

# RIG News #8 - August 2010



News from the Remote Indigenous Gardens Network – [www.remoteindigenousgardens.net](http://www.remoteindigenousgardens.net)

Welcome to our new look newsletter. In RIG News #7 we shared news from AMSANT about their fresh food summit and about some strategic research and policy developments that impact on food production in the Top End. This month, in the heart of the dry season, we thought it would be good to hear directly from projects on the ground – where better to look than at some of the great projects underway in Western Australia and we are very pleased that Kim Courtenay is helping us to kick off our new regular guest writers column. Please send us feedback and ideas about what you'd like to see or place in future newsletters.

## Feature writer – Kim Courtenay Nurturing Nutrition

Despite all the fad diets, potions and pills that claim to keep us healthy, it's funny how modern research keeps reaffirming you can't beat natural food for enduring vitality.

Good old fashioned fruit and vegetables, with no better way to enjoy them than straight off the vines and bushes during a stroll through a chemical free, organic garden.

On a crisp Dry season morning nothing tastes better, or is better for you than a sprig of broccoli snapped straight of the plant, a handful of tender young peas and beans or some vine ripened cherry tomatoes.

What a gift to be living in the North at this time of the year and have the satisfaction of nurturing all that nutrition in your own garden where it's on tap right at your finger tips.

But as well as all the conventional fruits, vegetables and herbs that thrive during these sun-drenched days, wild foods from the Kimberley continue to emerge as every bit worthy of their place in 'health food' gardens.

Broome's local 'wonder fruit', gubinge (*Terminalia ferdinandiana*) is a great example and it seems the

more this sweet/sour, cherry sized fruit is analyzed by scientists the more astonished they are by its nutritional value.

Dr Izabela Konczak, Senior Research Scientist with the CSIRO Food and Nutritional Sciences Department in Sydney has been studying the nutritional properties of Australian bush foods for the last five years.

She said gubinge (also known as Kakadu plum) has kept coming out on top after analysis for nutritional compounds and properties. "We are absolutely excited about it," she said.

Reports published by Dr Konczak and others have concluded that gubinge is the richest known source of antioxidant compounds as well as containing an exceptionally rich mixture of vitamins and minerals. The reports suggest gubinge has "potential significant health properties" and envisage its use in the development of "functional foods and nutraceuticals".

When analyzed for vitamin C the results confirmed previous reports that gubinge contains the highest levels of any known fruit in the world. One of Dr Konczak's articles states, "The level of vitamin C in

Kakadu plum is slightly higher than that reported for acerola (*Malpighia emarginata* DC), a wild plant from Central America known as one of the richest and most important food sources of vitamin C.”

Dr Konczak said everything is pointing towards an emerging industry but it will rely on a consistent supply of fruit, adding that cultivation is the logical way forward. But interestingly she said when growing gubinge it will be important to determine the differences in nutritional value between plants grown under different conditions.

Dr Konczak said in her experience fruit produced in conventional plantations where trees are given extra water and fertilizer can have less nutritional value than fruit from trees grown in a more natural situation.

For this reason she was highly supportive of the ‘enrichment planting’ gubinge trials currently being undertaken in Broome where trees are being established within areas of bush to preserve natural biodiversity.

*Kim works with Broome TAFE and has worked in the Top End for over 25 years providing horticultural training. Many of you may know him for his innovative enrichment planting work with gubinge.*

*This article recently appeared in the Broome Advertiser – for whom Kim writes a regular column. Further tips and advice from Kim are available on the RIG website under Useful Resources.*



*A thriving fruit & veggie garden, Broome.*

*Article and images kindly provided by Kim Courtenay.*

## News from Clair Medhurst

### EON Foundation Inc Edible Gardens

#### Great new gardening resources from EON

Visit the EON foundation’s recently updated website to access additional fact sheets to support edible gardeners with technical information and garden advice. Plus the interactive Bardi Food Wheel is now live and provides a season by season guide for planting vegetables, fruit and bush tucker as well as the types of pests that need to be managed.

#### Other news about EON Foundation Inc Gardens

Half way through 2010 and EON Foundation’s constant presence in the remote Kimberley indigenous communities in which it has partnerships continues. EON directors and horticultural consultant Sabrina Hahn, have made several visits to communities and our Kimberley project manager Chris Cassidy visits each community each fortnight. This high level of “turning up” and staying in communities ensures we continue to build our relationships and partnerships while proactively identifying opportunities to expand and improve the way we operate.

