



by Neil Amor

Porcini (*Boletus edulis*) are one of the world's most widely consumed wild mushrooms – wild because they are not cultivated. The porcini mushroom symbolises hidden abundance, the bounty of

the earth, and connection to the forest.

A 1998 estimate suggested that the total annual worldwide consumption of *Boletus edulis* was between 20,000 and 100,000 tons, although this is considered conservative as this tonnage only

takes into account commercial harvesting.

Romans prized the porcini as a delicacy. Through the Middle Ages it became a cornerstone of Italian regional autumn cuisine.

The name derives from the Latin *suillus*: 'of the pig' possibly for its stocky, fleshy shape, or because wild boar unerringly sought it out.

Porcini mushrooms are not only famed for their unique umami flavour, but in the process of formation, they contribute to the surrounding environment, in that they live in symbiosis with certain trees.

The mushrooms colonise and nourish the root systems of trees. They are efficient storehouses of water and nutrients, which they release to the root system as needed.

They convert otherwise unusable substances in the soil and adjust nitrogen according to the tree's needs. In turn, the trees supply the mushroom with the energy

Porcini Mushroom Pasta

Ingredients
1 cup dried porcini mushrooms
fettuccini pasta, fresh if available
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tbsp olive oil
3 tbsp Italian parsley, chopped
½ cup red wine
1 cup heavy cream

Method
Soak the dried porcini mushrooms hot water for 1 hour. Drain mushrooms and save the

water.

Cook garlic in oil on medium heat for 1 minute, then add mushrooms. Add red wine and let the liquid absorb. Then add porcini water and simmer on medium heat for 10 minutes. Stir in cream and add salt and pepper to taste. Simmer until thickened. Add to pasta and sprinkle with parsley. This earthy, silky sauce can be served with any pasta—fresh gnocchi is something special.

to perform all this work, via photosynthesis.

The relationship is so intertwined, that in the event of droughts or invasive insect invasions, the species work together to restore health and equilibrium.

Boletus edulis is well suited to drying: its flavour intensifies, it is easily reconstituted, and its resulting texture is pleasant.

They are rich in the dietary minerals, sodium, iron, calcium and magnesium. They also have high content of B vitamins, and trace elements of selenium.

The cultural influence of this mushroom was extended, when in 2023, with the signing of bill H.B. 92, *Boletus edulis* became the state mushroom of Utah.

Until next month, eat well.

History and science feature at Jiggi Spring Fair

Recording the Jiggi Valley's local history and its environment are two new displays featured at this year's Jiggi Spring Fair on Saturday 12th September from 11am at Jiggi Hall.

For the first display, local historian Thea Orr is building a huge timeline chart to hang around the walls of the Jiggi Hall so visitors can see the valley's history at a glance.

Ms Orr said the Jiggi Historical Committee was focused on how the history of the local districts – Jiggi, Georgica and Mountain Top – could be recorded for the future. This year, it will add a number of hands-on games and activities so local kids can connect with the valley's past.

The Fair's second display will outline how the Jiggi Valley Citizen Science (JVCS) group can help people contribute to environmental research. Organiser Cathie Dosba-Thomson said citizen science was easy to learn, fun to do and would help protect local threatened species.

Ms Dosba-Thomson said the citizen science stall would offer activities for all ages – including basic training in the iNaturalist app.

"If you want to connect with nature in an enjoyable and meaningful way, come



down to the Fair. You can also follow our JVCS Facebook group for details about training sessions," Cathie said.

There are only 230 houses spread around the picturesque Jiggi Valley 20km north-west of Lismore. But, each year, locals pool their resources to mount a memorable day of food and drink, fun and games, community stalls, raffles, a Welcome to Country and live music.

The Jiggi Spring Fair raises money for upkeep of the historic Jiggi Hall (built 1907) as well as supporting the Jiggi Primary School, the Tower Preschool and other local organisations.

An annual highlight is the fierce tug-of-war events between men, women and children of Jiggi and Georgica. Engraved trophies for these old battles hang on the walls of the Jiggi Hall and bear witness to the sweat and strained muscles that

make the event such a cultural highlight.

