Trees
White box

Language name
bibil (gambarraay)

Scientific name
Eucalyptus albens

Plant location
Widespread throughout the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, the bibil (White Box) is often a dominant tree species in woodland communities.

Plant description
This tree grows to a height of 25 metres. It is recognisable by the white-grey ‘box’ (fibrous-flaky) bark found on its main trunk. Above this, the bark is smooth and may be falling from the tree in ribbons. The adult leaves are 9-15cm long and are a dull grey-green colour. The flowers are white. Seven flowers are found on a flower head and the fruits are shaped like a barrel.

Traditional use
bibil muyaan (trees) have many uses. Their wugan (wood) is used for making implements such as coolamons, shields and woomeras. The nganda (bark) is also used to make canoes and burial slabs. The young warran (roots) may be roasted and eaten, while the nectar can also provide a sweet drink. The dhani (plant gum) can be used as medicine, glue or for tanning animal hides. Eucalyptus girraa, girraa (leaves) may also be crushed into a poultice to treat wounds or bruises, or as a general disinfectant. More information is included with the other Box tree species.
Yellow box

Language name
bibil (gamilaraay), yinay (nganyaywana)

Scientific name
Eucalyptus melliodora

Plant location
Widespread throughout the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, the bibil (Yellow Box) is often a dominant tree species in woodland and forest communities.

Plant description
The bibil is a large tree with a spreading crown growing to a height of 30 metres. Its bark is sometimes tinged a yellow colour and can be box type bark (fibrous-flaky), particularly in the lower part on the trunk, or smooth like a gum tree, especially in the branches and upper trunk. The adult leaves grow up to 14cm long and are a dull light green or slate grey colour. The flowers are white or sometimes pink. Seven flowers are found on a flower head and the fruits are shaped like a hemisphere (half circle). The leaf stems are red which can make the crown of the bibil appear reddish.

Traditional use
Like the other box trees, bibil (Yellow box) muyaan (trees) provide fantastic wildlife habitat, providing a home and food for animals such as possums, koalas, witchetty grubs, birds and bee hives. Box muyaan provide some of the best honey in the world and are also renowned for their excellent fire wood (Howell 1983). Eucalyptus girran.girraa (leaves) provided many types of medicine for Aboriginal people, most of which have not been recorded, but they were known as a cure for sore eyes and were also chewed and used as a poultice for common wounds and bruises (Cribb & Cribb 1981). More information is included with the other Box tree species.
Grey box

Language name
bibil (gamilaraay), yinay (nganyaywana)

Scientific name
Eucalyptus moluccana

Plant location
Widespread throughout the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, the bibil (Grey Box) is often a dominant tree species in woodland and forest communities.

Plant description
The bibil grows to a height of 25 metres. It has grey, rough, ‘box’ (fibrous-flaky) bark over its entire trunk and larger branches. In the branches above this, the bark is smooth, white and shiny. The adult leaves grow up to 14cm long and are glossy and green. The flowers are white, with seven flowers found on a flower head. The fruits are shaped like a cup or barrel.

Traditional use
Eucalyptus muyaan (trees) have been used for food, shelter, warmth, medicine, oil, timber and bark (Howell 1983). Their nganda (bark) and wugan (timber) is used for making boomerangs, coolamons, shields, woomeras, canoes and burial slabs. Evidence of this can be seen in the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, with many muyaan bearing scars where the nganda was removed - these trees are known as ‘scar trees’. More information is included with the other Box tree species.
**buubaya**

**Bimble box**

**Language name**

*buubaya* (gamilaraay, yuwaalaraay, yuwaalayaay)

**Scientific name**

*Eucalyptus populnea*

**Plant location**

Found in western and central areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, the *buubaya* (Bimble Box) can be a common species in woodland communities.

**Plant description**

The *buubaya* has wide, rounded leaves which are green and very glossy. It grows to 20 metres high. It has grey to brown ‘box’ (fibrous-flaky) bark on its trunk and larger branches. The smaller branches are often smooth and whitish. Seven to eleven flowers are found on a flower head, and these are usually white but rarely pink. The fruit are shaped like cups.

