Snugglepot and Cuddlepie

CDP Theatre Producers
in association with Monkey Baa Theatre Company

cdp Kids

Teacher Resource Kit

A teaching resource for children 5-10 years

www.cdp.com.au
The Snugglepot and Cuddlepie Teaching Resource accompanies CDP’s performance of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, presented in association with Monkey Baa Theatre Company. It is a new adaptation for the stage by Eva Di Cesare, Sandra Eldridge and Tim McGarry from the iconic Australian children’s book The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie by May Gibbs. The stories of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie first appeared in 1918 in Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, Little Ragged Blossom (1920) and Little Obelia (1921), and were published as a complete collection in 1940 by Angus and Robinson.

Produced by CDP Theatre Producers in association with Monkey Baa Theatre Company
Stage Adaptation: Eva Di Cesare, Sandra Eldridge and Tim McGarry
from a series of books by May Gibbs
by arrangement with The Northcott Society and Cerebral Palsy Alliance
Director: Susanna Dowling
Production Designer: Imogen Ross
Costume Designer: Matthew Aberline
Original Music: Daryl Wallis
Lighting Designer: Trudy Dalgleish
Cast (in alphabetical order): Georgia Adamson, Kirk Page, Christopher Tomkinson, Jacob Warner

CDP Theatre Producers
CDP is an award winning independent theatre production house specialising in boutique theatre of the highest quality. CDP’s recent productions for children and families include world premiere stage plays adapted from popular books including The 13-Storey Treehouse, The 26-Storey Treehouse and The Incredible Book Eating Boy, along with the Australian premieres of The Gruffalo, The Gruffalo’s Child and Room on the Broom. CDP also produces four productions a year for The Sydney Opera House Babies Proms. Renowned for its touring expertise, CDP’s productions are seen in theatres throughout Australia, in capital cities as well as in metropolitan, regional and remote communities, and tour internationally to destinations including New Zealand, the Middle East and Asia.

Monkey Baa Theatre Company
Monkey Baa Theatre Company was created in 1998 to bring high quality theatre experiences to young Australians by bringing to life uniquely Australian stories. They have performed in just about every corner of the country across metropolitan, rural and remote Australia, and have recently begun to tour internationally.
Introducing *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*

*Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* are iconic Australian characters, first introduced to the Australian public in *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, their adventures wonderful*, a children’s picture book by May Gibbs, published by Angus and Robertson in 1918. Following the incredible success of this publication, Gibbs went on to publish *Little Ragged Blossom* (1920) and *Little Obelia* (1921). In 1940 the three books were combined into one volume, *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*, which remains one of Australia’s most popular children’s classics to this day.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie are two little gumnut brothers who have many adventures in the Australian bush. The stories have a strong conservation message, prefaced by Gibb’s now famous request, “Humans, please be kind to all Bush creatures and don’t pull flowers up by the roots”. The stories feature a host of characters based on the native flora and fauna, Professor Kookaburra, Mrs Fantail, Mr Lizard, Mr Frog, the very scary Banksia Men and the nasty Mrs Snake. The stories are a fantasy set in the bush that offer lessons to young readers, and balance good and evil. This production is an adaptation of this iconic story. This fast paced adventure unfolds as below.

Brothers Snugglepot and Cuddlepie set off on an adventure to see a human. They sneak out of their gumtree branch home disguised as birds, and go to find Mrs Fantail. Mrs Fantail is too busy to help them, but asks them to mind her eggs. They fall asleep, cracking the eggs. They are in despair, but are helped by Mr Lizard who brings them two new (much bigger) eggs from an unknown source. Mr Lizard agrees to join them on their quest to find a human, and nips home to grab his things.

While he is away Mrs Snake accosts the two gumnut babies, and tricks them into telling her where to find her sworn enemy Mr Lizard. Snugglepot and Cuddlepie run to warn him but it seems to be too late. They are very upset. They are overheard by Mr Frog who offers to help, and carries them under the water to Mrs Snake’s cave. There they release Mr Lizard and escape together. Mr Frog stays behind to distract Mrs Snake but is eaten!

Mr Lizard, Snugglepot and Cuddlepie arrive in a large bushland town. While Mr Lizard runs some errands the brothers ask a Kangaroo cabbie to take them to see a human. He refuses, saying it is too dangerous. Suddenly Mrs Fantail returns, furious, with two baby lizards holding onto her wings. She rounds on the gumnut babies, and on Mr Lizard upon his return, forcing him to adopt them and take them home to his wife.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, exhausted from all the excitement, sit quietly for a moment. Snugglepot is drawn from his reverie by the sounds of a dance party in a tree trunk. Hepeeks in, and spies Little Ragged Blossom sitting waiting. He is entranced, and asks her for a dance. They dance, and he learns that she is an orphan.

As they are dancing Cuddlepie is woken from his nap by calls for help. He follows the sound, and finds poor Mr Possum with his leg stuck in a trap. He is unable to help him, and runs to find Snugglepot to help. Snugglepot runs from the dance, promising to see Ragged Blossom again. They are unable to help Mr Possum, and are further amazed and frightened when a human comes and releases the possum, carrying him away to an unknown fate.

Mr Lizard stumbles upon the two brothers again, and excitedly offers them tickets to see the famous Miss Lilly Pilly’s show. As they make their arrangements they are overheard by the wicked Mrs Snake. She hisses in delight and plans to capture all three of them, enlisting the Big Bad Banksia man. Ragged Blossom overhears and runs to the theatre to try to warn them. At the theatre Snugglepot has lost his ticket. Mr Lizard kindly hands his over, and the gumnut babies go in to watch the show. Ragged Blossom finds Mr Lizard, and gasps out her story. Mr Lizard hatches a quick plan, and hoists Ragged Blossom up into the roof. She bravely climbs into the theatre, warning Snugglepot and Cuddlepie,
who make their escape. As Ragged Blossom runs away she is captured by the Banksia Man, and taken back to Mrs Snake’s cave.

Mrs Snake is furious that the Banksia man has captured the wrong bush baby. She throws Ragged Blossom and her sack into her lair in disgust and sends the Banksia man back out. Ragged Blossom meets Mr Frog, who has escaped Mrs Snake’s belly, and they are quickly joined by Snugglepot and Cuddlepie who have come to help. Ragged Blossom and Mr Frog escape. Thanks to Cuddlepot’s quick thinking the brothers dress up as a snake, tricking the Banksia man when he arrives. Mrs Snake arrives, and they tackle her with the help of Mr Lizard. Mrs Snake meets a nasty end.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie are resting and recovering from their adventures. They spy Mr Possum, and are thrilled to learn that he was saved by the human. They reflect on their adventures.

Meet the Author

Cecilia May Gibbs (1877-1969), was a popular and successful Australian author, illustrator and cartoonist, best known for *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*. She was born in Kent, England, and moved with her family to Western Australia in 1881. After several journeys back to England to complete her artistic training, she settled in Sydney in 1913. She and her husband James Ossoli Kelly moved into their famous Neutral Bay home *Nutcote* in 1925. May remained resident at *Nutcote* until her death in 1969.

She began her wide spanning and highly successful career as an illustrator, author and cartoonist with the Western Mail in Perth in 1904, and went on to many further contracts with English and Australian magazines and newspapers. Notably, she produced quintessentially Australian postcards and bookmarks featuring her iconic gumnut babies to be sent to the troops in WW1.

The first book written and illustrated by May, *Gumnut Babies*, was published in 1916. She also produced postcards, bookmarks and other merchandise for sale featuring these characters. In 1918 she surprised her publishers, Angus & Robertson Ltd, by selling 17,000 copies of *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* (1918) on its first release. She went on to produce *Little Ragged Blossom* (1920) and *Little Obelia* (1921), with further adventures in the Australian bush. The bush babies series were published as *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* in 1940, and remain in print today. May Gibbs went on to write and illustrate many other children's books, produce long-running cartoon strips such as Bib and Bub and a wide variety of commercial work.

