

# Native Tuber(man)s

- Year 3 – Humanities and Social Sciences; Technologies  
Year 4 – Humanities and Social Sciences; Technologies  
Year 5 – Humanities and Social Sciences



**(Technologies; Yr 3&4, ACTDEK012)**

Investigate food and fibre production and food technologies used in modern and traditional societies

**(HASS – Geography; Yr 3, ACHASSK062)**

The importance of Country/Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who belong to a local area

**(HASS – Geography; Yr 4, ACHASSK088)**

The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people

**(HASS – Geography; Yr 4, ACHASSK089)**

The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability

**(HASS – Geography; Yr 5, ACHASSK112)**

The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places

**Cross-curriculum priorities**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Sustainability

# Native Tuber(man)s

## Talking about and tasting Australian native foods

Aunty Dale talks tubers in the bush. The Super Naturals learn about some of the many different foods the Noongar people of South West Australia enjoyed, and dispel a few myths about food production and farming.

**Equipment:**

Markers and poster sheets  
(optional)

**Duration:**

45 minutes

**Notes:**

## Tasty Tucker Tune-in

👁 Watch **The One on a Log**



❓ **Discuss** what do the Super Naturals taste?

- Share experiences of native foods. Have any students in the class tried foods similar to the ones the Super Naturals ate? Have they tasted foods that are new to them that may have originated from their specific area's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander culture?
- Talk about Aunty Dale's golden rule of trying bush foods, which is: "Always go with a good local guide, only eat what they give you, and let them eat one first!" Why might this be?

## Noongar food and language

❓ **Discuss** the importance of Aunty Dale coming from the Noongar culture of South West Australia. She talks about *boodja*, Country or the land.

- She tells the Super Naturals the names of two of the Noongar seasons. Ask if any of the students can recall the name of the seasons Aunty Dale mentions (*Djeran* and *Kambarang*). (You may also like to show *The One* with the *Welcome* to explore the concept of six seasons further).
- Share a map of Noongar country (you'll find one in Resources, below).
- Show students the names of the seasons in the Noongar language:
  - ◇ *Birak* – the first summer (December and January)
  - ◇ *Bunuru* – the second summer (February and March)
  - ◇ *Djeran* – Aunty Dale calls this autumn-ish (April and May)
  - ◇ *Makuru* – the time of the first rains (June and July)
  - ◇ *Djilba* – the second rains (August and September)
  - ◇ *Kambarang* – the wildflower season (October and November)
- Watch the episode again and listen carefully for other words that Aunty Dale uses in Noongar, especially names of foods. Here are just a few:
  - ◇ *youlk* – bush potato/carrot
  - ◇ *kahna*, *coanna* – related tubers, cousins of the youlk
  - ◇ *bohn*, *meen*, *mardja* – bloodroot
  - ◇ *merenj* – food
  - ◇ *warrine* – a slim tuber with a green shoot

## The *warrine* gardens

- Watch again the section (from 2:27) where Aunty Dale talks about the *warrine* gardens, where thousands of *warrine* (tuber) plants were grown near the *Derbarl Yerrigan* (Noongar name for the Swan River) in Western Australia.
- Get students to think about why European settlers would not have wanted the *warrine* gardens there. (They were in the fertile land, near water, and they involved digging holes that were dangerous to the legs of horses.)
- **Discuss this definition of agriculture:**
  - ◇ The science or the practice of raising plants, animals or fungi for the sustenance of life, including uses as food, fibre, fuel and medicine.
- Debate: if the ladies Aunty Dale describes are tending, watering and encouraging the growth of the *warrine* tuber, is that agriculture? Why or why not?
- How is the definition of agriculture framed (influenced) by expectations people have about what farms are and how they should look?

## Putting it up

- Students research three reasons why Australian bush foods are not commonly found on menus and supermarkets.
- They use this information, plus what they have learned from *The One on a Log* and *The One with the Welcome*, to create a poster about one of the native foods shown in these episodes.
- Students can also use information gathered from experts, cooks, growers, Indigenous Elders, and on Indigenous food cooperative websites, radio shows and TV programs. Some research resources are provided on the right to help get students started.

### Resources:

- ◇ Kaartdijin Noongar – Noongar Culture – <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/>
- ◇ Noongar Word List: <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/glossary/noongar-word-list/>
- ◇ Noongar Food: <https://www.noongarculture.org.au/food/>

### Bush foods:

- ◇ ABC Landline – Youlks, native vegetables: <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/landline/old-site/content/2016/s4484469.htm>
- ◇ ABC News – Farmers in WA banking on native vegetables becoming Australian staple: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-17/native-vegetables-youlk-kulya-to-hit-australian-dinner-table/7519878>
- ◇ ABC Radio National – Rethinking Indigenous Australia's agricultural past: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bushtelegraph/rethinking-indigenous-australias-agricultural-past/5452454>
- ◇ Australian Native Plant Society – *Mentha australis*: <http://anpsa.org.au/m-aus.html>
- ◇ Gardening with Angus – *Mentha australis*, River mint: <http://www.gardeningwithangus.com.au/mentha-australis-river-mint/>
- ◇ Tucker Bush – Native River Mint, *Mentha australis*: <https://tuckerbush.com.au/native-river-mint-mentha-australis/>
- ◇ The West Australian – Native Radish on the Menu: <https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/native-radish-on-the-menu-ng-ya-364569>