**Traditional use**

The roots of the *buubaya* can be tapped for water (Purcell 2002). *Buubaya muyaan* (trees) provide habitat for many species of animals. Older *muyaan* have hollows which provide homes for animals such as possums, whilst koalas eat the *Eucalyptus girran.girraa* (leaves). In the past, possum and koala skins were used for clothing. *Buubaya muyaan* also provide very good fire wood and the *nganda* (bark) and *wugan* (wood) is used to produce implements such as coolamons, shields and woomeras. *Nganda* can be used to construct shelters. The *girran.girraa* can be used as an antiseptic.
Black box

Language name
**guburruu** (gamilaraay, yuwalaraay, yuwalayaay)

Scientific name
*Eucalyptus largiflorens*

Plant location
Found in the western area of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments (west from Mungindi), the **guburruu** (Black Box) grows in woodlands on seasonally inundated river flats.

Plant description
The **guburruu** tree has grey to black coloured, rough, ‘box’ (fibrous-flaky) bark. It has long, thin leaves (up to 18cm in length) which are dull grey-green. Seven to eleven flowers are found on a flower head and these are usually white, but rarely pink. The fruits are shaped like a hemisphere (half circle).

Traditional use
The **guburruu** provides habitat for animals which were hunted by the local Aboriginal people. For example, possums like to live in the **guburruu**, while native bees use this **muyaan** (tree) to make sweet honey. The **nganda** (bark) and **bungun** (branches) can be used to construct shelters and bind them together using string made from the **nganda**. Implements such as coolamons, canoes, didgeridoos, spears, shields and woomeras can be made from the **nganda** and **wugan** (wood) of the **guburruu muyaan**. In some areas, the small **bungun** were used as decorations at ceremonies such as corroborees (Williams & Sides 2008).
Gulabaa

Coolibah

Language name

Gulabaa (gamilaraay)

Scientific name

Eucalyptus coolabah

Plant location

Found across the western half of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, gulabaa (Coolibah) grows on heavy clay soils near permanent water or in areas which are sometimes flooded. It is often a dominant species in woodlands on the floodplain.

Plant description

Always found near water, the gulabaa has rough, ‘box’ (fibrous-flaky) bark that can be coloured from grey to brown to black on most of the trunk. The finer branches have smooth, powdery bark which is red-brown or light grey over white. Leaves are dull grey-green to bluish-green and up to 17cm long. Seven white flowers are found on a flower head. The fruits are small and shaped like a shallow hemisphere (half circle).

Traditional use

The girran.girraa (leaves) of the gulabaa tree were thrown into waterholes to stun fish which made them easier to catch. Dhani (gum) from the gulabaa can be used to tan animal hides. The gulabaa can be used for a variety of medicines, for example, heating the inner nganda (bark) and pounding it makes a poultice which can be used to treat snake bites. Young girran.girraa can also be used to treat headaches, sore throats and fevers, by hand mixing girran.girraa with some water to create thick green fluid which can be drunk (Howell 1983). Many animals use the gulabaa muyaan (tree) as habitat and therefore this can be a good place to find animals to eat. The nganda and bungun (branches) from the gulabaa provide good materials for making a shelter. The gulabaa tree holds water in its roots. Aboriginal people dig up the shallow roots, cut them up and up-end them into a bowl to collect the water (Stewart & Percival 1997).
**Red gum, River red gum**

**Language name**

*yarraan* (gamilaraay, yuwaalaraay, yuwaalayaay)

**Scientific name**

*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*

**Plant location**

The *yarraan* (Red Gum) is also known as the River Red Gum because this tree is usually found near water. It is found in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments and is often a dominant species in woodlands and forests.

**Plant description**

A tall tree which grows to 40 metres high, *yarraan* has smooth ‘gum’ bark which may be streaked with red. It has a large, spreading crown with green leaves. There are 7 to 11 white flowers on a flower head. The flower buds have a beaked cover over them. The fruit are shaped like a hemisphere (half circle).