May Gibbs was a fiercely determined woman, paving her way as Australia's first full-time, professionally trained children's book illustrator, amongst her mostly male competitors. In 1955 she was appointed Member of the British Empire (MBE) in acknowledgement of her important contribution to children’s literature. She died in 1969, leaving her estate to UNICEF, the Spastic Centre of NSW (now Cerebral Palsy Alliance) and the NSW Society for Crippled Children (now Northcott Disability Services).
Live Performance - The Ultimate Teaching and Learning Opportunity

Attending a live performance is a rich and engaging learning opportunity. Prepare children through explicit teaching to make the most of their theatre experience.

- Talk about and practice being an audience member. Audience members sit and listen quietly for most of the time. They join in the action when invited, and clap and cheer to show their appreciation. They allow fellow audience members to watch the show without interruptions.

- Talk about and roleplay theatre conventions. What is a theatre? What are actors? What are characters? What are costumes? What is a stage? What are props? What is a set? What is a script? Is theatre ‘real’? How can movement tell a story?

- *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* is performed by a team of four actors. A physical storytelling style, background music, beautiful bushland sound effects and clever costuming help to bring the story to life. Discuss and explore physical storytelling. Use simple costume items to help build a character. Consider how musical underscoring and sound effects can tell a story.

- Familiarise children with the work of May Gibbs in the lead up to the performance. There are many suggestions for how to use *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* for older readers and the simplified *Meet Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* picture book for younger readers as a learning resource in the following pages.
Australian Curriculum and NSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum

A wide range of learning activities from all curriculum areas are described in this resource. Links to the Australian Curriculum and the NSW Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum are provided below the activities for each learning area.

For further details see:
www.australiancurriculum.edu.au
http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au

Discussions and activities suggested in this resource kit support progress towards the seven general capabilities outlined in the Australian Curriculum for Foundation to Year 2:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Information and communication technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

The book and play of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, together with the discussions and activities contained within this resource kit, provide many learning opportunities that address the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability.
Suggested Age Guidelines

*Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* is suitable for children ages 5-10 years. A suggested age range appears next to each of the teaching ideas, for example:

- Add percussion instruments, vocal sounds, everyday objects from your classroom and other sound makers to create the Australian bushland fantasy world represented by May Gibbs when reading the books. Choose a different sounds to represent each of the native creatures and plants in the illustrations. Play the sound each time you see the matching image. 5-10 years

Suggested Books

There are many children’s books based on the adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie still in print. The two books referred to in this education resource are:

Teaching and Learning Activities – Learning About and Through the Arts

Attending a live performance can be a stimulus for a huge range of rich learning experiences. Not only can you plan for learning about the arts, but for whole of curriculum learning through the arts.

Literacy and the Arts

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie can be the impetus for a range of literacy and arts experiences, before, during and following the performance. Use this list below as a jumping off point for planning learning around the texts and the performance in your setting.

Experiment with using sound to tell a story. In the production of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie bushland sound effects such as birdsong and animal sounds are used to set the scene for the story, and transport the audience into the bushland fantasy world of May Gibbs.

- Add percussion instruments, vocal sounds, everyday objects from your classroom and other sound makers to create the Australian bushland fantasy world represented by May Gibbs when reading the books. Choose a different sound to represent each of the native creatures and plants in the illustrations. Play the sound each time you see the matching image. 5-10 years
- Make group musical soundscapes to represent contrasting key scenes in the story. Compare the peaceful pace of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie’s treetop home, the noisy dance party in the tree branch, Mrs Snake’s scary cave, the swim underwater with Mr Frog, the bustling city, the escape of Mr Lizard, the capture of Mrs Snake. 5-10 years
- Go outside and listen to the sounds of the environment in and around the classroom. Make audio recordings on a tablet, laptop or phone of the birds, animals, manmade sounds. Walk to a nearby park or bushland and make a recording of the sounds there. Create bush baby and native animal stories that match the recordings you have collected. 7-10 years
- Make a radio play or reading of short sections of the book. Experiment with recording sound effects on a tablet device, laptop or phone, escaping air or rubbing wood together for hissing sliding Mrs Snake, scratching sticks on sandpaper for the scurrying of the baby lizards, tapping fingers on tables for the quick steps of the running gumnut brothers. 8-10 years
Explore the characters in depth. May Gibbs has brilliantly captured the essence of each type of native flora and fauna depicted by the characters. A lot of the characterisation is achieved through her wonderful drawings. In both the written story and the production Snugglepot is adventurous, impulsive and generous, and Cuddlepie is thoughtful, a little fearful, careful, clever and kind. Mrs Fantail is a busy, practical, bossy bird, and Mr Lizard an Aussie lovable rogue who is dapper, helpful, loves a good yarn and supplies goods that have “fallen off the back of a truck.” Mrs Snake is aggressive, sneaky and out for revenge. Ragged Blossom is kind, gentle and loyal, and the Big Bad Banksia Man scary, rough, greedy and not very bright.

Develop the existing characters, and create new ones through music, movement, costuming and visual arts.

- If you were an Australian native plant, tree, animal, bird, insect, reptile or fish which one would you be? What type of voice would you have? How would you move? What would you say? What would you wear to represent your character? Develop a new character to join the adventure. 7-10 years
- Examine different illustrations of each of the characters. Record and share what you learn about the characters from each of the illustrations. 7-10 years
- Move like Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, Mr Lizard, Mrs Snake, and the Big Bad Banksia Man to music. 5-8 years
- In pairs, choose a character from the story. Identify the physical features of the character and sculpt each others bodies to recreate that character. 7-10 years
- Interview Snugglepot and Cuddlepie at different stages of their journey – ask how they are feeling, what have they seen, where are they going, who have they met? Avoid yes/no questions. 5-10 years
- Choose key scenes from the story and in small groups create a freeze frame or living postcard of the scene. 6-10 years
- Take digital photos of children representing each character and key scenes of the story. Use these photos to create a visual plot line of the story. 8-10 years
- Take digital photos of children representing each character and key scenes of the story. 8-10 years
- Make a favourite character in a drawing, painting, cartoon or sculpture out of things you find in the bush, playground, park or garden. 5-10 years
- Choose a musical sound to represent each character. 5-10 years
- Make a mind map or character profile of key characters that you can add to after seeing the production. 8-12 years
Write an innovation on the text by changing the creatures that Snugglepot and Cuddlepie meet, or setting the story in a different Australian habitat. Perhaps Mrs Wombat helps them on their way to find humans? Maybe they are chased by Mr Red Back Spider? Perhaps they are Darwin gum blossoms who live in the tropical savannah? Maybe they are chased by hungry Mr Crocodile? Maybe Miss Barramundi is caught in a fish trap? Maybe Mr Bandicoot comes to save the day? 7-10 years
Examine the scope and examples of May Gibbs' work, and consider the types of literary activities that successful author/illustrators may engage in during their career. May Gibbs was a ground-breaking female author, illustrator and commercial artist who had a successful career in the early to mid 20th Century in Australia and the UK. She created books, pamphlets, posters, magazine covers, cartoon strips, and merchandise such as bookmarks and postcards. 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the publishing of The Gumnut Babies.

