, Rural Fire Service Association, Firesticks Indigenous Alliance, 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, vegetation, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jimmy Connors, Shane Levy, Greg Livermore, Sue Blacklock, Dick Blair, Terry Munroe, Sarah Munroe, Neville & Ingram Williams, Joshua Williams, Kira Edwards, Richard Ellis, Jamie Bertram, Ivan Lackay, Ivan Perkins.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Koala, goanna, wallaroo, Brent Emerson

PHOTOS

Michelle McKemey, Greg Livermore, John Hodge, Phil Spark, David Milledge, Josh Griffiths, Adam Henderson, DM Enterprises, Cactus man, Marshall Hedra, R Clarke, Arndam Bhattacharya, JJ Harrison, David Cook, Bernard Spragg, Benjamin 444, Alan Yen. Images reproduced with permission from photographer or under creative commons by attribution.

DESIGN

Kerry Hardy (BlackSheep Studio), www.baabaa.net

Jacqueline Gotthe, San Homeik and Lyndal Harris.



REFERENCES

1. Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2017) AUSTRALIAN language Dictionaries <http://aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/about>

2. Gamilaray / Gamilaroi / Kamilaroi language D23 <https://collection.sahlin.gov.au/austlang/dictionary/d23>

3. Bureau of Meteorology (2021) Climate statistics for Inverell NSW <https://www.bom.gov.au>

4. Duncan B and White H (2015) Speaking our Way: A collection of Aboriginal languages within the Northern Tablelands of NSW. Northern Tablelands Local Land Services, New South Wales.

5. Hunter J (2017) Vegetation and Floristics of Tingha Plateau State Conservation Area, NPWS, NSW.

6. McKemey M (2020) Developing cross-cultural knowledge (y'right way' science) to support Indigenous cultural fire management. Doctoral thesis, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

7. McKemey M, Baird Rangers, Eric E, Hunter J, Ridges M, Corbett G & Reid N (2020) Co-producing a Fire and Seasons calendar to support renewed Indigenous cultural fire management. Austral Ecology.

8. McKemey M B and H White (2017) Bush Tucker, Boomerrangs and Bandages. New South Wales, Australia, Border Rivers-Gwydir Catchment Management Authority.

9. North West Ecological Services (2017) The Basin Nature Reserve fauna survey report. NPWS, NSW.

10. Steffensen V (2020) Fire country: how Indigenous fire management could help save Australia's Hardie Grant Travel, Richmond, Victoria.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

TINGHA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

The President

Mooki & Bassendean Association Inc.

W: 149 Howell Road, Tingha NSW 2369

P: (02) 67233 012

E: gl81280@bigpond.net.au

MICHELLE MCKEMEY

Melaleuca Environmental

Consultancy Services

W: www.MEnvironmental.com.au

P: 0437 350 597

E: michellemckemey@gmail.com

© COPYRIGHT 2021

This poster is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

You may reproduce, distribute and remix this work for non-commercial purposes as long as any derivatives are released under the same licence, and you reference the work as follows:

McKemey M and Tingha Aboriginal community (2021)

Wii - Fire, Tingha Fire and Seasons Calendar

Northern Tablelands Local Land Service NSW

Released under Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

AUTHORS

Tingha Aboriginal community and Michelle McKemey