The Spring Fair also features displays of local art and produce and the ever-popular White Elephant stall – where someone's discarded memories are recycled as another's must-haves. In addition, information stalls will be set up by the SES, the Jiggi Valley Fire Service and Landcare.

Daytime entertainment includes an open mic session for music and poetry, a kidszone run by kids, a Maypole Dance and a performance by the Jiggi Primary School. Other stalls allow local businesses who sponsor the Fair to showcase their products.

At nightfall, the art, produce, flowers and White Elephant leftovers are auctioned off to a, by now, spirited crowd of local bidders. Then the evening is taken up with live music, dancing, supper, a bar and circles of locals chatting around fire pits.

The Jiggi Spring Fair welcomes everyone from the Northern Rivers to experience how a small, rural valley maintains its local culture while having a heck of a good time!

For more information or to book a stall, please contact Danielle Deidun at: jiggihall@gmail.com or Kenrick Riley on 0404-111-603.

The sacrifice of Nimbin Island

Rebirth of the Loon
by Laurie Axtens



As you may or may not know, I live in one of the few remaining homes in North Lismore.

You may also be unaware that the purportedly conservative politicians of our region; Hogan and Saffin, engaged the CSIRO to develop engineering options that would significantly mitigate my flooding.

Very kind – particularly as I'm the only household that remains in my street after the buyback and the demolitions.

Late last month that flood mitigation report was published – sadly without thorough mapping of the 10 proposed multi-gigalitre retention dams that it champions. Quite a conspicuous omission when you think that the report took three years to write and \$11 million to almost complete, and the retention dams are the primary features of the report.

Fortunately, our talented community has people skilled enough to use the specifications laid out in the report to map these proposed retention dams.

If you'd like to see one – I refer you to the front page. These dams will be filled during a major flooding event and those waters will be held there for 12 days or more

and slowly released. As you again may not be aware, we regularly receive dual flooding events which could have floodwaters retained in those dams for a month, possibly more.

A quick perusal of the Goolmangar retention dam indicates it will completely isolate Nimbin from road transport for the previously stated periods.

So aside from the all-new upper catchment black water events, profound risk of increased land slips and localised extinctions, the fact that you will need airdrops and air lifts for weeks is an amazing sacrifice. Thanks Nimbin.

Major flooding can cause me many days of cleaning up and can be on my property for several days – your sacrifice and the sacrifice of nine other upper catchment areas really cannot be understated – and I can't fully express how grateful I am – if you actually let them do it.

Prevent. Eradicate. Contain. Protect assets

Weed words
by Triny Roe

Weeds – exotic, opportunistic, invasive and virulent pest plants – fall into one of four categories which dictate how they are managed. Different regions may have different conditions for the same plant. Some plants are problematic in some regions but not in others or simply have not yet arrived.

To avoid introduction of new species, practice weed hygiene. Be careful where you shake out car mats from interstate travel. Don't pick roadside flowers on long distance trips or anywhere. Wash mud off undercarriage of vehicles. Pick seeds off socks and strides and chuck them in the bin, not out the window or in the garden.

Ensure boots are clean when visiting National Parks. Quarantine new stock before releasing them into the paddock. Keep a close eye

on areas where animals are fed. Identify new plants promptly when they appear and deal with them appropriately.

Prevent

If a listed weed is not present in an LGA, it could be under a prevention order. In the Northern Rivers, weeds to prevent include parthenium weed, *Parthenium hysterophorus*. This pretty frilly herb with creamy white star flowers can complete its lifecycle in as little as four weeks.

With a huge invasive potential, parthenium produces an allelopathic chemical which lets it outcompete everything else. It's prevalent in Central Queensland where it arrived in pasture seed imported from Texas, USA.

Currently not yet naturalised into NSW, there have been outbreaks which have been controlled. Contaminated chicken feed has been responsible for some of these incursions, as has agricultural

machinery and vehicles.

Parthenium looks similar to annual ragweed *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, but has grooved stems. Ragweed stems are round.

Eradicate

Some weeds are not yet present or only in low numbers. With potential to be a significant problem, these species have been earmarked for total removal, before their populations explode.