- Read and view other examples of May Gibbs' works including her books, cartoon strips, posters, pamphlets and bookmarks. Consider the similarities and differences in her works, common themes, and how her ideas and themes are adapted for a different audience or purpose. 8-10 years
- Compare the careers of author/illustrators 100 years ago and author/illustrators today. What are some of the different types of texts and technologies that have come into existence? How has this changed the role of the author/illustrator? How did children access children’s literature 100 years ago? How do they access it now? 8-10 years
- Discuss the types of activities that artists undertake to create new works – research, sketches, photographs, journals, travelling, doodle books. Collect ideas in individual scrapbooks over a four week period. Take time each day to collect ideas for a creative project. Choose one of the many formats favoured by May Gibbs to develop your ideas. 9-10 years

Australian Curriculum – content codes

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NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum

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Develop a love of literature using The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie or Meeting Snugglepot and Cuddlepie as a starting point.

- Explore the history of Australian children’s books by reading and enjoying some classics such as Seven Little Australians (Ethel Turner, 1894), the Coles Funny Picture Book (E.W Cole, 1879), Dot and the Kangaroo (Ethel Pedley, 1899), We of the Never-Never (Aeneas Gunn, 1908), The Magic Pudding (Norman Lindsay, 1918), and Blinky Bill (Dorothy Wall, 1933). Talk to your parents, grandparents and great grandparents about their favourite children's books. 5-10 years
- Read May Gibbs' cartoon strip Bib and Bub, and enjoy the adventures of Ginger Meggs, first created by Jimmy Bancks in 1921. 7-10 years
- May Gibbs was a very successful female author and illustrator. Read and enjoy the works of some other famous female children's authors, those of the times such as Beatrix Potter (Peter Rabbit collection, 1902-1922), and those of recent times such as Pamela Allen, Mem Fox and Rosemary Wells. 5-10 years
- May Gibbs' work had a very strong conservation theme. Examine other children’s fiction with a strong environmental message, like The Hidden Forest and Belonging by Jeannie Baker, The Waterhole and Uno’s Garden by Graeme Base, and One Small Island by Alison Lester and Coral Tulloch. 5-10 years
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### Have fun with words

Just like the wonderful wordplay in the production of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie.

- In the production when Snugglepot and Cuddlepie are playing around they use the names of native flora and fauna to tease each other. “Ahhhh! I’ll thorny plum you, you fringe lilly! Not if I bottlebrush you first. You bully bull ant, you.” Create fantastic wordplays using the names of the flora and fauna found in your local habitats. “I’ll Kakadu plum you, you crazy crocodile!” ,“I’ll wiggle your waratah, you playful possum.” 8-10 years

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Create new visual artworks informed and inspired by the artworks of May Gibbs. The illustrations in the *Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*, and in *Meet Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* are rich and wonderful works of art in themselves.

- Many of the illustrations in *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* depict the everyday lives of the bush babies as if they lived in a human town or city, creating a whimsical bushland fantasy world. May Gibbs' deep knowledge of native flora and fauna allows her to create very convincing images of town life using the bush habitat as the setting. Examine images such as the hat shop, with lovely blossom babies trying on a range of blossom hats using a puddle as a mirror, a blossom taking a shower, from the drops of rain collected on the gum leaves above her, a bushland park as a temporary home for some homeless blossom babies and ladies, wrapped in gum leaf blankets as their only source of warmth. Create your own illustrations of town life using the natural features of your local habitat. 8-10 years

- The illustrations of gumnut and blossom babies are very endearing, expressing a strong sense of personality and life, and the uniqueness of Australian flora. Collect both real examples and images of your local flora. Draw new characters based on the features of these local plants. Use a grevillea spike or wattle flower as a starting point. Examine a spiky cycad, or native orchids for inspiration. 7-10 years

- May Gibbs reinterprets the scribbly marks found on gumtrees as messages for the inhabitants of her bushland fantasy. We see shop signs such as the Secondhand Home shop scribbled on a gum leaf, and the newspaper scribbled on a tree trunk. Experiment with making your own signs and messages using gum scribble. 7-10 years

- Look closely at the colours used in the illustrations of the books. The tones and colours chosen are strongly reminiscent of the Australian bush. How would the colours change if the setting was the beaches of the east and west coast? The rainforests of Far North Queensland? The Great Barrier Reef? Your garden at home? 7-10 years

**Australian Curriculum – content codes**

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**NSW Syllabus – Creative Arts Outcomes** (pending introduction of new Syllabus)

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Experiment with different styles genres and formats using the work of May Gibbs as a starting point. May Gibbs was a prolific writer, illustrator and commercial artist who worked in a wide range of genres and formats for many different purposes and audiences.

- **Snugglepot and Cuddlepie** as first written by May Gibbs was a fast paced and complex adventure story featuring a range of colourful characters, a very interesting quest, endless twists and turns, and high drama. Create your own bushland adventure. Send your characters on an important mission, plan a series of mishaps and narrow escapes, some endearing characters and a cracking ending. 7-10 years

- May Gibbs was commissioned to create images for promotional purposes. One of her most famous images of Dr Stork and Mrs Kookaburra was commissioned by the NSW Department of Public Health’s first Babies Week in 1920, and was designed to encourage families to bring their infants for regular health checks. This image was in use until 1959. View the poster at [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/gibbs/commercial_art/index.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/gibbs/commercial_art/index.html). Design and make your own promotional poster for a public health campaign of your choice using the bush babies and their native animal friends. 8-10 years

- The bush babies were also featured for commercial and merchandising purposes. They were found on quintessentially Australian postcards for homesick WW1 soldiers, cards and gumleaf shaped bookmarks and magazine covers. View the NSW State Library Discover Collection of May Gibb’s commercial art at [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/gibbs/commercial_art/index.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/society_art/gibbs/commercial_art/index.html). Design your own bushland commercial art. Draw and produce designs for Bushbaby T-shirts and cloth bags, covers for popular magazines such as Girlfriend or DMag, postcards promoting Australia as a tourist destination, birthday and Christmas cards, notebooks and diaries. 8-10 years

- May Gibbs produced a long running cartoon strip called Bib and Bub. Create your own cartoon strips featuring bushland characters. 8-10 years

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie has been published many times. Compare the artwork and style of different editions over time and analyse how and why there are different forms of the book.

### Australian Curriculum – content codes

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Reader’s Theatre

- In pairs or small groups find parts of the text that represent the personality of a character. Look at the language used by the author and discuss elements like speech patterns, figurative and descriptive language. Why has the author made certain language choices. Share your work and as a class compare and contrast the written text used to develop characters.

- Select a narrator and characters to read the story. Each character reads the spoken section of the text, with the rest read by the narrator, for example:

  **Narrator:** One day their friend Mrs Kookaburra came to visit
  **Cuddlepie:** Tell us a story!
  **Snugglepot:** Tell us about humans!
  **Narrator:** Mrs Kookaburra leant in close and began her yarn.
  Mrs Kookaburra: Humans are as strong as the wind, swift as the river, fierce as the sun. Humans are taller than the biggest branch on the biggest gumtree in all the land.
  **Narrator:** The younger nuts gasped and huddled in closer.

- Explore the different sounds of the character’s voices – Snugglepot’s daring and adventurous tone, Cuddlepie’s shy, and timid timbre, Mrs Kookaburra’s raucous cackle.

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Explore the power of imagination, and imaginative language in plays and written texts after seeing the production. The production is introduced by a voice over from May Gibbs, and is set in her imagination. Her works are characterised by her incredible imagination and the wonderful bush fantasy land she creates. This world is based around the Western Australian bush she spent hours playing in as a child.

- Create your own fantasy world based on an Australian habitat and the associated flora and fauna. Create characters and settings based on the Australian desert, a tropical rainforest, the mangroves, a suburban backyard. Draw the characters and write and illustrate their adventures. 7-10 years
- Read some other children’s books that celebrate the imagination such as The Lion in the Night by Pamela Allen, or Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, or the Narnia Chronicles by C.S Lewis. 5-10 years

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Explore how narratives are structured. Snugglepot and Cuddlepie is a narrative that tells the story of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie’s journey to find humans.

