Supporting cultural and contemporary burning practices for healthy communities and healthy landscapes

firesticks

winba = fire

Fire and Seasons Calendar Wattleridge Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)

JANUARY

WUROPE = KOALA MALE / MOLE = RAIN

Fruits of the **native raspberry** are a delicious snack. Insect populations explode and eucalypts are flowering, with many animals feeding. Many wildflowers are blooming. **Koalas** are breeding. Summer migratory birds visit, including the striated pardalote, **sacred kingfisher**, rufous whistler, satin flycatcher and grey fantail. **Bracken fern** roots were processed and eaten as a staple food, young leaves were rubbed onto skin to relieve insect bites. Bracken fern is abundant after fire.

DECEMBER

KWEZHO / GUGINBIL = WATER

Ladies' tresses, buttercup, fairy aprons, crinkle bush, blue bell, native violet, **vanilla lily**, native geranium, **fringed lily**, creamy candles, glycine pea and forest goodenia are flowering. Lance beardheath, spiny-headed mat-rush and blackberry are fruiting. The roots of the vanilla lily were eaten raw or roasted. Geranium, glycine pea and fringed lily roots were cooked and eaten. Lance beardheath fruits were eaten. The **native potato** is flowering. The roots of this orchid were roasted and eaten in some parts of Australia. Aboriginal people could find the tubers by digging down where they noticed bandicoots had been scratching. Mistletoes on New England manna gums are flowering, attracting eastern spinebills and New Holland honeyeaters.

NOVEMBER

BURE, WEHANA = EEL, TUK = FROG

Pink kunzea, lemon dovefall, common buttercup, yellow buttons, native geranium, slender stackhousia, slender teatree, bell fruited mallee and other plants are flowering. The black grevillea and **spiny-headed mat-rush** are seeding. Mat-rush leaves were used to weave baskets and eel traps. Tea tree was used as an antiseptic and broom. Diurua orchid tubers (like lemon dovefall) were an important food resource in south eastern Australia, in some areas they were 'everyday' vegetables for Aboriginal people. **New England tree frogs**, common eastern froglets, spotted grass frogs, striped marsh frogs, Peron's tree frogs and eastern banjo frogs are calling and breeding. Snow gums are flowering, attracting honeyeaters. A lot of bats are around, catching insects, including the threatened **eastern false pipistrelle**. Magpies are teaching their young.

OCTOBER

KUME = SLEEPY LIZARD, GUNIRUL = FRILLNECKED LIZARD

Geebung are fruiting. Black grevillea, native clematis, lemon dovefall, false sarsaparilla, leafy purple flag, wait-a-while vine, native violet, dusky fingers, Australian indigo, beard heath, grass tree and other plants are flowering. **Native clematis** leaves were crushed and infused to cure headache or cold. **Australian indigo** roots can be used to stun fish in waterholes. False sarsaparilla stems were used as rope or string for baskets. **Grass trees** were important for food and tools. The flower stalks were used as a base for fire drills and dry material used as tinder to make fire. Black grevillea is a threatened species found only around the Wattleridge region. Whistling tree frogs and eastern sign-bearing frogs are breeding. **Eastern water dragons** are active around Lizard Gully. Bowerbirds are active near the homestead.

SEPTEMBER

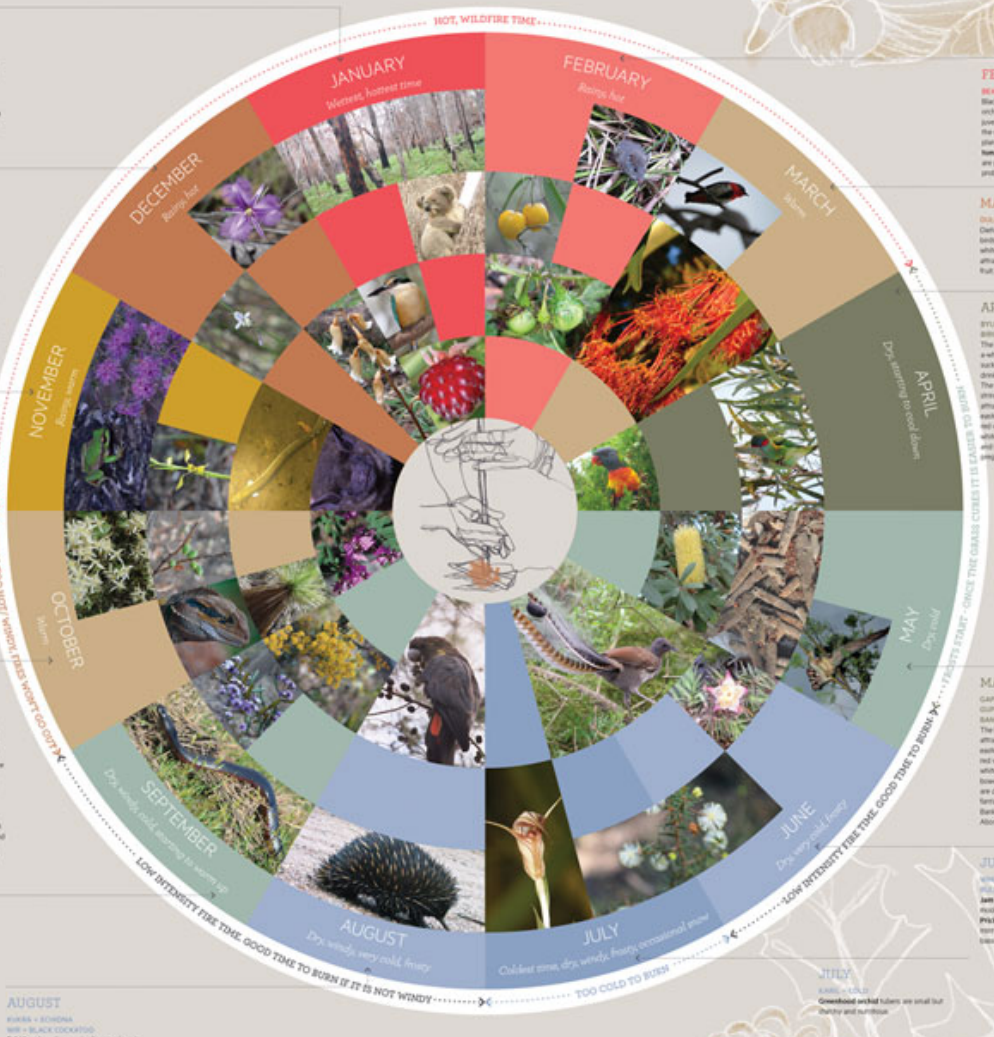
TOOLS: ILEMEN = WOODEN SHIELD
GANAY = DIGGING STICK, KUNNA = YAMSTICK, PIKORA = SPEAR, TUA = BOOMERANG, HAWKUAK = STONE AXE