Velvet tree, *Miconia calvescens*, a tall shrub growing 6 to 12 metres high, is one of these. Once popular with collectors, its large glossy green leaves have prominent veins and a distinctive purple underside. In Tahiti they call it the 'Purple Plague' due to damage it has done invading their rainforests.

A mature miconia can produce 5 million seeds in a year. It germinates and grows in low light, forms dense thickets and displaces native vegetation. Don't let it get away.



GDF spreads readily.

was recognised by authorities as a problem.

Don't let them spread means, at a bare minimum, don't let them set seed. Chop them down when they flower.

Protect assets

These weeds are ubiquitous. Landholders are expected to manage them appropriately and not let them spread under their general biosecurity duty, acting to protect sensitive areas.

Consider a vegetation survey before purchasing land if unfamiliar with local plant species. "It's all green, all good" or "It's so pretty" are recipes for trouble.

Lemon Balm – A little patch of calm

Herbal Pharmacy
by Sammi Allen

There are certain herbs that quietly weave themselves into everyday life, asking for very little while giving so much in return. Lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is one of those herbs.

On our farm, lemon balm is one of the first herbs people are drawn to. Without thinking, they reach out, rub a leaf between their fingers and smile as its bright lemon fragrance fills the air.

It has a way of making people pause, even if only for a moment. In a world that often feels busy, rushed and noisy, perhaps that's part of its medicine.

A member of the mint family, lemon balm has been growing alongside people for more than 2,000 years. Native to the Mediterranean, it found its way into monastery gardens throughout Europe, where monks cultivated it not only for its wonderful scent but also for its ability to lift the spirits and settle the nerves.

The famous physician and alchemist Paracelsus reportedly called it an "elixir of life," while Carmelite monks made a celebrated tonic known as Carmelite Water, using lemon balm as one of its treasured ingredients.

Today, science is beginning to explain what traditional herbalists observed long ago. Researchers have identified compounds including rosmarinic acid, flavonoids and aromatic essential oils such as citral and citronellal.



Its botanical name, *Melissa*, comes from the Greek word for honeybee. The connection is fitting. Lemon balm's tiny white flowers are loved by bees, and for centuries beekeepers have rubbed the fresh leaves inside empty hives to encourage new swarms to settle. It reminds us that herbs rarely exist in isolation, they support not only us, but the wider ecosystem around us.

For generations, herbalists have reached for lemon balm whenever life's worries began to spill over into the body. Before we understood neurotransmitters or stress hormones, people recognised that anxious minds often came with tight stomachs, restless nights and racing thoughts. Lemon balm became known as a herb that gently softened those edges.

Today, science is beginning to explain what traditional herbalists observed long ago. Researchers have identified compounds including rosmarinic acid, flavonoids and aromatic essential oils such as citral and citronellal.

These natural constituents appear to influence GABA, one of the brain's main calming chemical messengers.

Clinical studies have found that lemon balm may help ease mild anxiety, reduce feelings of stress and support restful sleep, all while remaining remarkably gentle for many people.

The digestive system also seems to appreciate lemon balm's calming nature. Herbal traditions have long used it for occasional bloating, digestive discomfort and cramping, particularly when symptoms seem connected to stress or nervous tension. It's a lovely reminder that the gut and the mind have always been in conversation, long before modern medicine described the gut-brain axis.

Lemon balm has another fascinating talent. Research has shown that preparations containing lemon balm may help reduce the severity and duration of cold sores when applied early. Laboratory studies have demonstrated activity against herpes simplex virus, adding scientific support to another long-held traditional use. One of the things I love most about lemon balm is that it doesn't ask us to do anything complicated. It invites us back to simple rituals. A warm cup of tea at the end of a long day or a few drops of fresh plant

tincture in your favourite drink. A few quiet moments in the garden. Taking a breath before moving on to the next task. Sometimes those small moments become the foundations of wellbeing.

At Nimbin Apothecary, lemon balm has become one of the herbs we simply couldn't imagine being without. We harvest and dry it for our herbal tea, gather it fresh for our fresh plant tincture, and infuse it into the oil used in our Cold Care Balm.