- Draw or unjumble a story map of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. 6-10 years.
- Identify the setting, the complications and the resolution in the story. 7-10 years
- Write your own narrative. 6-10 years

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Social and Emotional Learning Through the Arts.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie explores the importance of kindness and helping each other, the personal traits of curiosity, courage, being a quick thinker, adventurousness, and timidity, the relationship and balance between good and evil, and the responsibility we have to look after our environment. It also examines diverse family relationships and structures, the impact of bullies, the different cultures and customs of life in the bush and life in the city, and the power of the imagination.

Examine each of these themes:

- Cuddlepie is a gentle gumnut baby who tried to be kind to others. Are you a kind person? What does it mean to be kind? How do you show your kindness? Has anyone been kind to you? What is good about being kind? Is there anything hard about being kind? How do different people show kindness?
- Mr Frog helps the gumnut babies to find Mr Lizard. Ragged Blossom helps the gumnut babies and Mr Lizard when the Banksia Man is after them. Have you ever helped anyone? What did you do to be helpful? Has anyone ever helped you? How did they help? How does it feel to help others? How does it feel when people help you?
- Snugglepot is a very curious gumnut baby. He is very curious to see humans. Are you a curious person? What are you curious about? What do you do when you feel curious? How can being curious help you and others? How can it hurt you and others?
- Cuddlepie is a bit of a scaredy nut. He has to find a lot of courage when he is on his journey with his adventurous brother Snugglepot. Have you ever had to find some courage? Have you done something courageous? What is it like having to find some courage even if you are very scared about something? Some people win awards for courage and bravery. Some people are courageous every day in small ways. Think and talk about someone courageous you know.
- Cuddlepie is able to think very quickly on the spot to get his friends out of danger. Do you know someone who is a quick thinker? Have you ever used quick thinking to solve a problem?
- Snugglepot is very adventurous. He is always excited to go off to discover new and different things. Are you adventurous? What adventurous things have you done? What type of adventures do you enjoy? Is it always a good thing to be adventurous? What are some of the good things about being adventurous? What are some of the not so good things about being adventurous? Can you learn to be adventurous? Is there such a thing as being too adventurous?
- Cuddlepie and Ragged Blossom are both timid. What does being timid mean? Are you sometimes timid? Do you know any timid people? What is it like to be timid? What situations make you feel timid? Can it be a good
thing or helpful to be timid sometimes? How do you help yourself when you feel timid? How can others help you?

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie discover both good and evil in the world on their journey. They learn that some humans set traps for possums, while others set them free. They meet kind Mr Frog and evil Mrs Snake. What do you know about good and evil? Do we need both in the world? Is anyone ever really truly evil? Or truly good? Can people and animals change between good and evil?

- Professor Kookaburra speaks to the bushfolk of the ways in which humans are damaging the world, from the perspective of the flora and fauna in the Australian bush. This message is still very pertinent today. Are we responsible for looking after our world? What do you know about looking after the environment? What are some actions you can take to care for our world? What are some things you do that damage the environment? Look after the environment?

- There are many examples of diverse family situations in Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Cuddlepie has been adopted by Snugglepot's family. Ragged Blossom is an orphan. Mrs Fantail hands over the two young lizards to Mr and Mrs Lizard to look after. Who is in your family? What makes a family? What different types of families do you know? What is a blended family? Do you know anyone who is adopted, or fostered?

- Mrs Snake is a bully and the Big Bad Banksia Man is part of her gang. Have you ever been bullied? Has anyone ever tried to make you be a bully? Why do people join in with bullies in hurting and teasing others? What can you do if someone tries to make you be part of their gang? What can you do if a bully tries to hurt you or a friend?

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie travel from their bushland home to the big city. It is very different to what they are used to. What are the different customs and cultures of bush people and city people that you know? Why have these customs developed? Are they really different or is this just a stereotype?

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie are a product of May Gibbs’ wonderful imagination. How do you use your imagination? How can using your imagination help you to solve problems? Create wonderful things? Is it always a useful thing to have a great imagination? How can it help you and others? How can it cause difficulties?

Exploring emotions

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie also examines some common childhood emotions and emotional experiences. Cuddlepie is scared when he sets out on his adventure with Snugglepot. Ragged Blossom is lonely waiting at the dance by herself. The gumnut baby brothers are sad when they see poor Mr Possum in a trap. This story is a great starting point for discussions and activities that will help children to understand their feelings.

- Have you ever felt scared about doing something new?
- How did your body feel when you were scared? What did you do when you were scared?
- Have you ever felt lonely?
- What can you do if you feel scared or lonely, or if someone else is scared? Who are some people who could help you?
- What can you do if you feel sad and confused?
- What could you do to feel better?
These discussions and activities support progress towards the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities Achievement Standards for Foundation, Year 2 and Year 4:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding
Teaching and Learning Activities Across the Curriculum

There are countless ways to incorporate Snugglepot and Cuddlepie into all areas of the curriculum. Following is a list of jumping off points. The rest is up to your imagination.

Science

To assist with Science activities refer to the botanic illustrations and information at the end of this resource kit (page 31), compiled and provided by the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, NSW.

- Take a walk in your own local natural habitats. Notice, collect, observe, listen, smell and share your observations. What do you notice about your local environment? 5-10 years
- Examine botanical illustrations of the Australian flora depicted as the characters in Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Notice the similarities and differences between the different plants. Look at other botanical illustrations. How do they help us understand the flora depicted? 8-10 years
- Before cameras were widely available naturalists recorded what they saw and learnt through detailed drawings. Explore the scientific illustrations of Australian colonial times. How did they help people to learn about these natural features? How are they different from other types of illustrations? 8-10 years
- Research the local species of gumtrees and other Australian native found in your local habitat. What do the blossoms and nuts look like? Collect some and examine their features. What are the key differences and similarities between eucalypts and gum blossoms between the different states and territories? Make your own botanical drawings. 7-10 years
- Mrs Fantail is sitting on a nest of bird eggs, two of which are replaced by lizard eggs. What creatures in the Australian bush lay eggs, and how do they look after them? How are the eggs different to each other? 5-8 years
- Gather some facts about Australian flora and fauna. Have a quiz just like Mrs Snake and the two gumnut babies. 6-9 years
- Make a study of your local native habitat. What are the typical birds, insects, animals, reptiles found in your area? Research these native creatures and their interrelationships. 7-10 years
- Mrs Snake is a much feared predator. Who are the other predators in Australian habitats? Who are the predators in your habitat? How do people and creatures protect themselves from these predators? 7-10 years
- Professor Kookaburra is concerned about the impact of humans on the natural environment. What changes do you notice in your local habitats? 5-10 years

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History and Geography

- May Gibbs was a groundbreaking woman who forged a successful career in the mostly male dominated world of commercial illustration, writing and publishing. She studied and travelled extensively, married later in her life, and did not have children. Consider the typical roles of women in society in the early to mid 20th century. How was May Gibbs different? How has the role of women changed today? What was the impact of women like May Gibbs on the changing roles of women and girls in Australian society? Research other groundbreaking women in Australian society such as Edith Cowan (politics), and Nancy Bird-Walton (aviation). 7-10 years

- May Gibbs represents bush and city people and culture as distinctly different in her gumnut babies series. Consider whether the lives of people living in the Australian bush, and in rural areas are different to people living in Australian cities. What are the differences? What are the similarities? 7-10 years

- The gumnut and blossom babies build their homes and other structures out of leaves, sticks, and other things they have found in the bush. What kinds of homes and structures do people build in your community? Do they use local resources? What do buildings made out of local resources look like? What are they like to live in? 6-10 years

- Even when May Gibbs was writing in the early to mid 20th century there were concerns about the impact of human habitation on our environment. What were the concerns expressed by Professor Kookaburra? Are they still concerns today? Are there new environmental problems that Professor Kookaburra did not foresee? 7-10 years

