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Bush medicine workshop causes a stir

Using WA's wondrous variety of native plants for wellbeing and treating ailments has long been the norm for Aboriginal Noongars. Some of this vast and interesting knowledge was passed on to the community by Viv Hansen who presented to a packed out workshop in Guilderton on Friday 10th March. Viv, a Noongar women of the Balladong and Wadjuk people has always had an interest in traditional medicinal uses of the bush and recently received a formal qualification in Bush and Western Herbal Medicine in 2008. Rachel Walmsley, Moore Catchment Council's Community Landcare Coordinator who organised the workshop said "The interest in this workshop was overwhelming and I had to turn away at least a dozen people as we just didn't have room. When I phoned Viv to tell her the numbers, she was flabbergasted that there was so much interest. Around 70 people attended ranging from local community to travellers from Perth, various suburbs, Mundaring and even overseas visitors. Amazing turnout !"

Viv started the day by running through a few native plants and their uses. Samples from plants such as Oldman Saltbush and Balga (Grass tree) gum were shared around to see, touch and taste. Then the hands-on session started with the furious chopping of Eucalyptus and Melaleuca leaves for the balm which involved boiling up the leaves in olive oil and then adding beeswax and cooling. The balm can be used as a general moisturiser and for tired muscles. Rachel said "Next the group made herbal pot-pourri using various plants which can help respiratory and sleep issues. Viv also enlisted an army of stirrers to make the Eucalyptus and native lemon grass cream which involved plants steeped in water, then combined with wax and glycerine, and stirred furiously until cooled."

Viv has recently co-published a bush medicine book 'Noongar Bush Medicine: Medicinal Plants of the South-west of Western Australia' which she had for sale. Further copies are available from <https://uwap.uwa.edu.au/products/noongar-bush-medicine-medicinal-plants-of-the-south-west-of-western-australia>

The day came to an end and people left armed with a new appreciation of the WA bush and samples of the creations. Rachel said "Many thanks to everyone who came along and gave great feedback, to the Guilderton Country Club for their venue and catering, to Viv and Moort Hansen for their knowledge, and to the State Natural Resource Management Program and Royalties for Regions, and the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council and National Landcare Program for their funding which made this day happen. Apologies to anyone who missed out but we plan to run another one next year. Watch this space !"



Huge crowd came to listen to Viv



Local Noongar knowledge shared thanks to the Hansens & Shaws

Finalist in the 2014 CSBP Environmental Awards – Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards
Finalist in the 2015 Fairfax Media Community Group Award Finalists – Western Australian Landcare Awards
Finalist in the 2015 LandCorp Sustainability Award - Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards
Semi-Finalist in the 2016 LandCorp Sustainability Award - Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards

The Moore Catchment Council promotes Natural Resource Management in the Moore River Catchment

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