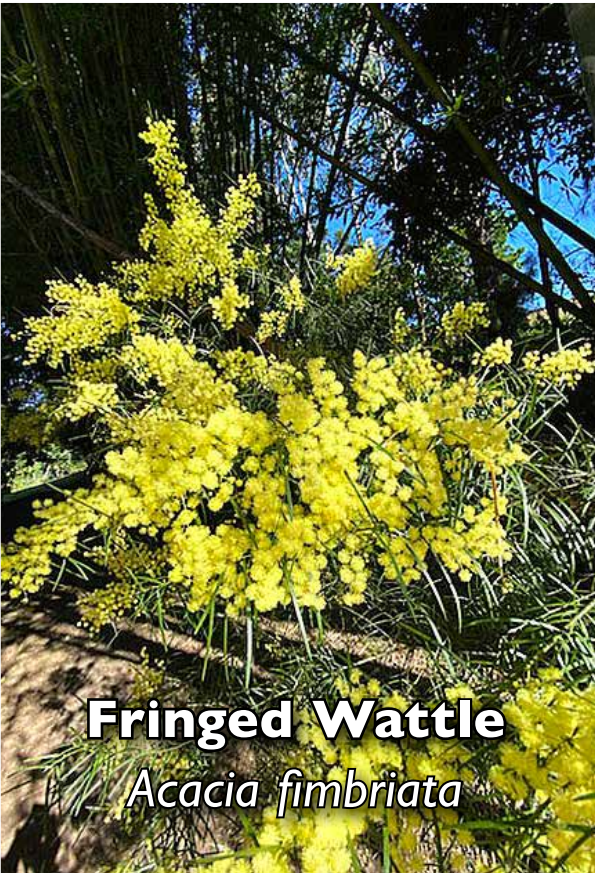
Each preparation honours a different aspect of this remarkable plant, but they all begin in the same place – with fresh leaves growing under the Northern Rivers sun.

Perhaps that's why lemon balm has remained loved for so many centuries. It doesn't promise miracles. Instead, it offers something many of us are searching for: a little more calm, a little more balance, and a gentle reminder to slow down and simply breathe.

Sammi is a qualified Naturopath and available for over the counter acute consultations at the Nimbin Apothecary, phone 66891529, email: admin@nimbinapothecary.com.au The shop is located at 54 Cullen Street, Nimbin.

The information in the column is meant for general interest only and should not be considered as medical advice.

Plant of the month



Fringed Wattle
Acacia fimbriata

by Richard Burer

Spring comes early in the Northern Rivers, and in some parts of our valleys of Nimbin Acacias are in full flower and in their spring glory.

The glorious early yellow flowers could indicate a dry hot spring and late September can hit you hard, so late August (frost is possible) looks great to get your spring trees in and other outdoor planting tasks like the vegie garden and the ever-demanding woody weed control after years of intense wet.

Acacia fimbriata and its yellow lemon flowers is one of my favourites, and although not endemic to Nimbin it can be found south of here where it grows

on clay soils in open forest.

Growing to about 5-8m, Fringed Wattle is an excellent shrub or small tree for most gardens and the farm or large landscaped area.

It provides an excellent fast cover, screen or wind break. Eventually it can get ratty, but it is still an easy to manage Wattle.

A hardy small tree, I recommend this for those large gardens and on other outdoor planting tasks like the vegie garden and the ever-demanding woody weed control after years of intense wet.

Easy to grow from seed, Fringed Wattle is good summer tree to plant as it's very hardy and drought tolerant and it will suit the looming hot conditions.

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant: richard.burer@gmail.com





Image courtesy wirestock

The bonfire and dancing with an angel

by Athena

Sick of this crazy world of smoke and mirrors where there's more NON sense than sense? Simply return to community.

Turn your focus to community values of kindness, sharing, inclusiveness, helping and respect, treating others as you wish to be treated.

We enjoyed a generous serve of this recently at the Rous School annual Bonfire night. What a pleasure!

I had a box of novels to donate and rang the school, not sure I could get them there in time. Jo, the receptionist I guess, asked me where I lived and collected them that very day with thanks.