Bridal veil orchid is one of the first plants to flower as weather starts to warm up. The beautiful purple flowers of the **hovea** shrub welcome warmer weather to the bush. Snakes are becoming active, including highland copperheads and **red-bellied black snakes**. Many **waffles** are flowering prolifically. Waffles were often indicator species which were used to let people know when to use fire, move camp or access resources. Waffles have many uses (including gum, seeds (ground or eaten green), timber, bark, 'apples', grubs/insects, tools, flowers and medicine.

AUGUST

KURRA = ECHIDNA
WIR = BLACK COCKATOO

Echidnas breeding: males forming lines to follow a female. Traditionally echidnas were eaten. This culturally significant species features in rock art at Wattleridge. Day length is increasing which stimulates animals such as antechinus to start mating. Young black cockatoos can be heard begging food from tree hollows. **Glossy black cockatoos** are a threatened species with key habitat found at Wattleridge. She-oak cones are an important food source for them. Magpies swooping.



FEBRUARY

BEKWEYU = EAT, PHATNE = FOOD

Blackthorn, ladies' tresses and greenhood orchids are flowering. **Native bush rat** juveniles are active. **Wombat berries** are eaten, the roots are sweet tasting when raw, this plant is also used for medicine. Some **bush tomato (solanum)** fruits were eaten, some are poisonous: the local solanum fruits are probably poisonous.

MARCH

DULE = TREE

Diehard stringybarks are flowering, attracting birds such as New Holland honeyeaters and white-naped honeyeaters. **Mistletoe** is fruiting, attracting **mistletoebirds**. People are mistletoe fruit, colloquially known as snotty gobbles.

APRIL

BYURNGARRAN = MUSK LORIKEET, BIRGIS = RAINBOW LORIKEET

The hairpin banksia is flowering and wait-a-while vine fruiting. Banksia nectar can be sucked or dipped in water to make a sweet drink, the banksia cone was used as a comb. The wait-a-while vine was used for rope or string. Broad-leaved stringybarks are flowering, attracting **rainbow lorikeets, musk lorikeets**, eastern spinebills, yellow-faced honeyeaters, red wattlebirds, New Holland honeyeaters, white-naped honeyeaters, noisy friarbirds and silvereyes. Native bush rat females are pregnant.

MAY

GAPI / KUPOAR / KURAKE / GUPE / GURAKAK = POSSUM, BANGOO = SUGAR GLIDER

The **honeysuckle banksia** is flowering, attracting rainbow and musk lorikeets, eastern spinebills, yellow-faced honeyeaters, red wattlebirds, New Holland honeyeaters, white-naped honeyeaters, silvereyes, satin bowerbirds & **sugar gliders**. Bird species are dispersing after breeding, including the farmalied cuckoo, flame robin and silvereye. Banksia cones were used as **firesticks** to assist Aboriginal people to carry fire across country.

JUNE

WINGA = FIRE, N.IAKO = STRIPE FIRE, PUEA / YAKOLE

Jam tarts may be known traditionally as nuuldrum with small edible fruits and nectar. **Prickly moses**, jam tarts, greenhood orchid & mint bush are flowering. **Superb lyrebirds** and silaoran thrushes are breeding.

JULY

KARRI = COLD

Greenhood orchid tubers are small but thatchy and nutritious.

BANBAI ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Thaldaru ana durunuan ngala nuen ngenda dunga ngurabirri

The members of the Banbai Nation would like to welcome you to learn about our country. This land was walked upon, played upon & hunted upon by our ancestors. As an act of remembrance, honor and loyalty to our ancestors, we ask that you take a moment to remember them.

Our vision for our country is that it is self-sustaining for future generations where our children learn cultural values (such as bush tucker and traditional practices) and understand what healthy country means. Our country is a meeting place for family and community gatherings where knowledge is shared and what we see now, generations will see in the future. Healthy country, healthy people and healthy waterways will make our country self-sustaining.

BANBAI LANGUAGE

The Aboriginal language words included in the calendar are the language of the Banbai nation, of northern NSW.

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This draft Calendar is a work in progress and will be updated.
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