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie provides an introduction to the native flora and fauna of Australia. People can build a sense of identity and place when their local plants and animals are celebrated. Explore the types of native flora and fauna in another culture that is prominent in your school community. What plants and animals do people from other nations celebrate as their own? How do they relate to their own native flora and fauna? 6-10 years

- May Gibbs’ works celebrate the spirit and essence of the Australian bush. Consider, research and explore the lives of people living in the Australian bush during May’s lifetime. 5-10 years

- The Banksia Men are very scary. What other types of scary creatures are in Australian mythology? Consider some of the scary characters from Indigenous culture such as the bunyips, yowies, Tiddalik the giant frog and the Rainbow Serpent. 5-10 years

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie first appeared during the WW1 years. May Gibbs also created patriotic postcards to be sent to soldiers in action. Consider the sense of identity and patriotism expressed by these characters, and the changing sense of nationhood during these years. How are they linked? How did they impact on each other? 9-10 years
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### NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum

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Mathematics

Meet Snugglepot and Cuddlepie picture book activities

- How many pages does Mr Lizard appear on? How many pages does Ragged Blossom appear on? 5-6 years
- How many days and nights did Snugglepot and Cuddlepie travel away from home?? 5-6 years
- How tall would the gumnut babies be? Compare them to the other creatures in the book. Are they small or big? Collect some gumnuts and make scale gumnut babies using the gumnuts as hats. Measure your gumnut babies. 5-7 years
- Find all the different shapes in the illustrations in the book. Choose one illustration. How many different size and colour circles do you see? 5-7 years
- Draw a map of the journey of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie that features all of the locations they visit. 6-7 years
- The gumnut and blossom babies are usually drawn in groups. Count the number of bush babies in the groups you see in the book. 5-6 years

The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie book activities.

- Create a timeline that presents the journey of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, including events that were occurring simultaneously. 8-10 years
- Create a detailed map of the adventure of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie, including the locations, and approximations of the distances and directions they travelled. 8-10 years
- How big are the fictional characters created from plants such as gumnut and blossom babies, and the Banksia Men? Research the sizes of the other animal characters that appear in the illustrations. Calculate the probable size of the fantasy characters. Test your theories by creating to scale and measuring these characters using real Banksia flowers, gumnuts and blossoms. 8-10 years
- Create a special bushbabies currency for the characters to use in their transactions in the bushland shops – two wattle coins for a hat, 5 pebbles for a cocoon home. 8-10 years

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Health, Wellbeing and Physical Education

- Discuss the role of emotions in the story. 5-10 years
- How do Snugglepot and Cuddlepie's feelings change throughout the story? 5-10 years
- Graph or draw a pictorial representation of the emotional changes throughout the story. 7-10 years
- Mime the emotions, play them on an instrument, move like Snugglepot and Cuddlepie when they experience these feelings. 5-10 years
- What different forms of exercise do the characters in *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* participate in? Study the illustrations and talk about the health benefits of walking in the bush, diving on the back of a frog, dancing at a gumtree branch party, riding a fast leaf down a switchback, the beetle battle, and boating with Mr Frog and Ragged Blossom in the Kurrajong. Recreate one of these bushland fantasy sports. 8-10 years
- Choreograph a dance that might have been popular at the gumnut and blossom babies dance. Perform it for your friends. 5-8 years
- There are many diverse family structures and characters in the story. Cuddlepie has been fostered by Snugglepot's family. Ragged Blossom is an orphan who is adopted by Lilly Pilly and her family. Mr Lizard adopts the two young lizards accidently hatched out by Mrs Fantail. Who is in your family? Is there anything different about your family that you would like to share or celebrate? 5-10 years

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Information and Communications Technology

- Take digital photos of children’s characterisations and freeze frames. Use them to make a Powerpoint or other multimedia presentation. 8-10 years
- Record a soundtrack for the story. 7-10 years
- Create a talking book. 7-10 years
- Create digital pictures using a drawing program. 5-10 years
- Access Snugglepot and Cuddlepie resources on the Internet. (See Resources for helpful links) 6-10 years

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NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum

Design and Technology

- Design and create your own bush fantasy world and bush fantasy characters using natural objects you collect in your local bushland. Make your own Banksia man, blossom babies, homes for bush babies, vehicles, buildings. 5-10 years
- Research the way that Australian bush plants are currently used to make food stuffs, and other goods. Plan and cook a class meal using products such as wattleseed, Kakadu plum, and lemon myrtle. Experiment with the many ways to use eucalyptus oil. 7-10 years
- Choose or create an animal or plant character. Design, make and wear one costume item that captures the essence of the character. 8-10 years

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Differentiating Snugglepot and Cuddlepie Activities for Students
with Special Needs

Students with special needs can be fully involved in enjoying and learning with the Snugglepot and Cuddlepie performance and education activities. All learners enjoy being challenged and thrive on high expectations. Take an open approach to different modes of participation, and create a teaching environment where all contributions are valued. Students with special needs have a right to access high quality arts and education experiences, and to learn along with their peers. Given the right supports these students will rise to the challenge.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie is an engaging, imaginative and dramatic story that appeals to all ages and abilities. All of the activities listed above can be adapted to provide many entry points for students with a wide range of extra needs – physical, sensory, socio-emotional, intellectual disabilities, communication, behavioural and medical needs, and students with profound and multiple disabilities. A list of examples and ideas is below.

Physical Disabilities
Students with physical disabilities may have difficulty expressing their ideas through drawing, moving, making, writing or sometimes even speaking.

- Record responses or ideas as an audio or video file, using an iPad or similar technology. Make a video recording your ideas and thoughts about one of the characters so classmates can add it to a group mind map.
- Share responses and ideas as a spoken presentation. Be a storyteller. Tell your class your own cracking dramatic adventure with plenty of twists and turns.
- Use talk to text technology such as Dragon Speak Naturally to record responses. Present your Professor Kookaburra style lecture to the Dragon Speak Naturally program so it can create a text version of your speech.
- Work with a partner or small group to collaborate to complete tasks. Work with a team to create your radio play version of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Assign roles such as Narrator, Actors, Audio Engineer, Vocal Sounds Artist, Sound Effects Artist, Critic, Marketing Guru and Producer.
- Use the students’ existing Assistive Technologies such as augmentative communication apps and eye-gaze technology to collect and share responses. Create new Australian flora and fauna characters using the existing vocabulary banks and images in the Proloquo2Go communication app.
- Work with physical strengths to promote participation in movement activities. Choreograph the new bush babies dance in a group. Incorporate unusual or amazing physical actions that are shared by all group members.

Vision and Hearing Loss
Students with mild to moderate vision loss may have difficulty seeing the detailed and delicate drawings of May Gibbs, and the finer detail of botanical drawings. They may also have trouble reading large amounts of small print text.

- Provide a significantly enlarged copy of drawings and text. Make A3 copies of each of the illustrations depicting the stages of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie’s journey.
- Use a black border made out of A4 paper or smaller to focus in on particular sections of enlarged drawings, and to reduce visual distractions. Use a black frame to focus on each segment of an enlarged copy of the hat shop, diving pool, or dance illustrations.
• Present images on a contrasting background to increase visibility. Cut out an enlarged copy of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie and stick them on a piece of brightly coloured cardboard.

• Provide an audio recording of important sections of the text. Make an audio recording of the section of the story when Mrs Snake and the Banksia men plot to catch Snugglepot, Cuddlepie and Mr Lizard, starring students using their best character voices.

Students with hearing loss often have difficulty hearing and following spoken instructions and class discussions.