A young girl serving behind the delicious array of cakes and pastries politely asked me what I'd like. A little boy grabbed his basketball before it hit me, apologising before returning to his game. I didn't hear an angry word spoken all night.

Despite the wet, muddy grounds and the sprinkling of rain, the large crowd was alive with an ambience of celebration, fun, music, good food, kids running around playing and not a "screen" in sight – ahh... how refreshing.

Wishing I had my gumboots on instead of my good boots, we danced like

crazy on the wet, muddy dance floor. Straight away I noticed a little girl dancing too. She invited me to join her with her delightful, radiant smile.

She looked about three-years old, and Mum and Dad were just a metre away watching her. Her happy energy was contagious; we three adults and one tiny girl had a ball. We must have danced for half an hour.

Almost spent, she put her arms up to John who happily picked her up and tossed her in the air twice, much to her delight before giving her a hearty hug and returning her to the ground. She turned to me and I lifted her up and gave her a huge loving hug.

This little girl who we didn't know had given us all so much. All without a word spoken. I heard her mother call out, "Amelia". Her parents seemed to enjoy our connection with their daughter as much as we had, beaming smiles across their faces. I mouthed a "Thank you" to Amelia's mother and waved goodbye to this little angel.

Magical times like these do exist already.

All that before the colourful, wonderful fireworks. It doesn't get much better than that!

Thank you, Rous School for demonstrating what we can have... what community is all about.

Rainbow Ridge Open Day

by Mila McCarthy

As the sun returns and moves towards the equinox, we know that our annual Spring Fair is near.

On Saturday 12th September, Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education opens its doors to the community for a joyful celebration of the coming season and a chance to experience the life of the school.

This annual fundraising celebration is more than a gathering of stalls and treats; it's a way to support the school's work and help create future opportunities for the children.

As you enjoy live music, handmade treasures, and delicious food, your support directly contributes to the school's ongoing journey.

Children and adults alike can join the many activities – small works of imagination that awaken attention and joy. Please



bring cash for the event.

As it is also an Open Day, each classroom becomes a welcoming living space. Step inside to meet the teachers and see how learning is woven through art, movement, and thoughtful study.

Teachers will be present to speak with you, answering questions and sharing what



we cultivate: reverence for the human spirit, reverence for the world, and a growing confidence that education can shape character as well as knowledge.

As spring renews the earth, we are invited to

reflect on the quiet lessons in nature: how growth happens patiently, how beauty is shaped by rhythm, and how each living being belongs within a larger whole.

Rainbow Ridge Spring Fair on Saturday 12th September 10am-3pm at 279 Lillian Rock Road, Lillian Rock.

Celebration of new sports court and successful athletics carnival

by Isabella Herington

Barkers Vale Public School wrapped up an eventful Term 2 with two exciting highlights: the completion of our fantastic new multipurpose outdoor court, and our school athletics carnival.

The multipurpose court is a wonderful addition to our school grounds and provides students with even more opportunities to develop their sporting skills and enjoy being active.

Designed for basketball, netball, tennis, volleyball and other outdoor games, the court also includes an undercover seating area where students can cheer on their classmates and enjoy school sporting events together.

To celebrate the opening of the court, students enjoyed a whole-school game of 'Golden Runner, making the most of the new facilities while enjoying some friendly competition.

Thank you to the NSW Department of Education for their support in making this upgrade possible, and Jared from Erzetic Constructions Wollongbar for his meticulous eye for detail and organisation.

On Thursday 2nd July, we held our school athletics carnival. Fortunately, the rain stayed away for most of the day, allowing students to enjoy a full program of events.

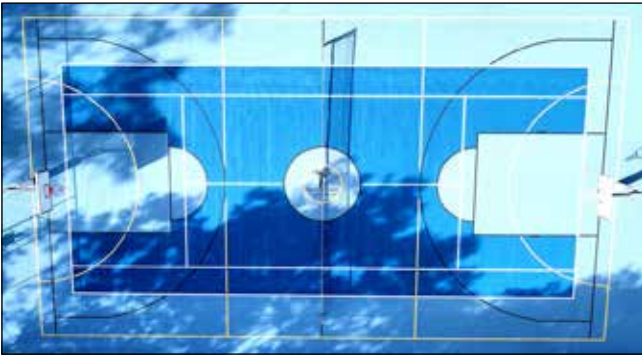
Students enthusiastically participated in the 800, 100 and 50 metre races, along with long jump, high jump, shot put, discus and relay races.