**Traditional use**

Insects produce a secretion on the leaves of the *yarraan* which is eaten dry by Aboriginal people. Grubs are often found in the *bungun* (branches) and *warran* (trunk and roots) which can provide a tasty snack. The *nganda* (bark) can be chewed, similar to chewing tobacco. The bolls and roots can be used to make implements, such as bowls (Hudson, in press). The juice of the *yarraan* can be dried which makes a gum resin that can be used to treat dysentery (Howell 1983). The heartwood can also be boiled and drunk to treat diarrhoea, while the dark inner *nganda* can be boiled until the red *dhani* (gum) comes out. When cool, this substance is rubbed into sores (such as scabies) to heal them (Purcell 2002). The *nganda* of the *yarraan* can be used to make a canoe. A piece of *nganda* about 3 metres long is cut from the tree then held over a fire so that the sides curl. Each end of the *nganda* is tied with rope from the inner *nganda* fibre, and wooden stretchers support each side of the canoe to stop the sides from collapsing (Australian National Botanic Gardens 2010a).
Manna gum, Ribbon gum

**Language name**

dhani (yuwaalaray, yuwaalayaay)  dharraabiin (yuwaalaray)

**Scientific name**

_Eucalyptus viminalis_

**Plant location**

This forest and woodland tree is found in the eastern part of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments.

**Plant description**

The dhani (Manna Gum) sheds its bark in long ribbons. It is a very tall tree which can grow to 50 metres high. It has smooth white or grey bark. The adult leaves are glossy green and grow to 20cm long. There are 3 white flowers on a flower head. The fruit are shaped like a cup or hemisphere (half circle).

**Traditional use**

The dhani has been used for traditional medicine. Girran.girraa (leaves) can be eaten as a diarrhoea remedy and the bark can be moistened to use on sore eyes. The leaves were burnt to smoke out fevers. The girran.girraa also have natural antiseptic qualities. This tree also produces dharraabiin (manna) which is a hardened sugary liquid that falls to the ground from the girran.girraa. Dharraabiin is very sweet and can be eaten directly or made into a sugary drink by mixing with dhani (gum) from wattle trees and soaking in water. Dharraabiin can also be used as a medicine, for example, as a laxative (Low 1991). It is estimated that a single dhani muyaan could produce nine kilograms of dharraabiin (Purcell 2002). The dhani provides important wildlife habitat and is a food tree for koalas. In the past, this tree would have provided animals for Aboriginal people to hunt for food, clothing and tools. Implements such as shields and bowls can be made from the wugan (wood).
**gundhi**

**Red stringybark**

**Language name**

*gundhi* (yuwaalayaay), *intwara* (nganyaywana)

**Scientific name**

*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*

**Plant location**

The *gundhi* (Red Stringybark) is found in the eastern area of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, south from Wariald. The Red Stringybark is sometimes the dominant species in forests and woodlands.

**Plant description**

*gundhi* trees have red-brown, or sometimes grey, bark that forms long, stringy fibres. These trees can grow as high as 30 metres. There are 7-11 flowers found on a flower head which are white in colour. The fruit are shaped like globes. The leaves are a slightly glossy green colour, growing to 15cm long. The flower buds have beaks on them.

**Traditional use**

Stringybark *muyaan* (trees) provide great wood and bark which can be used to make shields, dishes and shelters. Young *giraan.girraa* (leaves) from *Eucalyptus* trees were sometimes chewed by Aboriginal people to quench their thirst. *Eucalyptus muyaan* were also used to heal wounds and to stop blood flow, by mixing animal fat, clay and gum leaves and packing them into a wound. Various *Eucalyptus muyaan* were used to treat dysentery, colic, diarrhoea, headaches, colds, fevers, conjunctivitis, snakebite, wounds, burns, blisters, rheumatism and sore throats (Howell 1983). As you can see, Aboriginal people know a huge range of traditional remedies which can be found from just one type of tree!
Ironbark, Silver-leaved ironbark

Language name
thiinyaay (gamilaraay), girranba (nganyaywana), kiranpa (nganyaywana)

Scientific name
Eucalyptus melanophloia

Plant location
thiinyaay (Ironbark) is widespread and abundant in woodlands in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments. It grows from the western slopes of the New England Tablelands to beyond the western boundary of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments.