• Provide clear step by step written instructions and examples for student activities. Create outstanding new animal and plant costume pieces by providing a visual template for each stage of the design process, with written labels, pictorial illustrations and suggestions included.

• Conduct silent class discussions where all contributions and questions are shared through writing, mime or drawing, much like Pictionary or Charades. Develop a new bush baby character as a class using no talking. Contributions could include drawings, mimes or written descriptions of the new bush baby character’s features.

• Aid understanding through the use of signed English or Auslan. Access signed versions of traditional fairy tales via YouTube. Share them then add key signs to sections of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. A comprehensive video sign dictionary can be found on the online Auslan sign bank.

Socio-emotional and behavioural needs.
Students with additional emotional and behavioural needs often find it difficult to complete challenging, complex or lengthy desktop tasks.

• Encourage students to work collaboratively to complete extensive written or drawn activities. Work in duos to map out the journey of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Each pair of students then illustrates and writes about one stage of the journey in detail to make a whole class story map.

• Provide alternative forms of sharing and presenting ideas that include movement elements. Work in groups to research, choose, rehearse and present animal and plant facts as a news report, advertorial, YouTube style clip or short documentary for the rest of the class.

• Create a safe learning environment where all students are treated with respect, and reserve the right to pass. Enable a positive and humorous class discussion by reframing Cuddlepie’s reluctance and timidity as providing a counter balance to Snugglepot’s risk taking nature.

Intellectual Disabilities
Students with intellectual disabilities often have difficulty with comprehending and responding to complex written, spoken and visual texts.

• Break the text down into very short sections and examine in depth to aid comprehension. There are endless opportunities for exploration with such a rich narrative text. Carefully examine the scene where the nuts join in the frogs’ diving game in order to get to Mrs Snakes’ cave. Are there any words we don’t know? What is diving? What are lanky legs? How do frogs move through the water? Why do the gumnut babies want to get through the water? What is a cave? How do you get to the mouth of a cave? Look at pictures of caves. Draw some diving frogs and hiding snakes. Recreate the journey of Mr Frog and the gumnut babies through the water.

• Use physical and visual supports. Literally build your new bush baby character. Dress a life size figure drawn on a large piece of paper. Provide flowers, leaves, sticks, large googly eyes, coloured fabrics, wool, string, coloured beads, cellophane.
• Make use of strong structures, time and repetition to aid learning and comprehension. Read and reread Meet Snugglepot and Cuddlepie over many days. Introduce the activity in the same way each time, using the same images, and the same language to give instructions. Collect and display new ideas and understandings about the text and put them on display in the classroom so you can revisit the idea as often as you need.
• Offer many alternative ways of responding; speaking, talk to text, drawing, photography, drama, videos, collage, air dried clay or plasticine models, song, musical improvisation. Create your own bush baby adventure. Provide a wide range of noisemakers and percussion instruments, craft materials, natural materials when creating new adventures. Use the instruments to plan the action, objects to create settings and characters.

Profound and multiple disabilities.
Students with profound and multiple disabilities will require a range of supports and adaptations to participate in these activities.

• Draw out the sensory elements of the text and pictures to engage learners with profound and multiple disabilities. Create some of the sensory elements of the Australian bush. Brush arms with some leaves and branches and banksia flowers, and listen to the crunch of the leaves and sticks. Experience the smells of the bush by crushing flowers, smelling eucalyptus oil, listen to the songs of the birds and animal calls, taste some Australian bush produce.
• Provide opportunities to make choices and indicate preferences. Work with a partner to build a bush baby character. Use eye gaze, sign or vocal sounds to choose between real objects or images. Should the bush baby have a nut or blossom hat, a gumleaf or wattie leaf skirt, dark skin or light skin?
• Use real life experiences in the environment and community for learning. Visit a cave, a bushland pool. Visit the Botanic Gardens in your area. Go on a bushwalk into a range of different habitats. Smell, feel, hear, see what it’s like to live in the Australian bush.
Resources

The Australian Curriculum Online
www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

Board of Studies NSW
http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/

The State Library of NSW features the work of May Gibbs in their Discover Collection series.

The Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust
www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

The official website of Nutcote, May Gibbs’ Neutral Bay home.
http://www.nutcote.org/

A detailed online biography of May Gibbs and her father Herbert Gibbs
http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gibbs-cecilia-may-6373

The Australian Children’s Literature website provides a comprehensive list of Australian children’s publications from 1830 to 1950

The ABC Splash site has a 5 minute video explaining how May Gibbs took inspiration from the Australian bush to write her classic Australian bushland fantasies.
http://splash.abc.net.au/media?id=104738

Visit the Auslan Signbank for a video dictionary of Australian sign language.
www.auslan.org.au
Excursions

Contact the following organisations for details of excursions related to *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* in the Greater Sydney area:

Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, NSW – see information sheet included in this resource kit
Botanic Gardens in your local area

Acknowledgements

This resource was created and assembled from a variety of sources:
Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, NSW
The State Library of NSW Discover Collections – May Gibbs website.
*Snugglepot and Cuddlepot* Stage Adaptation by Eva Di Cesare, Sandra Eldridge and Tim McGarry
*Meet Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* by May Gibbs published by Scholastic Australia.
*The Complete Adventures of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* by May Gibbs published by HarperCollins Publishers
The Australian Childrens Literature website
The Australian Dictionary of Biography website
The Nutcote official website
Illustrations copyright May Gibbs
Photograph of May Gibbs by Robert Cale

Thank you to the The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust for their invaluable assistance.

This resource was compiled by Catherine Threalfall (BMus, BTeach, MEd)
with contributions from Elaine Smith (BArts, BTeach)

Botanical Illustrations and information courtesy of Community and Education Programs, the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney.
Botanical illustrations and information

The following pages provide information from the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney relating to some of the native plants in Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Please note that species may vary from state to state. Students can investigate the appearance of each species in different states to compare and contrast.

OLD MAN BANKSIA (Banksia serrata)
Banksias

Banksias are very hardy plants found only in Australia. There are 72 known species which are all woody, evergreen plants ranging from shrubs growing along the ground to tall trees. The leaves are usually sclerophyllous — hard and leathery — which helps them to survive in harsh dry conditions.

Old man banksia (*Banksia serrata*) is a distinctive banksia known by its serrated leaves with saw-like edges. It is usually found in dry sclerophyll or woodland on sandstone in NSW, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. Its name and its dry brown flowers with woody seed follicles could have been the inspiration for May Gibbs to create her “big bad” *Banksia Men* characters.

Animal relationships

Although many species of bee help pollinate Banksia flowers, one particular bee – the banksia bee (*Hylaeus alcyoneus*) - has a special relationship with Banksia flowers. A male banksia bee will choose the biggest Banksia flower spike he can find and defend it against others in the hope of attracting more female banksia bees. This defensive behaviour has been likened to a little “King of the Castle”.

Nectar feeding or “nectarivorous” birds are pollinators of many Banksia species. Birds such as rainbow lorikeets, honeyeaters and spinebills frequently visit Banksia flowers to feed on the sugar-rich nectar they provide. Many mammals also feed on Banksia flowers, including feathertail gliders, squirrel gliders and pale field-rats.

Cultural uses and significance

Aboriginal people sucked nectar from the flower heads of some types of banksia. Heath Banksia (*Banksia ericifolia*) flowers were placed in water to dissolve the nectar as a sweet high energy drink. Banksia seed cones were used to carry fire from one place to another because they burn for a long time. The dried cones were used by women as hairbrushes.

Interesting facts

Banksia flower heads are made up of hundreds (sometimes thousands) of tiny individual flowers grouped together in pairs. The colour of the flower heads usually ranges from yellow to red. Many species flower over autumn and winter.

