

FROM FLOOD TO FIRE... the story of our land and its trees

GATHERING, ACKNOWLEDGING THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS & CENTERING

SONG: Hope for the Tree by Peter Kearney

There is hope for the tree when the rain doesn't fall; though the dryness goes deep and the dust covers all.
While across the broken land slow death seems to crawl .There is hope for the tree to bloom again. Hope ...

There is hope for the tree though it burns on the wind, as the leaves turn to ash black and charred is the skin
When the smoke is so dense the sun is going dim. There is hope for the once so lovely tree. Hope....

This tree that has grown up for thousands of years reaching to the skies of the Southern Hemisphere
Where the birds of the earth could shelter without fear. There is hope they will shelter here again. Hope...

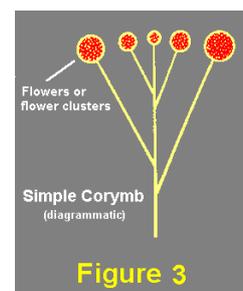
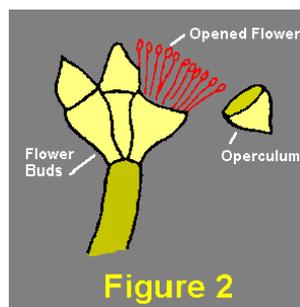
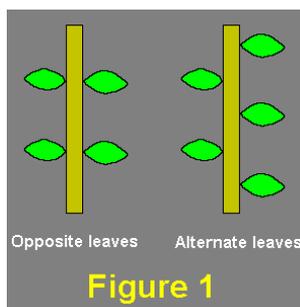
There's hope for the tree when the axeman comes round;he sharpens his steel & the branches tumble down.
When all that is left is a stump in the ground, there's still hope for the once so mighty tree. Hope for the tree!

There's hope for the tree for its roots they are strong and deep within the ground they are reaching on and on
When the water is found the new growth won't be long! There is hope for the tree to grow again. Hope...

WALKING THE LAND:

1. Dry Vine Forest and the Myrtles
2. Emergence of the Cadagi (*Corymbia torelliana*)
3. Exploring the Lemon Scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*)
4. The diversity of the Eucalyptus genus including the Flooded Gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*)

Eucalyptus, Corymbia, Angophora



Eucalyptus and Corymbia - Adult leaves alternate; Angophora - adult leaves opposite (Fig 1)

Eucalyptus and Corymbia - Flowers have a cap (operculum) which falls off as the flowers open (Fig 2) ;

Angophora - Flowers do not have a cap

Angophora and Corymbia - flowers occur in 'corymbs' ie flower stalks arise from different levels on the stem but finish on the same plane (Fig 3)

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Rainforest *Judith Wright*

The forest drips and glows with green.
The tree-frog croaks his far-off song.
His voice is stillness, moss and rain
drunk from the forest ages long.

We cannot understand that call
unless we move into his dream,
where all is one and one is all
And frog and python are the same.

We with our quick dividing eyes
measure, distinguish and are gone
The forest burns, the tree frog dies,
yet one is all and all are one

Gum Tree *Graham Ballard*

We call it gum tree, as if it were just a thing
Not pulsating, not whispering
Not rustling around, not shedding skin,
Not perfuming, not drinking
Not perspiring, not growing, not trembling,
Neither swaying, waving or sheltering
Not watching, not listening
Not stretching, not changing colour,
Not bleeding, not blooming, not breeding,
Not singing, not shrieking
Not crying, not sleeping, not grieving
Not breathing.
Not scratched and bleeding from a frightened
goanna,
Not tolerating raucous mobs of parrots, children.
Just there, sticking out of the ground
As if we weren't so very blessed to have it there.

From: **The Gum Forest** *Les Murray*

New trees step out of old: lemon and ochre
splitting out of grey everywhere, in the gum forest.
In there for miles, shade track and ironbark slope,
depth casually beginning all around, at a little
distance.

Sky sifting, and always a hint of smoke in the light;
you can never reach the heart of the gum forest.

Municipal Gum *Oodgeroo Noonuccal*

Gumtree in the city street.
Hard bitumen around your feet.
Rather you should be
In the cool world of leafs forest halls
And wild bird calls.
Here you seem to me
Like that poor cart-horse
Castrated, broken, a thing wronged,
Strapped and buckled, its hell prolonged,
Whose hung head and listless mien express
Its hopelessness.
Municipal gum, it is dolorous
To see you thus
Set in your black grass of bitumen -
O fellow citizen,
What have they done to us?

SHARING OUR REFLECTIONS

RITUAL

Our ritual uses the burning of eucalypt leaves as a sign of healing. The Christian tradition uses the burning of incense, first nation people in America use the practice of smudging that involves burning sacred herbs and Australia's first nation people use smoking ceremonies for cleansing and purifying. As we light the fire we pray for healing for our land and for ourselves. We face the four directions and pray for healing for our land responding *Bring Healing and Peace to our Land*. We then invite those who wish to enter the circle one at a time add your leaves to the fire as we pray for that person.

SIGN OF PEACE