Plant description
thiinyaay is a tree which grows to 20 metres high. It has grey-black ironbark (bark which is hard, thick and widely and deeply furrowed). It produces 7 white flowers on each flower head and has woody fruits which are shaped like a cup. This plant is also known as the Silver-leaved Ironbark, and it has dull bluish leaves which are sometimes oval shaped.

Traditional use
Like other eucalypts, thiinyaay had many traditional uses for Aboriginal people, including shelter, habitat, medicine, timber, bark, oil and food. thiinyaay is well known for its very strong and hard wugan (wood) which was prized for making both broad and narrow shields. Some thiinyaay trees in the catchment still show the scars where shields were cut from them many years ago. Another interesting use for thiinyaay is that it was used as a firestick in some parts of Australia. The slow-burning wugan of thiinyaay was carried alight between campsites so that campfires would not need to be relit from scratch. Sometimes the firestick was also used like a torch at night, to help people to see in the dark. A third notable quality of thiinyaay was its high content of kino, a substance which seeps from the tree when it is cut, which was useful as a medicine for the treatment of diseases such as diarrhoea, bleeding and throat infections. Finally, the honey produced from thiinyaay trees is delicious! (Howell 1982, Cribb & Cribb 1982).
**Carbeen**

**Language name**

*gaabiin* (gamilaraay)

**Scientific name**

*Corymbia tessellaris* (also known as *Eucalyptus tessellaris*)

**Plant location**

Found in the western parts of the slopes and in the plains of both the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, the Carbeen tree grows in woodlands where it is sometimes the dominant species.

**Plant description**

The lower bark of the Carbeen tree looks a little like crocodile skin— it is formed into little squares or blocks (known as ‘tessellated’ bark). This bark is dark grey and grows up to 3 metres along the trunk of the tree. Above this, the bark changes abruptly to smooth grey or white bark. The leaves are dull grey to green in colour and grow up to 18cm long. There are 3 or 7 creamy white flowers on a flower head. The fruit are shaped like a cup or cylinder.

**Traditional use**

*Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia muyaan* (trees) have been used for food, shelter, warmth, medicine, oil, timber and bark (Howell 1983). The *gaabiin* was used to prepare a bark infusion which was consumed for the treatment of dysentery (Taste Australia 2008). Pseudoscorpions and insect larvae under the flaking bark edge can be collected and nibbled for a snack (Steenbeeke pers. comm. 2010).
gawuuwildhaa

Western bloodwood, Long fruited bloodwood

Language name

_gawuuwildhaa_ (yuwaalaraay)

Scientific name

_Corymbia dolichocarpa_

Plant location

_gawuuwildhaa_ (Western bloodwood, Long fruited bloodwood) is found in eucalypt woodlands in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments.

Plant description

_gawuuwildhaa_ is a tree which grows to 25 metres high. It has red-brown to grey-brown, tessellated (forming small thick flakes or squares) bloodwood bark all the way to the end of the finer branches. The adult leaves are grey-green and dull. The flowers are white or cream.

Traditional use

_gawuuwildhaa_ is best known for providing the finest _wugan_ (timber) to make didgeridoos. Didgeridoos are long hollow _bungan_ (branches) which are blown into to make music. This music is used for entertainment and ceremony. The name _gawuuwildhaa_ possibly means ‘rambling’ or ‘wandering aimlessly’, due to the curling branches of this tree. _gawuuwildhaa_ also provides food and shelter for wildlife which would traditionally have provided Aboriginal people with an opportunity to hunt animals for food, clothing and tools.
Apple tree

Language name
bulamin (gamilaraay), tunpa (nganyaywana)

Scientific name
Angophora floribunda and other Angophora species

Plant location
Various species of bulamin (the native Apple tree) are found in woodlands and forests throughout the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments. These trees are sometimes the dominant species in a vegetation community.

Plant description
bulamin have woody fruits which are egg-shaped, with ribs along the edge of the fruit. The Rough-barked Apple (Angophora floribunda) has rough grey bark, twisted branches, leathery leaves and clusters of fluffy cream flowers at the end of the branches in summer. It grows to 30 metres high.

