

SPRING 2004

October

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Queensland Bushfood
Association
Email the editor:
Lynne Paterson
lynne_paterson@hotmail.com

FRENCH ODYSSEY BEGINS

Leading native food authority and QBA Committee member, John Wrench travels to France on October 6.

Invited by the Hospitality College of Nice, on the French Riviera, John will headline a series of workshops about Australian native foods over 2 weeks.

Sure to be the highlight, John will present an address at the gala dinner to launch the event. Impressively, John will be speaking fluent French at all of his talks. The audience will include France's leading food industry figureheads, local politicians, respected chefs of the region and France's chefs of the future - students of the College.

This is no mean feat for someone who became self-taught in French specifically to prepare himself for this amazing opportunity.

As a retired Senior Pharmacist of The Royal Brisbane Hospital, John will focus on medicinal and nutritional properties of native foods. In addition, John will incorporate cooking workshops into the event to demonstrate how native flavours can become part of French cuisine.

Dale Scott, Aboriginal chef on the Sunshine Coast will also cater throughout

the event, showcasing native food.

It has taken nearly 10 months of organising fundraising events and selling his award winning photography to enable John to attend this unique and exciting international event.

The QBA would like to wish John all the success he deserves and look forward to hearing about his adventure when he returns.

FAMOUS NOOSA RESTAURANT HOSTS NATIVE FOOD EVENT

On 25 August, highly respected head chef Matt Golinski opened his kitchen at the iconic Ricky Ricardos restaurant situated on the picturesque Noosa Sound. Teaming with Aboriginal chef Dale Scott to present a fundraising lunch featuring native foods where the proceeds supported Dale and QBA Committee member John Wrench towards their trip to France.

Other QBA members attended to show their support on the day and the event received major media attention by appearing on the local Ch 7 Sunshine Coast news that night.

Restaurant owner, Leonie Palmer, was interviewed by Ch 7 and supported the event by saying 'We are keen as restaurant diners in Australia to try new dishes from Italy or France, so

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why not try Australian native cuisine?"

The support of important food industry figures can only raise awareness of native foods and endorse it as part of mainstream food culture.

NEW CROPS CONFERENCE BREAKTHROUGH

For the second year running, the Australian New Crops Conference was held from 20-26 September at the Gatton Campus, University of Queensland. The event was attended by leading industry figures across Australia and overseas.

President of the organising Committee, Sibylla Hess-Buschmann of Australian Rainforest Products P/L is one of the pioneers of the commercial native food industry. Sibylla became involved in the industry in 1989.

Over the years her reputation for supplying the highest quality native foods has met the strict guidelines of the pharmaceutical industry in addition to the food industry, locally and overseas.

Sibylla was able to give a report on the outcomes of the conference this year. As most of the 'new crops' developing are native foods, the focus was on the native food industry and

some exciting developments resulted.

Bringing together industry figureheads and academic researchers created a unique forum, as research is being conducted in many areas not widely publicised.

In the area of research, the CSIRO announced at the conference they would be taking over responsibility, to become the main research body for native foods, currently held by RIRDC. An email from RIRDC to all industry participants will be communicated in the near future to advise of the changeover.

The most groundbreaking development came from committed representatives in the industry at the conference, who formed an a 'interim' National body to represent the native food industry as a 'steering committee' only.

As part of this committee, Sibylla emphasised it's purpose is to 'form guidelines' to enable the whole industry 'not just a few big players' to democratically elect and form a National Body proper.

One of the main benefits a National Body can provide is to become a facilitator to change legislation that recognises Australian native foods under the Novel

Foods Act. By removing native foods from the Act it will enable the application of native species to Food Standards Australian & NZ. One of the main benefits of having Standards recognition will enable the industry to become in line with guidelines of the EU and many countries worldwide.

The steering committee are working frantically to form the proposed guidelines and by the time of the next QBA general meeting in November, information will be available on a new website set up by CSIRO.

For an in-depth report on the conference covered by the ABC check out their website www.abc.net.au

THE GOLDEN OIL – Insights from the first commercial native food

The macadamia industry is long-established and highly successful with Australia controlling market share internationally. This was not always the case.

For many years the largest grower was Hawaii, supplying the USA's colossal demand for the product in confectionary form such as coated in chocolate.

Now, the future opportunities of the Queensland Nut are extending to macadamia oil.

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Trends indicate that macadamia oil will offer a successful alternative to the established olive oil market.

This is due to the oil content of macadamias which can be as high as 75%. In addition, the macadamia has a unique quality whereby the fats are 80% mono-unsaturated. (the good fat). Also the flavour of the oil is light which does not overpower the main ingredients in a dish unlike some olive oils.

John and Lesley Groves are owners of 'The Nut Farm' who have been growing macadamias for 15 years in the Gympie region. John & Lesley originate from a long line of farming families and made the change from small-crop growers (French beans and lady finger bananas) gradually, by inter-planting macadamias in the bananas.

The Groves' explained the history of the commercial macadamia industry started in the SE Qld region. It was Bernie Mason who planted the first commercial stand of macadamias in the Gympie area after the Second World War.

The orchard is still operating as Gympie Nuts, run by their good friend Geoff Garrat.

Lesley Groves believes the success of the macadamia has been due to a few main factors.

Government tax breaks over many years created a huge injection of investment money from professionals who were not concerned with short-term returns.

