

# Hermansburg Potters

## Indigenous Art Football and Community

### Bush Foods



**Virginia Rontji**

Western Arrernte born 1942

*Spotty Lizard* 1992

Hermansburg, Northern Territory  
earthenware

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased from Admission Funds, 1992 ©

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Photography: Tobias Titz

The Hermannsburg Potters belong to a small community 130 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs. They are famous for their colourful terracotta pots which tell stories about their culture and where they live: their Country, the mission days, bush tucker and, of course, football! During footy season the Hermannsburg community get together to watch AFL on TV and on weekends many make the trip to Alice Springs to support local teams.

*Bush Foods* is part of a package of resources that introduce you to the Hermannsburg potters, their art, their community and their love of football.

In the resource members of the Western Arrernte community introduce some of the bush foods that have sustained their community for many thousands of years.

## Bush Foods

As the traditional owners and caretakers of much of the land surrounding Hermannsburg, the Western Arrernte people know all about the different types of bush tucker that can be gathered there.

The Hermannsburg Potters often paint these local foods and medicines on their pots, to celebrate their cultural knowledge.



Unfinished pots  
Hermannsburg Potters studio,  
Ntaria, Northern Territory, 2015  
Photo: Tobias Titz



Photography: Tobias Titz

Bush tucker is gathered from the Country surrounding Hermannsburg.



Photography: Tobias Titz

Here is a Witchetty Grub in the root of a tree.

Witchetty grubs are most abundant in winter. After the rains they grow big, come out of the roots and fly away. How? Because Witchetty grubs are actually the larvae of large moths!

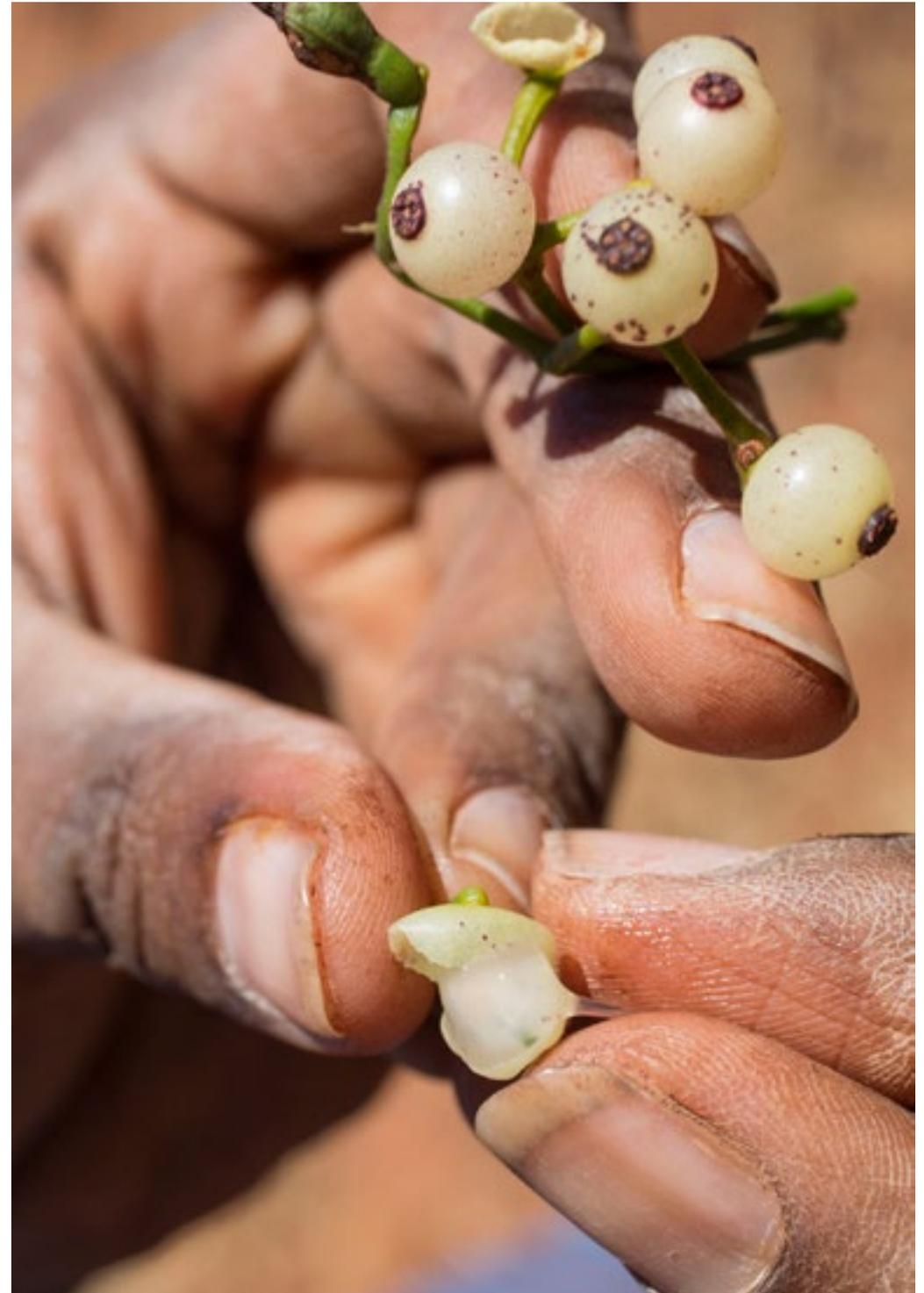




Photography: Tobias Titz

Eaten raw, Witchetty grubs taste like almonds. When cooked, their skin becomes crispy like a roast chicken.

- **Western Arrernte name:** Tjankana
- **English name:** Mistletoe berry





Photography: Tobias Titz

The sweet Mistletoe Berry can be picked all year round, and tastes sweet like lime.

- **Western Arrernte name:** Rraatninga
- **English name:** Bush passionfruit

After the rains bush passionfruit are abundant, and they like lots of sun. They taste tangy, mild and sweet.





Photography: Tobias Titz

The easiest way to eat them is to suck the juice and spit out the seeds.

- **Western Arrernte name:** Yalka
- **English name:** Bush onions

Bush onions like the colder months, and grow in the desert ground in winter.

They taste starchy, like turnips, potatoes and other root vegetables.

You can peel back the skin and eat them raw, or cook them with meat on the fire.



- **Western Arrernte name:** Salta Sata
- **English name:** Salt flakes

Look at this photograph and find the salt on the edges of the waterholes.

This salt is available all year round from the waterholes near Mt Hermannsburg, and tastes strong and salty just like ordinary rock salt.





Photography: Tobias Titz

Bush tucker can be used for medicinal purposes. Swimming in salty waters can soothe and heal sore skin. All you have to do is go for a swim in them and you'll feel better.

Bush Foods

**Investigate!**

Watch this video featuring students from Ntaria School.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHw1MuArWP4>

List the foods that the students are eating.

Using the internet, research where 2 of these foods are grown.

How many kilometres might  
the food have travelled to get to  
Hermannsburg?

**Hermannsburg Potters:  
Indigenous Art  
Football and Community**

To find out more about the Hermannsburg Potters and their work you might also be interested in looking at other resources in this package.

**These include**

- Explore and Create
- Look and Explore
- Mission Days
- Making Pots
- Language



**Rona Panangka Rubuntja**  
Western Arrernte born 1970  
*The Crow (Andrew McLeod),  
covered vase 2015*  
Hermannsburg, Northern Territory  
earthenware  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2015  
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