With agreement, planning and infrastructure delivery to the new EON Edible Gardens at Kadjina and Wangkatjungka schools are underway, we’re now the

proud parents of seven school gardens in the Kimberley. They include:

*Dampier Peninsular:* Djarindjin/Lombadina, Beagle Bay, One Arm Point  
*Fitzroy Valley:* Looma, Nookanbah, Kadjina, Wangkatjungka.

Plans for further expansion are being developed, and EON will continue its strategy of geographic “clustering” of operations for maximum efficiency.

Full infrastructure is now in place at Djarindjin Lombadina with extensions made at One Arm Point. A full vegetable garden and shade house are in place at Looma and is incorporated into the daily school curriculum. At Nookanbah several vegetable beds and a shade house have been built and are in use. The highlight of the year has been the site clearance at Kadjina and the establishment of some beds. This was due to a huge effort and great deal of enthusiasm of community members.

Grasshopper plagues, a dry “wet”, a wet “dry”, powerful winds and boggy roads provide plenty of

humour and challenges for the EON team and partners.

In support of the gardens a garden manual has been prepared with the content finalised and proof reviewed for printing. It is anticipated that the manual will be available to all schools in Term 3 and will assist the children in preparing and maintaining their gardens.

There is continuing mutual support and a strong relationship between EON and Unity of First People of Australia delivering nutrition and cooking classes to our remote communities in the fight against Type II Diabetes.



*Inspecting new growth at Noonkanbah.*



*Preparing the bed at Looma.*

The EON focus will remain on ensuring the sustainability of the gardens and the incorporation of the learnings into the wider community to enable the generation of healthy communities. EON will continue to look for opportunities to further embed the principles of healthy communities and good nutrition in partnership with local elders and community members.

*Information and images kindly provided by Clair Medhurst.*

## Leaping Lizards Program, Pilbara Health Network Onslow Community Garden Launch July 3/4th 2010

The Onslow Community Garden in Western Australia is a key community led health initiative that has been growing for some time. They recently held a weekend long celebration to launch their garden and associated programs that are run in conjunction with it. The garden started as a school garden and has grown to become a major feature in the town centre – incorporating bush plants, an Elders led bush plants nursery, and a food and ornamental garden park adjacent to the school food garden that local residents regularly visit to enjoy and hold community meetings.

*Marcelle Coakley, Leaping Lizards Coordinator Onslow, provides a snapshot of the celebrations:*

“We launched our community garden literally with a bang on Saturday the 3rd by having a huge festival that ran over 2 days.

The festival showcased everything that will be the essence of our garden - we had local music, celebrity chef's Peter Manifis and Don Hancey cooking up a variety of foods like Exmouth Wagyu beef and Dorper Lamb, to local squid and prawns with all the fresh salad and herbs from the garden. The kids got to paint and decorate their own arty umbrellas and we had a workshop with Josh Byrne the Environmental Scientist and ABC Gardening presenter. Michael Leslie, the acclaimed indigenous dancer, choreographed a fantastic dance piece with the middle school students and an amazing display of fireworks and the Australian 'Kylie Show' was held to entertain guests in the evening.

A wonderful way to bring the community together in what will now be an annual event on our calendar - the 'Passion of the Pilbara Festival' ”.

## Onslow Community Garden Launch

The following photo's (impossible to choose just one....) from the weekend of celebration are reproduced with kind permission of Marcelle Coakley and the Onslow community.



## News from Charlotte McCabe

### Shepherdson College School Garden, Galiwin'ku, North East Arnhem Land.

Our school garden started after an attempt at compiling an application for the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden grant. We realised in the end we weren't going to be able to fulfil all the criteria, but the process of applying sparked a lot of interest at the school, and I was fortunate to be given the role of a science/garden teacher the following year.

Initially, while there was no garden to teach in, the students did science lessons with me, and I spent the first term working out budgets and designs. For the second term students spent most of their garden classes building garden beds and making seedling pots by rolling newspaper around empty tins. Although it was a slow process, I felt it was important that students felt ownership over the garden and that they learnt how to make a garden from scratch. I have tried as much as possible to keep all the gardening techniques simple so that they can be repeated easily by students at home, although sometimes we have found it necessary to cheat by ordering things from Darwin that are not available in the community shop, just to speed things up a little!

The biggest problem we have with gardening is the scarcity of black soil. We needed to build all our own soil from scratch, otherwise planting into red sandy soils would mean constant leaching of nutrients. Building a hot compost is very difficult as there is no domesticated livestock, which means no poo, and in the dry season there is very little green material to use. Nevertheless, we attempted to make no-dig-beds with leaves that had been raked up around our school and chicken pellet poo and kept it well watered. By the time our seedlings had come up, these beds had broken down just enough to plant into. We now have a green manure crop (lab lab beans) in one of the beds that we plan to rotate around the garden in order to assist with improving the soil. We also have an operating worm farm which will be vital for liquid fertiliser and castings.

