



# FORESTS AS MEDICINE

Perspectives on the Potential of Using Australian Plants and Forests for Human Health

# KERRY WAILES

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor of Forest Science (Uni of Melbourne) 1988
- Yoga Teachers Diploma (Sarasvati Yoga Society) 2003
- Cert IV Massage Therapy (Southern School of Natural Therapies) 2009
- Certificate of Clinical Aromatherapy (ISHA) 2015
- Permaculture Design Certificate (Pete the Permie) 2016
- Emotional Freedom Technique (Tapping) Practitioner & Course Facilitator (inspired EFT) 2017





# PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

- **Natural Resources 1982 – 1996**
  - Toolangi: Project work - Protecting Leadbeaters Possum habitat in Eucalyptus regnans logging coupes
  - Heyfield: Bushfire Mobile Support Crew member (first female MSC member in Victoria)
  - Noojee: Silvicultural Systems Project research
    - Tree seed collection contractor
  - Hamilton: Tree Victoria Project Officer – promoting trees on farms
  - City of Whittlesea Conservation Officer
- **Kerry Wailes Yoga & Massage (Own Business) 1996 - Present**
  - *Natural Health Practitioner: Yoga Teacher, Massage Therapist, Clinical Aromatherapist and Inspired EFT Practitioner and Course Facilitator. Working in Kinglake, Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek, Whittlesea and Flowerdale, Victoria*





WHAT WAS IT THAT FIRST ATTRACTED  
YOU TO A FOREST?



MY MAGIC  
PLACE  
MYERS CREEK ROAD,  
TOOLANGI





## MOUNTAIN ASH SEED



- Tallest Mountain Ash currently:
  - 'Centurion' Tassie Arve Valley 2024  
*Eucalyptus regnans* (Mountain Ash)
  - Around 100m tall
- Tallest known Mountain Ash:
  - Thorpdale Gippsland, Vic 1880 E.  
*regnans*
  - Measured at 114.5m (cut down!)
- Tallest tree in the world currently:
  - 'Hyperion' *Sequoia sempervirens*  
(Californian Redwood)
  - Around 116m



WHAT IS AN ESSENTIAL OIL?





# TEA TREE (Melaleuca alternifolia) ESSENTIAL OIL

- **Therapeutic actions:**
  - antimicrobial, antiseptic, bactericide, cicatrisant (helps with scar formation), expectorant, fungicide, immunostimulant, insecticide, stimulant, sudorific (promotes sweating) Complete Guide to Aromatherapy (Battaglia, 2014)
- **Indications:** (highlight where Kerry has successfully used tea tree oil for this purpose, for herself and/or clients)
  - Acne, onychomycosis, thrush, vaginitis, cystitis, pruritis, glandular fever, infections, asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, coughs, sinusitis, whooping cough, athlete's foot, blisters, burns, cold sores, dandruff, herpes, insect bites, oily skin rashes, verrucae, warts, wounds.  
Davis, P. 1999; Mojay, G. 1996; Lawless, J 1992; Lavabre, M. 1997; Schnaubelt K. 1995
  - Kerry also used it to recover from tropical ulcers while living in West Malaysia, to remove ticks and treat their bites and to treat head lice.
- **Active against Methycillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)** (Warnke et al 2013)



OTHER  
AUSTRALIAN  
PLANT  
ESSENTIAL  
OILS IN  
CURRENT USE

Eucalyptus radiata,  
E. polybractea, E.  
citriodora, E. dives

Melaleuca  
quinquinervia  
(Niouli)

Leptospermum  
petersonii (Lemon-  
scented Tea Tree)

Backhousia  
citriodora (Lemon  
Myrtle)

Santalum spicatum  
(Australian  
Sandalwood)

# AUSTRALIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS

- Lassak & McCarthy 2011
- Hundreds of Australian plants (around 800)
- Uses:
  - *Narcotics*; Sedatives & Anti-spasmodics; Tonics, Vitamin deficiencies & blood purifiers; Emollients; toothache; headache; other *analgesics*, earache; rheumatism, swelling, *inflammation*; coughs and colds; treatment of fever, diaphoretics; Bactericides, *wounds*, sores and ulcers, styptics; Eye diseases, treatment of sore eyes; Skin disease, *scabies*, tinea, ringworm, itches, *leprosy*; stomach disorders, emetics; Diarrhoea, *dysentery*; Laxatives; Diuretics; Anthelmintics; treatment of internal parasites; *snake bite*, insect bites; Marine stings; *Menstrual disorders*; Lactagogues; Contraceptives; Venereal disease; Aphrodisiacs; Plants with industrial potential, including *anti-tumoral*; Misc: asthma, *Tuberculosis*, *rabies*, *cancer*, deafness, *diabetes*, infectious diseases, warts, etc



# FOREST THERAPY (SHINRIN-YOKU)

- Shinrin-yoku translates as ‘Forest Bathing’
- Sensory immersion and mindfulness in the forest
- Development in Japan 1980s
  - Some connected ancient roots





THAT PEOPLE FEEL BETTER IN THE FOREST IS  
JUST 'COMMON SENSE'

QING LI



# FOREST THERAPY BENEFITS

- Increased Natural Killer (NK) cell activity (enhanced immunity)
- Reduction of stress hormones
- Reduction of HBP
- Lowered heart rate
- Reduction in symptoms of anxiety, depression, anger, fatigue, confusion
- Increased vigour
- Improved sleep quality
- Inhalation of terpenes or phytoncides (essential oils)

# Forest Therapy Session with Tony & Kerry Woowookurung Regional Park





# REFERENCES

- Battaglia, Salvatore, 2014. The Complete Guide to Aromatherapy (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed) Pub. ICHA, Brisbane Qld
- Davis, P. Aromatherapy: An A-Z C.W Daniel Co, GB 1999
- Kotte, Dieter; Li, Qing; Shin, Won Sop; Michalsen, Andreas.2021 International Handbook of Forest Therapy , Cambridge Scholars Pub.
- Lassak, E.V. & McCarthy T. 2011. Australian Medicinal Plants 2011 Reed New Holland, Sydney
- Lawless, J The Encyclopedia of Essential Oils. Element Books Ltd, GB 1992
- Lavabre, M. Aromatherapy Workbook. Healing Art Press, USA, 1997
- Mojay, G. Aromatherapy for Healing the Spirit. Hodder and Stoughton, UK 1996
- Schnaubelt K. Advanced Aromatherapy. Healing Art Press, Canada, 1995
- Warnke, Lott, Sherry, Wiltfang & Podschun 2013. Plant-derived Essential Oils May Represent a Promising and Affordable Topical Agent to Support Surgical Treatment Against Multi-resistant and Hospital-acquired Infections Dept of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. (In: <https://greenmedinfo.com>)