Also due to the high profile of the macadamia established by Hawaii, Australian growers were able to capitalise on this benefit to take market share and expand internationally.

With an interesting and long history the macadamia can provide valuable insights for the broader native food industry. There is also an opportunity to profit from the success of the macadamia. Already native food producers are combining other native food ingredients with the macadamia nut in a value-added product.

Most importantly, by aligning with the macadamia product the native food industry will enable itself to reach the mainstream food market in Australia.

THE GOLDEN NECTAR - honey from native bees

Appearing on the ABC's excellent program 'Gardening Australia' on August 20, a feature story focussed on Australia's native bees. Dr Ann Dolan, Professor and PHD student Melissa Bell of the

University of Western Sydney, gave valuable insights on their research conducted. In particular Melissa Bell warned Australia is trying to import exotic European Bumblebees into the mainland, to pollinate tomatoes based on the claim we have no native alternatives.

This conflicts with important research findings from Melissa Bell who has already demonstrated that native blue-banded bees can be successfully used to pollinate greenhouse tomatoes.

Australia has it's own native bees which are also sting-less. They are a primitive species and thrive in the warm areas such as Queensland and Northern NSW.

The bees only produce small amounts of honey and their nests are very sensitive to environmental elements. "Sting-less bees store their aromatic honey in clusters of small resin pots near the extremities of the nest.

This means for commercial honey production the design of the box needs to be altered so the nest is not disturbed when collecting honey. Details of the most recent box designs and techniques for honey harvesting can be found in the Australian Native Bee Research Centre

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(ANBRC) booklet, "Tips on Sting-less Beekeeping by Australian Beekeepers (Vol 2) or visit the website www.zeta.org.au

Editor's Desk

On behalf of all QBA members I would like to thank the outgoing committee members who have given their time, knowledge and leadership towards our Association.

Also, welcome new Committee members and recognise Committee members John Wrench and Graeme White who continue to hold positions on the Committee for another year.

As the new Committee for 2004/2005 we held the first Committee meeting on Sunday 12 September 2004. Doug Brownlow (President) and his wife Kath generously hosted the day with beautiful food and a tour of 'Eden', home to their Eden Bush Food business, 22km north-west of Brisbane, at Camp Mountain.

QBA GENERAL MEETING **Saturday 6th November 2004**

Arriving at 9:00am for 9:30pm start of the meeting.

Existing/New Projects Presentation.

If any members would like to address the meeting by providing a short presentation on a Project they would like the QBA to be involved in please advise when notifying RSVP.

The location is:

Downfall Creek Bushland Centre, 814 Rode Rd, Chermshire West

Please bring some food (native food if possible) and drinks to share after the meeting. RSVP to Lynne Paterson, Secretary, QBA, Ph 07 3216 4335, email lynne_paterson@hotmail.com

We ask that everyone pay \$1.00 to cover tea and coffee as well as some special food or drink to share.

MEMBER PROFILE -DICK COPEMAN

It seems fitting this column profiles one of our outgoing committee members. Dick Copeman held the position of Secretary and made many contributions to our Association.

One of the main reasons Dick became involved in the native food industry is due to the native food course he attended, run by fellow QBA member, John Wrench, at Ithaca TAFE in Brisbane in the late 90's.

Dick's work at the Northey Street City Farm in Windsor, Brisbane, is well-known and started with an interest in maintaining and extending the few native food plants into a diverse

and flourishing plantation dedicated to its own area on the Farm.

Dick was involved in applying successfully for the "Living in Harmony" grant to help the Aboriginal community. Funded by the federal government the grant idea was a way for the NSCF to work with Aboriginal and Islander people on bushfoods.

Part of Dick's busy schedule at City Farm includes hosting regular Bushfood workshops and running a volunteer program for maintaining the native food area on the farm.

Through this volunteer program was my introduction to native foods and I greatly appreciated the extensive knowledge shared and genuine enthusiasm Dick showed as an educator.

Dick is also a key figure in the Growing Communities Project run through the NSCF. The project aims to support other community gardens and schools around Brisbane. With Dick's knowledge the garden designs may include native food plants.

For someone who leads such a busy life, the QBA would like to thank Dick again for his contribution as Secretary.



THE *BUSHFOOD BULLETIN*

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Queensland Bushfood Association (unincorporated) "QBA" Application Form

Your Name/s
.....

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Contact by: email post

Enclosed is \$20 cheque/money order for the member type:
 individual family
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Make my contact details available to QBA members:
 yes no

Add my website (email if no web) to "Member Links" on the QBA website:
 yes no

I agree to abide by the rules of the Association, as outlined in its Constitution.

Signed8
.....

Date

Mail to: Lynne Paterson
 Secretary QBA
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specialising in native foods such as finger lime. Jenni and Rob Weekes are the owners and caretakers of Weewalk Bushfoods. There are up to 45 organically grown varieties of Australian Native Bushfoods. Inquire about informative workshops held at the historic property on the slopes of Mt Walker

Eats at Eumundi

Renowned restaurant located in the heart of historic Eumundi

Innovative menu featuring native foods. Current menu includes semi-dried tomato polenta cake with sandpaper fig compote and lemon myrtle sour cream

Deli section includes local products and native foods. Owner Wendy Birrell is a QBA member

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