Traditional use
The knots and burls of the bulamin are used for dishes and coolamons. The liquid is carefully removed from the knobbly lumps and rubbed vigorously into the hair, to groom it. The dhani (kino) extracted from the tree is drunk as a medicine to treat diarrhoea (Howell 1983). bulamin can provide water and the sweet nectar can be eaten. The nectar attracts birds, possums and other animals, which may have been hunted by Aboriginal people in the past.
burrii

**Brigalow**

**Language name**
burrii (gamilaraay)

**Scientific name**
*Acacia harpophylla*

**Plant location**
burrii (Brigalow) is found in forests and woodlands in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments. It can form extensive, dense low forests and scrub.

**Plant description**
burrii trees have long, leathery, silvery grey ‘phyllodes’ (leaves) that are shaped like a sickle. The trees grow up to 20 metres high. The bark is grey or brown and furrowed. White or yellow flowers are shaped like balls. burrii has seed pods which are 3 to 11cm long.

**Traditional use**
burrii provides good fire wood and timber for making implements. Spears, boomerangs, clubs and handles for stone implements can be made from the strong, elastic timber of the burrii muyaan (tree), which does not break on impact (Howell 1983). Inner nganda (bark) of wattle muyaan, like burrii, can be used to make twine. The nganda is also considered to have healing properties and can be used like a bandage or sling and secured with twine. Nganda was soaked in water and the water was used to soothe burns, blisters and rashes. When nganda and warran (roots) were beaten and added to water, the solution was drunk to treat dysentery, diarrhoea, coughs and colds (Howell 1983). burrii muyaan provide good wildlife habitat and so can be a place to find animals for food, clothing and implements.
Gidgee, Stinking wattle

Language name
gidjiirr (gamilaraay)

Scientific name
*Acacia cambadgei*

Plant location
gidjiirr (Gidgee) grows on the plains in the western area of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, and can form extensive woodland communities. Also known as the Stinking Wattle, it is recognisable by its unpleasant smell which is particularly strong during wet weather.

Plant description
The gidjiirr tree grows between 5 to 15 metres high. It has dark grey, fissured (cracked or splitting) bark. The 'phyllodes' (wattle leaves) are straight and grow to 10cm long. The yellow or white flowers grow on a stem next to the phyllode. There can be many flowers on one tree, and there are up to 20 flowers per stem. The seed pods are papery or leathery, and you can see many fine veins in the pod.

Traditional use
gidjiirr trees are very important to Aboriginal people, and are used for a great number of purposes. wugan (wood) from the gidjiirr is used to make boomerangs, nulla nullas, fighting poles, woomeras and spears. The fibrous inner nganda (bark) can be used to make rope or twine. dhani (gum) from the wattles can be used as chewing gum or for the treatment of dysentery and diarrhoea. The dhani (resin) can also be used as a type of cement (Howell 1983). gidjiirr wugan can be used to construct shelter or as good fire wood. The leaves give off a strong smell when rain is approaching or when wet.
Malga

Language name
malga (yuwaalaraay)

Scientific name
Acacia aneura

Plant location
malga (Mulga) grows on the plains in the western area of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, and is found in most vegetation communities in this area.

Plant description
The malga tree grows between 5 to 10 metres high. It has dark grey, fissured (cracked or splitting) bark. The ‘phyllodes’ (wattle leaves) are long and very thin, growing to 10cm long and between 1mm and 3mm wide. malga flowers are bright yellow and formed into cylinders, 2.5cm long. The seed pods are papery and short and thick.

Traditional use
malga seeds are used to make flour by drying the pods, parching them in hot sand and grinding them. They can be eaten raw as a paste or baked as damper. Wattle seeds are very nutritious, with high levels of protein and fat (Low 1991). Insects which use the malga muyaan (tree) produce a powder which can be used as glue whilst other insects produce ‘apples’ which are sweet galls that can be eaten. The dhani (sap) is eaten as a lolly or made into a sweet drink by infusing it in water (Hudson, in press). This dhani is also used to seal things and can be used in ceremonies. The very strong wugan (timber) of the Malga tree is used to make tools such as boomerangs, spears, shields, clubs and digging sticks. Acacia murrayana (Murray’s Wattle) and Acacia ligulata (Small Coobah) are often found growing in the Malga scrub and are used for similar purposes as the malga tree. malga can be used as a medicine, similar to the medicines described under the other wattles. Wood grubs can often be found in the warran (roots).

