

Artwork by Thomas Day

Gunditj Mirring Partnership Project

Cultural Features of the Budj Bim Landscape Wattles

The Budj Bim Landscape extends from Mount Eccles National Park East of Heywood and along the associated lava flows to the coast. This is Gunditjmara country, the traditional lands of the Gunditjmara Nation. Cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge is very important throughout the region.

The Gunditjmara people have maintained their connection to country since European settlement. A native title claim was granted in 2007. Gunditjmara people manage ten properties in the Budj Bim area and have an integral role in managing the landscape.

The Gunditj Mirring Partnership Project has compiled examples of cultural heritage and indigenous ecological knowledge into fact sheets to share with the Gunditjmara community and the broader community. A Field Guide to Cultural Features of the Budj Bim Landscape is also available from

Gunditj Mirring
offices in Heywood and
Glenelg Hopkins CMA offices
in Hamilton.

There are many wattles (*Acacia* sp.) in Gunditjmara country. *Acacia* plants are distinguished by having phyllodes rather than true leaves. The petiole or leaf stalk become elongated and flattened thus having the same function of a leaf. Many *acacias* worldwide are thorny whereas most species in Australia are not, although many are prickly.

Wattle in bloom

Wattle Seed Pods

Another Photo

The Gunditjmara people used wattles extensively. Wattle gum can be used as a glue or binding agent. Gum could be used in the construction of axes and spears. The gum was used to affix stone points to spears which were wound with kangaroo tendon. This securely fixed the point for hunting. A similar method was used for axes.

Wattle bark can be peeled from a tree and used as a tray for carrying. This was known as a coolamon to the Gunditjmara. A skilled craftsman could fold wattle bark and seal it in such a way that water could be carried.

When the tree is old and decaying, it may be a source of grubs for eating. A family coming across a decaying tree could feast on grubs and feel very well fed. Grubs are

high in protein and were a popular source of food.

Wattle seed was also ground to a flour and used to make damper. The Gunditjmara people knew their country well and utilised many sources for food.

There are over 900 species of Acacia in Australia. They occupy nearly all landscapes and have many different growth patterns. In Southwestern Victoria, Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Golden Wattle (*A. pycnantha*) are amongst the most common species.



Wattle Seed

Contact for more Information

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