Initially we have planted fairly safe options of jap pumpkin, watermelon, zebra beans, cherry tomatoes, cassava and okra. Students have really enjoyed their garden classes, and we found there was a lot to learn about not walking on garden beds, planting seedlings very gently, being safe with garden tools and working together. It's great to be able to get out of the classroom and use English in a 'learning by doing' environment.

There is a lot of interest in the garden with our Yolngu staff and in the broader community. People have fond memories of mission gardens and growing their own things at home. We are hoping to encourage community involvement through working bees, workshops and eventually harvesting events.

The next stage of garden development will be the Yolngu bush food and medicine area. We want to make sure that our students are given a balanced message about healthy ways of living and eating both Yolngu way and Balanda way. Six months into the project it is a small beginning, but it feels like a good foundation and the process is as important as the end result.

## Susan Dow, Centre for Appropriate Technology, Alice Springs

### Social Enterprise - emerging opportunities in remote Australia

#### Introduction and acknowledgement

*Local food production such as market gardens, food services, and possible value adding activities in communities all need an organisational plan and structure appropriate for their context. Work being done by the Desert People's Centre, Alice Springs, is looking at ways to help build sustainable social enterprises in remote areas. The following piece is drawn from an article written by Susan Dow, the Centre for Appropriate Technology for their publication Our Place Magazine Number 37. We acknowledge and thank them for permission to reproduce this material.*

### Growing the Social Enterprise Sector in Desert Australia – An initiative of the Desert Peoples Centre.

The Desert Peoples Centre (DPC), Alice Springs, is partnering with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) to explore ways of growing the social enterprise sector in Desert Australia to provide a pathway for Aboriginal people into mainstream employment.

The Desert Peoples Centre is currently undertaking business planning to support the development of a Social Enterprise Hub. The Hub would broker a range of business and human resource support services for prospective social enterprises to ensure they can achieve both their social and financial objectives. The DPC is also looking at avenues for social enterprise to access start-up and capital grants or loans.

Over the next few years the DPC together with other partners will be working to increase its understanding of the contribution that social enterprise can make to reducing Indigenous employment disadvantage through setting up and supporting social enterprise in the centre and by documenting local experience and lessons.

### **What is social enterprise?**

A social enterprise is a business that trades to fulfil a social mission. Social enterprises have explicit social aims and socially inclusive values but also a commercial orientation so that profits can be created and used for community benefit. Social enterprises are businesses with a double or triple bottom line. They must deliver: financial outcomes, social outcomes, environmental outcomes. Social enterprises have been called the fourth sector or for-benefit sector to distinguish it from (1) the public sector or government, (2) the private sector, and (3) the charity, non-government and not for profit sectors.

### **Why social enterprise?**

There are three principal motivations for developing a social enterprise:

- Income generation
- Service delivery – to create or retain services needed in communities
- Employment and engagement of marginalized groups – often regarded as a principal motivation for social enterprise. One type of social enterprise that has employment outcomes as its social purpose is an Intermediate Labour Market Model.

### **Intermediate Labour Market social enterprises**

An Intermediate Labour Enterprise employs long-term unemployed people for a fixed period of time in a real business with real wages and expectations of productivity and then supports them to move into mainstream employment. The objective of an ILM enterprise is to provide short to medium term employment in a 'real' work environment as well as providing skills development support to help employees transition into mainstream employment.

### **Social Enterprise in remote contexts**

Social enterprise in remote communities is not new. Many Aboriginal corporations have set up enterprises explicitly to achieve social rather than financial goals – income for charitable purposes, service delivery or employment – but do not necessarily identify

themselves as social enterprises. However the sustainability of a social enterprise to achieve its goals depends on financial viability. In remote locations with small and dispersed local markets, where the local economy is dominated by a government service provision and skilled personnel are difficult to obtain and retain, financial viability is not easy to achieve.

### **Opportunities and challenges**

Policy reforms affecting remote communities has changed the rules for success for many Indigenous corporations. For example, in the Northern Territory the Intervention, local government reforms, CDEP reform, a move from community controlled housing to public housing and NT Growth Towns policy all since June 2007 have reduced the role of local community organizations and called into question the viability of businesses based on CDEP employment. However this new policy environment provides both opportunities and challenges for the development and growth of social enterprises. There are opportunities for social enterprises to secure procurement contracts from government (local or State/Territory) to ensure financial viability necessary to pursue employment related growth goals.