The woody fruits or ‘cones’ protect the seeds from foraging animals and from fire. Some Banksias release their seeds as a response to fire. This ecological adaptation is called *pyriscence*. The Banksia seeds released immediately after a fire fall in nutrient-rich soil and have the advantage of not having to compete with other plants for space and light.
RED BOTTLEBRUSH (Callistemon lanceolatus)
**Bottlebrush**

Bottlebrushes are members of the genus *Callistemon* and are closely related to paperbark trees which also have ‘bottlebrush’ shaped flower spikes. Most bottlebrushes occur in the east and south-east of Australia. Many species can tolerate or even thrive in damp conditions; others are very hardy and can cope with drought and limited nutrients. Their brush-like flower-heads come in colours ranging through pink, red, mauve, cream and green.

**Animal relationships**

Bottlebrush flowers can be spectacular and are irresistible to insects, small mammals and nectar-feeding birds including white plumed honeyeaters and rainbow lorikeets. Many honeyeater birds have a furry, brush-like tongue that assists them to gather the nectar from deep inside the flowers. These animals pollinate the flowers while getting a meal of sugar-rich nectar.

**Cultural uses and significance**

Aboriginal people sucked the sweet nectar from bottlebrush flowers, or mixed it with water to make high-energy drinks. *Callistemon* species were also used in Aboriginal bush medicine, as an antiseptic in treating scratches and cuts.

**Interesting facts**

Bottlebrush flowers look just like brushes designed to clean out bottles — this is the origin of their common name! If you look closely at a bottlebrush flower spike, you will notice that it is actually made up of lots of individual flowers bunched together. This makes a larger display, to attract the attention of birds and other animal and insect pollinators.
CRIMSON SPIDER ORCHID (Left – Caladenia arenaria, Right – Caladenia concolor)
Crimson Spider Orchid

The crimson spider orchid (*Caladenia spp.*) has flowers with five long spreading petals and sepals that look a little bit like spidery legs. It grows in woodland on granite soils in NSW, ACT and Victoria amongst other orchids, eucalyptus trees, flax lilies, tea trees and native grasses. It is classed as endangered in NSW.

There are very few crimson spider orchids left in the wild, some say less than 30 plants, so scientists from the Australian Network for Plant Conservation have been trying to grow more, to help increase their population.

Animal relationships

All Australian terrestrial orchids rely on a specific type of fungi to germinate and sustain their growth throughout their lifecycle. In order to germinate spider orchid seeds, scientists needed to find the right fungus. Each kind of orchid is also pollinated by a unique insect and we don’t yet know what insect pollinates the crimson spider orchid.

Cultural uses and significance

Tubers of *Caladenia* spp. are recorded as a traditional food source for Aboriginal people in NSW.

Interesting facts

The crimson spider orchid’s deep purplish-red flowers bloom in September and are said to smell like a hot motor!

Crimson spider orchids are deciduous and after flowering they lay dormant as a tuber in the ground in order to survive the heat and dryness of summer and autumn.
DAVIDSON’S PLUM

(*Davidsonia pruriens*)
Davidson’s Plum

There are four species of Davidson’s Plum, and two are grown commercially for their fruit (Davidsonia pruriens and Davidsonia jerseyana).

Davidson’s Plum (Davidsonia jerseyana) is a palm-like tree growing up to 10m tall. It has large hairy leaves towards the top of the trunk and small pinkish flowers which grow in clusters directly from the main trunk. The fruit are 3-6cm in diameter and fall to the ground when ripe.

It is found in areas of subtropical rainforest in north-east NSW and Queensland and is classified as endangered. Natural populations are in decline due to habitat alteration and fragmentation such as land clearing for agricultural or urban development. Weed infestation is also a threat as weeds can inhibit seed germination or smother plants.

Animal relationships

It is named for its plum-like fruit which is food for many birds, insects and mammals. Little is known of either the pollination or the seed dispersal of the Davidson's Plum. The size and form of the flower suggests that small insects may be its main pollinators. The fruit is eaten by many animals such as flying foxes, sulphur crested cockatoos, cassowaries and king parrots. Rodents also eat the seeds.

Cultural uses and significance

Davidson's plum has been a staple in the diet of the Aboriginal people from Eastern Australia’s rainforest areas. The plums can be eaten raw and have an astringent sour flavour with fibrous dark blood-red coloured flesh. The fruits smell earthy, like fresh beetroot, with a slightly pickled flavour.

Timber from the tree trunks was also used to make harpoons for catching turtles and hunting dugong (a marine mammal). Nowadays the trees are grown commercially to produce fruit for jams, yoghurt, fruit wine, ice creams and sauces.

Interesting facts

The plums have 100 times the vitamin C found in oranges and also contain lutein, a compound that plays an important role in eye health, along with magnesium, zinc, calcium potassium and manganese.

Research has been done into the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of Davidson’s Plum.
EUCALYPTUS – SPOTTED GUM (Corymbia maculata)
Eucalyptus Trees

There are three groups of plants known as Eucalypts or “gum trees” – *Eucalyptus, Corymbia* and *Angophora*. There are over 700 species, most of which are trees and native to Australia. Eucalypt species are found all across the Australian landscape from sub-alpine areas to wet coastal forests, temperate woodlands and the arid inland.

Animal relationships

The leaves of certain types of Eucalypts including river red gum, grey gum and ribbon gum are important as the food for koalas. Other marsupials also eat Eucalypt leaves, sap and flower, including common ringtail possums, brushtail possums and sugar gliders. Many species of stick and leaf Insects (Phasmids) also feed on a diet of gum leaves and have the perfect camouflage to hide amongst the leaves and branches. Gum trees also provide shelter for many animals in the form of nesting space and tree hollows. When flowering they attract nectar feeding birds such as rainbow lorikeets and many species of honeyeater. Pollination is mainly by a great variety of insects but also by birds such as rainbow lorikeets and small mammals such as flying foxes.

Cultural uses and significance

Eucalypts have been used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years. The timber made tools such as shields, coolamons, didgeridoos, boomerangs and canoes. The gum or sap of some species was mixed with water as a tonic for gastro-intestinal symptoms and some species used as an antiseptic for treating cuts or sores, or as a natural insecticide. Eucalypts are important for timber production in Australia, with many species from both natural forests and plantations used for building materials, woodchips, paper and fuel. The leaves have oil glands containing volatile oils which are used commercially for antiseptics, perfumes and essences. Flowers are also important for honey production.

Interesting facts

The Blue Mountains to the west of Sydney have been given their name from the blue haze often surrounding the mountains – created by eucalyptus oils dispersing from the leaves of eucalypts into the atmosphere.

The gumnut baby blossom hats such as that worn by Ragged Blossom are modelled on a Eucalypt flower. The feathery filaments are the stamens, the male parts of the flower. Snugglepot and Cuddlepie wear gumnuts as hats – they are the woody capsule that holds the eucalyptus seeds.
FLANNEL FLOWER (Actinotus helianthi)
Flannel Flower

The common flannel flower (*Actinotus helianthi*) grows in exposed situations in coastal heath and scrub as well as in Eucalypt forests. Flannel flowers don’t like to have ‘wet feet’; they are often found growing in shallow, sandy soil which does not hold moisture. They occur along the east coast of Australia from south-eastern Queensland to the south coast of NSW. Flannel flowers are small plants, usually growing between 30cm and 90cm high. The flowers appear creamy, white, and sometime even greenish in colour. The best time to see flannel flowers in bloom is spring. The petal-like bracts of the flannel flower are soft and fluffy to touch – giving the plant its common name.

Animal relationships

Flannel flowers are pollinated by native wasps.

