BUSH TUCKER SURVIVAL GUIDE

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Shelter

Start looking for a shelter site at least 2 hours before sunset.

Two most important factors are material to make the shelter and must be large enough and flat enough to lie down.

Also consider if site is safe from rock falls, large overhanging tree limbs that may fall, free of ant nests etc. Along creeks and rivers avoid a campsite that is below high water marks in wet season in case of flash flood.

Building a bed off the ground can save you from coming in contact with mites that bite and cause serous itching. They live just under the soil and under leaf litter. To build, look for four trees clustered in a rectangle, or cut 4 poles and drive them firmly in the ground in a rectangle. Should be far enough apart and strong enough for your height and weight.

Cut two poles long enough to span the width of rectangle. They must be strong enough to support your weight. Secure these two poles to the trees (or stakes). Cut poles long enough to span the width and secure them to the long poles.

Look for natural shelters – caves, rocky crevices with overhangs, large partly suspended dead fallen trees etc.

Check for snakes and stinging insects such as ants and wasps before setting up camp.

Introduction

Most of my life has been a quest for freedom. From my perspective to be free is to be self-sufficient in terms of food, shelter and clothing. In other words having the knowledge to provide for oneself (in the natural jungle, not the cement one). This is what this booklet is about.

To be free in the spiritual world is to live in the moment with no fear, with unconditional love, and with compassion for all. Living in harmony with nature, in the spirit of love, equals freedom.

What I discovered on my quest was that I really enjoyed chopping wood and carrying water – in fact every aspect of natural living. These days people pay other people to live their life for them: build their house, make their clothes, grow their food. Even their creative, adventure and spiritual needs are catered for. If one wants to go on an adventure he or she goes to the nearest video shop. Spiritual needs are met by blindly following doctrines, which seems to lead them to conflict, at war with the others. Creative needs are fulfilled singing in the shower and choosing which colour eye shadow to wear.

I think these people are missing out on a lot of joy and self-empowerment, but then I'm a simple man who finds joy in washing my clothes, by hand, and getting ecstatic when I discover a new swimming hole. I dream of walking softly on the earth, in harmony with nature, tribally in the spirit of love.

My hope with this booklet is to inspire people to touch the earth and realise the joys of nature and their human experience with her.

Knowing is knowledge gained by experience.

Chapter 3. Basic Needs: Water, Fire and Shelter

Water

Water is life. It is essential to know how to find water when surviving in the bush.

If you need to find water remember its nature: how it behaves. Look for it in the lowest points in the landscape- the bottom of hills, cliffs, and gullies. Water sometime runs underground for part of a river or streams length. Follow it downstream. Seasonal creeks can hold water just under the surface for months after the surface water has dried up. Follow down stream always looking for lush vegetation, especially on outside bends. Do not waste energy digging unless there is lush vegetation near where you are going to dig. Herb-eating animals like wallabies need to drink water throughout the day. Follow their well-worn tracks down hill to the water source. Birds that fly low at sunset are probably heading for water. Ant trails going up a tree can indicate water. Hiding in a parasite plant or some hollow cavity mob up the dew from grass with cotton clothing. Wring out in container. One can collect a fair bit of water this way.

Fire

Clear the area you are going to build the fire of twigs, leaves etc at least 1 metre in diameter (to prevent fire from spreading). If you are building a fire to keep warm as well as cook on, build a reflector wall of rocks or logs to direct heat back to you, also helps keep sparks from flying outside your cleared area.

Gotu Cola –well known herb around the world. Very common in all habitats. Whole plant is edible.To identify, PULL leaf, with stem connected, away from the rest of plant. If it fans out at the base of the stem it is Gotu Kola.

Acacias (Wattles) – occur throughout Australia. The green seed, mature seed pods, and gum is edible.

The green pods were roasted and the seeds inside were eaten by many Aboriginal communities.

The mature seeds can be gathered, ground between rocks and moistened to make a damper. According to USA army survival guide, all of the acacia family are edible.

The sap (or gum) is plucked from the tree and sucked on like a lolly, dissolving in the mouth.

- Large leaf Lilies are extremely toxic.
- Be wary of large seeds, they nearly all have toxins to keep rats from eating them.
- All species of grass are edible (the whole plant).
- All hibiscus family is edible and high in silica, whole plant. If flower has layers of petals, hybrid, don't eat.
- All fresh water plants with a stem and grow with roots in water are edible.
- All lizards, water fish, yabbies and shellfish are edible.
- All palm trees, tree ferns and grass trees have edible heart. The leaves emerge from a woody stem. In the centre near the top lies a store of nutritious food (the undifferentiated tissues from which the leaves are born).
- Most fruits that taste and smell good are edible, except for pandanus and native cashew fruit.
- Bat fruits are more likely to be edible than bird fruits.
- Tubers of all ground orchids are edible.
- All sedges and rushes are edible raw, white base of stem and tubers or swollen roots.
- Animal pollinated flowers, like banksias, grevilleas and tea trees have a lot of nutritious pollen which can be sucked from the blossoms before sunrise.