Photos: Australian National Botanic Gardens
Maayaal

Myall, Weeping myall, boree

Language name

Maayaal (gamilaraay, yuwaalaraay, yuwaalayaay), maayal (gamilaraay), mayal (gamilaraay)

Scientific name

Acacia pendula

Plant location

Maayal (Myall) trees grow on major river floodplains in heavy clay soils, in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments. They are sometimes the dominant species in shrublands and open woodlands.

Plant description

Also known as the Weeping Myall, this wattle species is easy to pick from its hanging branches and leaves. The maayal tree grows to 10 metres high. It has grey, hard, fissured (cracked or splitting) bark. The ‘phyllodes’ (wattle leaves) are narrow and grey and grow to 14cm long. The flowers are bright yellow. The seed pods are papery or leathery, and you can see veins running across the pod.

Traditional use

Maayal trees can be used to find water sources. The seeds of the maayal muyaan (tree) can be eaten as a type of flour which is made into damper. The wugan (wood) is used to make weapons and can also be very good fire wood. These muyaan provide habitat for wildlife which can in turn be useful to Aboriginal people as food, clothing and utensils. The inner nganda (bark) can be used to make twines. Wattle garril (flowers) are sometimes used for personal decoration.
Ironwood

Language name
[dhan.gayan.gan](yuwaalaray, yuwaalaayaray)

Scientific name
Acacia excelsa

Plant location
dhan.gayan.gan (Ironwood) grows in woodland and savannah in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments, west from Warralda.

Plant description
dhan.gayan.gan is a type of wattle which grows up to 15 metres high. It has bright yellow ‘puff ball’ flowers and papery seed pods which grow up to 11cm long. The ‘phyllodes’ (leaves) are up to 7cm long and have 3 to 7 veins which run parallel along the length of the leaf.

Traditional use
dhan.gayan.gan, like other wattles, is useful for medicine, food, shelter, habitat, timber, tools and more. The very strong, hard wugan (wood) of the dhan.gayan.gan has been used to make tools; archaeologists have found artefacts such as spear throwers and boomerangs in Aboriginal occupation sites, made from dhan.gayan.gan. The gum resin provides good cementing material for making tools also. The seeds of dhan.gayan.gan can be eaten. Various species of wattles have been used as medicine to treat complaints such as dysentery, diarrhoea, burns and blisters, broken bones, coughs and colds and rashes (Howell 1982).
Black wattle

Language name

dhulan (yuwaalaraay, yuwaalayaay)

Scientific name

Acacia salicina

Plant location

dhulan (Black wattle) shrubs grow in forests, shrublands and woodlands, mostly along creek banks, in the central and western areas of the Border Rivers and Gwydir catchments.

Plant description

The dhulan tree or shrub grows between 3 and 10 metres high but sometimes it can reach as high as 20 metres. It has long, hanging phyllodes (leaves) which grow up to 17cm long. The fluffy flowers are light yellow or cream. The woody seed pods grow up to 12 centimetres long. The bark is brown with fine cracks along it.

Traditional use

One of the most important traditional uses of the dhulan was as a fish poison. The nganda (bark) was pounded so that toxic material would be released when it entered a billabong. Sometime after the nganda was thrown into a billabong, fish would float to the surface. This made them easy to collect, and the toxin used to stupefy the fish did not affect humans (Cribb & Cribb 1982, Howell 1983). Ash from the dhulan was favoured in some places to mix with Pituri (Duboisia hopwoodii), a native narcotic that was chewed for pleasure - this was an important trade item (Cribb & Cribb 1981). dhulan is also considered to be an important source of medicine. The tannins in the bark are used as a dye but these tannins make the dark dhani (gum) from the dhulan too bitter to eat. Like other wattles, dhulan is important for food (e.g. the seeds are very nutritious), tools (e.g. boomerangs, spears, clubs and handles), glue and wildlife habitat.