Cultural uses and significance

A cultivar of the flannel flower named ‘Federation Star’ was selected as the NSW floral emblem for the Centenary of Federation in 2001. Before then, flannel flowers were being picked from wild populations to be sold as cut flowers. The cultivation of ‘Federation Star’ has helped conserve wild flannel flowers, by providing a new variety that is grown specifically for the cut flower trade. Flannel flowers feature in the stories of the D’harawal, the Aboriginal people of western Sydney. You can read one story here: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/Resources/kids_zone/stories_and_songs/the_flannel_flower_story

Interesting facts

Looking at a flannel flower you might think that it is related to daisies but it is actually in the same plant family as carrots (*Apiaceae*)!

*Actinotus helianthi*, the scientific name for the flannel flower, describes its appearance well: *Actinotus* comes from the Greek word meaning ‘ray’ or ‘spoke of wheel’ while *helianthi* refers to its resemblance to sunflowers.
FRINGE LILY (Thysanotus tuberosus)
Fringe Lily

The Common Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus tuberosus*) is widespread in grasslands and woodlands along the eastern coast of Australia – in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It grows on a variety of soil types and is the most common of the Fringe Lily species. It gains its name for the distinctive purple fringe around the edge of its three petals. Its flowers can be seen when the weather is getting warmer – mostly from November onwards. Each flower is only open for one day.

Animal Relationships
It is most commonly pollinated by native bees.

Cultural uses and significance
The underground tubers can be eaten and have been described as crisp and juicy but not having much flavour. Like other *Thysanotus* species, the tubers are best eaten around the time when the plant is flowering for maximum energy.

Interesting facts
The Common Fringe Lily gets its scientific name *Thysanotus tuberosus* from its fringed flowers and potato-like roots. “Thysanotus” is derived from a Greek word meaning “fringed” referring to its flowers – and “tuberosus” is derived from a Latin word meaning “a swelling” referring to the underground tubers.
LILLY PILLY (Acmena smithii)
Lilly Pilly

Lilly Pilly trees are rainforest plants with glossy green leaves and edible pink or purple fruits that appear in autumn. The magenta lilly pilly (*Syzygium paniculatum*) is an endangered species which grows in rainforests along the Eastern coast of Australia. There are small populations growing along the coast of NSW between Jervis Bay and Bulahdelah.

Animal relationships

Some animals eat the lilly pilly flowers, including possums and white headed pigeons. Many animals including birds and possums feed on the fruit of the lilly pilly. By eating the fruit, these animals also help to disperse lilly pilly seeds. Lilly pilly trees are pollinated by bees, the Native Hawkmoth, honeyeaters and butterflies.

Cultural uses and significance

The fruit from the lilly pilly were eaten raw by Aboriginal people. They were also one of the first plants to be noted as edible during Captain Cook’s first visit to Australia. The colonists would also eat the fruits, making jams and summer drinks.

Interesting facts

The fruit of the lilly pilly can be made into delicious jams. The magenta lilly pilly is endangered. Some of the threats to this species are fire, clearing for urban development and weed invasion. The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have several strategies to try to protect the remaining populations of lilly pilly, including reduction burns, weed control, and protection of habitat from clearing and disturbance.
PHRAGMITES (Phragmites australis)
Phragmites

*Phragmites australis*, or common reed, is a type of grass that grows in fresh or salty water up to one metre deep. It is especially common in swamps and tidal waters, and at the edges of lakes, ponds and small streams. It can grow up to six metres high, and forms dense thickets called ‘reed beds’. It flowers in spring; the large hairy flower-heads can be 30 cm long and are purplish green. As they mature through summer and into autumn, the flowers transform into fluffy white seed-heads.

*Phragmites australis* is widespread through Australia along the coast and inland waterways. It is considered to be invasive, as it spreads rapidly and suppresses the growth of other plants.

Animal relationships

The reed beds provide shelter for many animal including water birds. Some solitary bees use the hollow reeds as nests. Common reed is also the host plant for some native butterflies, including the White grass dart butterfly and the Evening brown butterfly.

Cultural uses and significance

There are many uses for the common reed. Aboriginal people ate the plants’ young green shoots, and used the reeds to weave baskets, bags and mats. The reeds were also used to make necklaces. Larger reeds could be bound together to make a raft, or used singly as long, light spears.

Interesting facts

*Phragmites australis* is used as a water purifier in a process called phytoremediation. This is a way of treating ‘greywater’ from kitchens and laundries, and also sewerage. The waste water travels through large reed beds in artificial wetlands, where the roots of the plants remove some of the excess nutrients from the water. The water can then be used for irrigation, or released back into natural waterways.
WARATAH (Telopea speciosissima)
Waratah

The NSW waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) is a shrub which grows up to 3 metres tall. It grows on sandy soils in dry sclerophyll forest in NSW from Ulladulla on the South Coast to the Watagan Mountains and the Blue Mountains. In these open forests, the waratah grows as an understory plant, partly shaded by the Eucalyptus trees. It occurs naturally throughout the Sydney Basin in at least 10 national parks. The waratah requires very low nutrient levels in the soil. Flowers appear between September to November, however the buds may be on the plant for several months before opening. Each flower head may contain as many as 250 individual flowers and grows to be 7-10cm in diameter. The seeds of the waratah each have a papery wing; when the large pod splits open in autumn, the seeds are released and distributed by the wind.

Animal relationships

The large flowers of the waratah contain an abundance of nectar — a great attraction for many native birds such as honeyeaters. Waratahs are largely pollinated by birds; as the birds feed on the nectar deep inside the flower, their heads become dusted with pollen, which is then spread from flower to flower. Other animals also feed on the waratah flowers, including pygmy possums and a variety of insects.

Cultural uses and significance

The NSW waratah has been the official state floral emblem for New South Wales since 24 October 1962 and appears on many state government documents. Waratahs are one of many nectar-bearing flowers that were consumed by Aboriginal people. The sweet nectar could be sucked out, and in some cases the whole flower would be eaten. A sweet drink could be made by dipping the flower in water.

Interesting facts

The name *Telopea speciosissima* comes from the Greek word ‘telopos’ which means ‘seen from afar’, and the Latin ‘speciosus’ which means ‘beautiful’ or ‘handsome’.

Waratahs are able to regenerate from their rootstock, meaning they are able to survive moderate bushfires.
SYDNEY GOLDEN WATTLE  (*Acacia longifolia*)
Wattle

Wattles (*Acacia*) grow in almost every part of Australia, but they are most common in woodlands, forests and drier regions. There are approximately one thousand species of wattles. Most wattles are short lived with a lifespan of 7 to 20 years. Most wattles flower during spring and summer but some flower in the cooler months. Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) naturally occurs from the southern Eyre Peninsula of South Australia, to western Victoria and southern inland NSW. It grows in areas with sandy, stony soil such as dry sclerophyll forest alongside Banksias and Eucalypts.

Animal relationships

Sugar gliders have been observed feeding on the gum that oozes from the trunk and branches of some wattles. The double bar finch nests in the shelter of prickly wattle branches. Wallabies have been known to eat wattle seedlings and many insects and beetles also feed on the leaves, seeds and woody stems of the plants.

Although the flowers do not have much nectar in them, the pollen is a good source of protein and is eaten by many insects. Wattles are pollinated by these pollen-feeding insects including beetles, wasps and bees.

Cultural uses and significance

 Aboriginal people ground the seeds of some wattles into flour and cooked damper. The edible sweet gum was another popular treat. Extracts from the bark and leaves were also used medicinally to relieve toothaches, colds, or soothe burns. The wood from some wattle trees was used to make clap sticks, clubs, spears, boomerangs and shields.

The golden wattle was officially declared as Australia’s national floral emblem on 1st September 1988. Our national colours of green and gold come from wattle, and wattle also features on the Australian Coat of Arms.

Interesting facts

While most wattles are various shades of yellow there are a few exceptions. *Acacia purpureopetala* in Queensland has mauve-pink flowers. In Victoria, *Acacia leprosa* has red flowers.
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