### **Conclusions**

Successful social enterprises are increasingly being evaluated and the lessons learnt documented. Social enterprise in remote Australia which draws on successful experiences of social enterprises elsewhere in Australia as well as an understanding of the specific context of remote Australia can deliver social benefits to Indigenous people, particularly employment outcomes, through a business that is financially viable.

Additional information can be found at: Social Traders [www.socialtraders.com.au](http://www.socialtraders.com.au), Brotherhood of St Laurence [www.bsi.org.au](http://www.bsi.org.au), The Aspen Institute [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).

*Acknowledgements:*

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# General News & Coming Events

## Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) and RIG Network

RIG is a keen supporter of ICV – support that runs both ways! We're delighted to welcome ICV Volunteer Ian Hudson to the RIG Network team. Ian possesses a wealth of experience in project management and marketing and will provide strategic support to a number of our key projects.

## Food Security

Last month an [ABC Online investigation](#) revealed there are concerns over whether there needs to be more regulation of foreign ownership of farms, as other countries are increasingly looking to Australia to buy up productive agricultural land. The [Greens are in favour](#) of a national food plan, while the [Coalition is in favour of more monitoring of foreign purchases](#), but does not want a register. Labor will develop a national food plan if re-elected to government, Agriculture Minister Tony Burke has announced. Mr Burke says the national food plan would investigate food security, quality and affordability. "This is a first for Australia and will integrate all aspects of food policy by looking at the whole food chain, from the paddock to the plate...Even though we export 60 per cent of what we grow, we need to ensure that our country's food security is protected in the years to come".

## Health Promotion

The *Local Community Campaigns to Promote Better Health* Social Marketing Program, is a measure under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing has released and opened request for tender for a communications consultant to support the development, implementation and management of these campaigns. The details of this tender are available on the AusTender website, as well as on the Department's website.

## Triodia Consultancy - Horticulture and Landscaping Training

Respected Territorian Don Duggan has launched Triodia Consultancy – an NT Aboriginal business that specialises in delivering practical, project based training in remote Aboriginal communities. Don has over 30 years experience in landscaping, horticulture and vegetation management and has been closely involved in Greening Australia's Aboriginal Landcare Education Program (ALEP) and development of the ALEP Learning Guides. For more information see Triodia's brochure on the RIG website (under Useful Resources) or contact Don directly at [don.duggan@triodia.com.au](mailto:don.duggan@triodia.com.au).

## Darwin Permaculture Design Course (PDC) 6th -18th September 2010

This full time two-week (72 hour) intensive course is fully accredited and internationally recognised. The PDC in Darwin will look at all climates, but will be locally based with an emphasis on tropical living, tropical agriculture and gardening and the tropical environment. The course is brought to you by the Lakeside Drive Community Garden and hosted by the Mulch Pit Community Food Garden. Further details and registration forms at [www.cdu.edu.au/ldcg](http://www.cdu.edu.au/ldcg) - registrations by 23rd August 2010. Cost: \$750. Further queries to Lachlan McKenzie via email [growyourown@y7mail.com](mailto:growyourown@y7mail.com) or mobile 0407 168 200.

## Tenth Australasian Permaculture Convergence - Cairns, September 24-27, 2010

The Convergence theme is preparedness for Climate Change and Peak Oil. A great program, including special guest and Gala Dinner Keynote Speaker Daryl Hannah. To learn more – see program and registration details at <http://www.apc10.org/>

**Please forward feedback and suggestions for the next RIG News to [rig@remoteindigenousgardens.net](mailto:rig@remoteindigenousgardens.net) if you would like to be removed from the RIG News email list, please tell us so by emailing us, as above.**

**RIG News is written and produced by Anthea Fawcett for RIG Network.**

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REMOTE INDIGENOUS GARDENS NETWORK – RIG NETWORK – [www.remoteindigenousgardens.net](http://www.remoteindigenousgardens.net)

**WHAT?** RIG Network is a national information sharing, networking and research initiative, established in 2009 with support from the Commonwealth Enterprise Connect program. We aim to connect people who have an interest in local food production projects and enterprises and the benefits they offer to people to build more resilient remote communities.

**WHY?** food security, more affordable & accessible fresh food – health & nutrition - sustainable livelihoods, better resource use & lower food miles — 'fusion' gardens, bush foods, fruit & veg & other food production – enterprise development & employment - life skills & skills for employment – caring for culture & country, capacity building & cultural respect .

**HOW?** strategic & practical projects – useful information & resources, case studies, contacts - new cross-sectoral conversations & partnerships – industry & community linkages - better practice - advocacy, applied research & outreach.