Native Bullrush – flat long leaves 1-2m high, flowering spike resembles a fluffy cat tail, or some of the old timers reckon it looks like a sausage on the end of a skewer. The immature green flower stalk can be steamed or boiled and eaten like corn on the cob.

The mature brown flower stalk can be pulled apart and mixed into a damper made from the swollen base stem which is in the mud (pound the starch out of stem). Mats can be woven from leaves.

Bullrush damper was a main staple of many Aboriginal tribes. Flourishes in sluggish backwater swamps, dams etc.

10. If no reaction, thoroughly chew a tiny bit of plant part, hold in mouth for 15 minutes, do not swallow!

11. If no burning, itching, numbing, stinging or other irritation occurs during the 15 minutes, swallow.

12. Wait 8 hours, if any ill effects occur during this time drink a lot of water and induce vomiting.

13. If no ill effects occur eat half cup of the plant part prepared the same way. Wait 8 hours, if no ill effects occur the plant part as prepared is edible.

Some plants have both edible parts and non-edible parts. Do not assume that a part of the plant that proved edible means all of the plant is edible.

Ferns– all young Fiddle Head leaves at the centre of the plant are edible steamed or boiled.

The heart of all tree ferns is edible raw, but taste nicer steamed or boiled.

Some ferns have round macadamia nut size black or brown tubers. They can be eaten raw or cooked (if bitter raw it can be cooked to remove bitterness).

Ferns are good for thatching a bush shelter or camouflaging your body or camp.

Don't eat Fiddle Heads of ferns every day, they may have a build up toxic effect that prevents the assimilation of vitamins.

All species of grass are edible: leaf, chew and spit out pulp; white leaf base, chew; seed can be chewed and swallowed but not if mouldy, or old looking or black. (Never eat mouldy seeds, can be highly poisonous.)

Survival pack

From my perspective there are many scenarios in the world that could cause a sudden economic collapse, therefore I always have a survival pack ready to grab and go bush with. This is what is in it..

1. Fire kit – two Bic lighters, wooden matches in waterproof container, flint and steel tool available from army disposal shops, dry tinder, bamboo shavings, two candles.

2. Torch with extra batteries. I have a head lamp with LED bulbs and batteries last up to 150 hours.

3. Backpackers hammock. 4. Mosquito net.

5. Lightweight tarp 6.Lightweight sleeping bag.

7. Swiss army knife with a saw blade and scissors.

8. Compass.

9. Wool jumper, leather shirt.

10. Small pack of dried fruit, seeds and nuts and wheat, lentils and Mung bean for sprouting.

11. Water bottle 1 litre kept full. 12. Water purifier ‘backpackers’ style.

13. Tea tree oil, pressure bandage and tweezers.

14. Fishing line and hooks.

15. 10 metres of strong cord.

Chapter 1. Bush Tucker

The following plants are very common in the bush, in home gardens and paddocks. Learn them and you will increase your survival chances ten-fold.

Native Mat Rush (Sedge) – is very common along stream banks, and although much smaller it's found all through the bush and along the seashore.

Easily identified by its long flat leaves about 1cm wide, has a spiky flower stalk, tiny yellowish flowers that produce a bright red seed.

To eat, clump is pulled out from the edge of the main clump, peel the leaves off (which can be woven into a mat or stripped and made into string), eat the white base, tastes like fresh peas. Twenty or more species grow commonly in grasslands, woodlands, forests and along streams. Some have narrow slender leaves, and others broad leaves. All have a slender upright stalk which emerges from the centre of the cluster of leaves and tiny little flowers

You will need 3 kinds of fuel:

1. tinder (dry material that ignites with a spark)

2. kindling is readily combustible material to add to burning tinder to increase temperature of the fire so it will ignite less combustible material.

3. fuel – this would be bigger, harder wood, preferably hard dry logs. The harder the wood the more coals the fire will produce, slower it burns.

The following are several methods of building your fire:

Cone – arrange tinder and kindling in the shape of a cone, place tinder inside the cone and light, as the core burns away the outside fuel will fall into the heart of the fire, this type works well if the wood is damp.

Lean-to – sharpen stick at one end, say 2 foot long 1 inch diameter, push into ground at 30° angle pointing the other end into the wind, place tinder under lean-to stick at the back, lean kindling sticks against it on both sides. Light tinder, as it burns, slowly add more fuel.

Cross-ditch – scratch a cross in earth about 1 foot in size, dig out to about 3 inches deep, put tinder in the middle of cross and build a Cone fire over it.

.***Wandering Jew*** – very common in all habitats, but much lusher around streams and rivers. Has a tiny bright blue flower, short pointed green leaves. The tips are pinched off and eaten raw. Also the flower is edible and nutritious. (Do not eat if the leaf is any colour other than green, it's probably a hybrid and may contain toxins.)

Clover – very common in paddocks but found throughout the bush. All of the plant is edible, although the flower probably has the most nutrition. All clover species are edible.

Palm trees – all have a heart that can be extracted and eaten raw (only in a survival situation because it obviously kills the tree).

Bangalow – when the trunk is 1 to 2m high is the best time to harvest. Cut the foliage off where it meets the woody trunk, and cut again a third of a metre down from there. Peel outer bark layers off to expose white heart which is edible raw although some species are a bit bitter, cooking removes the bitterness, can also chop it up and put it in a net bag in fast running stream for 24 hours.

Snakes

First let's put them in perspective as far as the deaths they cause in Australia. Suicide and cars both average over 2000 deaths a year, snakes- one death.

Next, out of all the 5 species only a very few can harm humans. Most people who are bitten are usually trying to kill or capture the snake. Because the snake needs its venom to eat, it does not give it up easily and may only use it as a last resort. Nine out of ten bites are dry, where no venom is injected.

Leave the snake alone and it will follow suit.

Snakes are deaf but very sensitive to ground vibrations. Carry a stick and thump it on the ground as you move through the bush, snakes will get out of the way.

If you are bitten – don't panic, apply a pressure bandage between bite and heart (not tight) and stay calm.

Bush medicine

Preventive medicine is the best option – don't get sick or hurt in the first place!

Move slowly and surely through the bush, scanning the ground in front, to the sides. Look up and around, be fully aware of your footsteps.

Walk with a stick and thump ground as you walk to get snakes to move out of your path. Don't grab onto plants before checking to see if they have thorns. Learn to identify the stinging tree and stinging nettle.

Native Cordyline – glossy broad green leaves in a bunch at the top of a woody long stem, which can be up to 3m high.

Boil or bake short stout roots at base of plant (only in survival situation). Boil or steam the very young leaves.

Break stem of plant where stem meets the foliage, peel off leaves to reveal a white tender base, eat raw, tastes like fresh garden peas.

Leaves can be used to thatch a shelter, make a rain cape. Strip leaves and make string or rope, wrap food in leaves to roast in fire.

To make string or rope take fresh leaf and hold by stem and pull leaf over coals, or over flame until it becomes very glossy and oily, strip to make string or rope (plaited or twisted).

A few tips..

If the situation is urgent and you don't have time to use the universal edibility test, remember the following information and then apply the test.

- Poisonous plants nearly always warn of their toxicity by tasting bitter or acrid. Human tastebuds are highly developed and can taste most toxins. Some poisons, however (such as in cycads, mushrooms and legumes) cannot be detected, so avoid these if you are not sure how to eat or identify them.
- Place a small piece of the plant you want to test under your arm. Wait 10 minutes, if there is no reaction (like itching, burning, redness or swelling) take another piece and touch your lips, hold there for 3 minutes. If there's no reaction place on tongue, no reaction after 15 minutes chew thoroughly and spit out, don't swallow, no reaction another tiny piece on an empty stomach, chew and swallow, wait 4 hours, no reaction eat up to 1/3 cup of tested part of the plant, wait overnight, no reaction eat 1/2 cup and find other plants you know are edible to supplement.
- Nearly all of the 700 species of legumes are highly poisonous and ones that are edible are hard to distinguish from the toxic ones. So if it looks like the beans in your garden don't assume it's edible.
- Avoid plants that look like carrots.
- All Cycad nuts are poisonous, they taste good raw, even delicious boiled or baked. Remember taste alone does not indicate edibility. Aboriginals knew how to leach out poisons.

Insects and Animals

All termites, earthworms, witchity grubs, march flies, cicadas and stick insects are edible.

All lizards are edible in Australia. All species of the little geckos lose their tail to escape and grow another one. Very high energy food, that can be harvested without killing the animals.

All fresh water fish except for possibly the bull trout are edible. Fresh water mussels are abundant and high energy, they are found in the backwaters, in the mud or sand, just under the surface. Put them in clean water (bucket or other container) for 24 hours (they will spit out all the mud and grit). Roast on coals until they open, simmer for a few minutes after opening in their own juices.

Bush Tucker Myths

- If it tastes good it's edible ..Wrong!
- If it smells good it's edible ..Wrong!
- Cooking destroys toxins that are harmful ..Wrong! (although it can destroy some toxins).
- If the fruit, or any other part of the plant is edible, the whole plant is edible ..Wrong!. (many plants have some edible part and some parts highly poisonous).
- If other animals eat them they are okay for humans…Wrong!

Chapter 2. Surviving Potential Dangers.

Universal edibility test.

Follow there guidelines to find out whether a plant is edible..

1. Test only one part of a potential plant at a time.

2. Break the plant into its basic components, leaves, stems, roots, buds and flowers.

3. Smell the potential food part for strong or acid odors (keeping in mind smell alone does not indicate the plant is edible).

4. Do not eat for 8 hours before starting test.

5. During the 8 hours you are abstaining from eating test for contact poisoning by placing a piece of the plant part on the inside of your elbow or wrist. 15 minutes is enough time for a reaction to happen.

6. During testing, take nothing by mouth except pure water, and plant part being tested.

7. Select a small portion of a single component of the plant, and prepare it the way you plan to eat it.

8. Before putting the plant part in your mouth, touch a small bit to the outer surface of the lips (testing for itching or burning sensation).

9. If no reaction after 3 minutes, place the plant part on your tongue, holding there for 15 minutes.