It was wonderful to see every student giving their best effort while encouraging and supporting one another throughout the day.

The success of the carnival would not have been possible without our generous parent volunteers, who assisted throughout the day, and our amazing P&C, who once again provided a delicious free lunch and treats for students and staff.

The athletics carnival was a wonderful way to conclude the term, showcasing the positive school spirit and strong sense of community that makes Barkers Vale Public School connected and inclusive.

We now look forward to cheering on our athletes as they represent the school at the District Athletics Carnival held in Kyogle.



Differences and similarities

Biologists determine a species by similarities and differences. That's the beginning of categorization and understanding how environments also change entities. Things can look similar but be something entirely different.

Take the apple. Sweet, juicy, and succulent, the apple is a tasty fruit. The tree originated in Central Asia, where its wild ancestor *Malus sieversii* is still found.

It is cultivated across the world and is a daily staple for many. Then there is the manchineel: a fruit that looks edible but actually isn't.

Grown in sub-tropical regions and coined 'little apple of death', it is sweet-tasting, but soon your throat swells and you have intense throat burning and stomach distress.

Lizards and salamanders seem similar, but lizards are reptiles while salamanders are amphibians. As amphibians, salamanders are found close to water, while lizards can be found in many climates, including those that are hot and dry.

Antechinus look like mice, but are small, carnivorous marsupials native to Australia. Ravens and crows are similar, but different. Ravens are larger and usually live in pairs or alone, while crows hang around in large

groups. They sound different too. Ravens have a deep hoarse croak while the crows caw. And so on.

Nature can be tricky. Something can look like something else but be totally unrelated to it. There are numerous examples of living things that look like other ones, bodies that resemble other bodies, but are different. And then there are things that resemble other things just by chance (that is without any environmental context).

I'm thinking of pieces of burned toast that look like the Virgin Mary, the shape of a rabbit on the moon, a dragon formed by a confluence of clouds in the sky at dusk, the smile on the electric outlet. This phenomenon is called *pareidolia*, where the brain imposes images, patterns or sounds on something unrelated to it.

Cultural similarities and differences are interesting as well. I'm intrigued by how Islamic art and Christian Amish art share similar ideas. Both focus on creating geometric abstraction, repetition and the deliberate inclusion of one very curious design flaw.

Islamic mosaics are perfect in every way, except one purposeful visual mistake. Amish quilts are

monochrome, but with the addition of one brightly coloured square.

The message is the same for both traditions: only God is perfect, humans have flaws. Fascinating that two very different religious traditions have come up with the same idea.

Cultural differences may or may not be recognised as such if what we initially see are similarities. Psychotherapy is mostly very Anglo-European oriented and managing our treatment of those outside our culture can be, and often is, very clumsy.

I reflect on a client I had a few years ago. She was indigenous to Australia and had a mixed upbringing that included both gathering medicinal herbs in healing ceremonies and attending university. I wondered how to work with her.

I don't think I was particularly useful, being fundamentally quite confused in how to go about the therapy. I suspect a lot of my confusion came about because I wasn't listening sufficiently closely to what she actually brought to our sessions.

Differences and similarities can befuddle us in many ways. Two clients can arrive on the same day, share a similar history, be the same gender, similar age, have the



by Dr Elizabeth McCardell

same number of siblings, have had an absent mother when they were children, pursued a similar path in life, and yet their presenting problem may be completely different.

Sometimes one's therapeutic vision is blurred when things look too similar and then one's attention is compromised. We always need to be vigilant to what is actually present with us and not lapse into reading more into what is there.

It's so easy to bunch people and their problems into simple categories and fail to listen to their uniqueness. An apple may be poisonous, or it may be deliciously good.

A fairy godmother may bring hope or distress. A problem may be a problem to one person, but a liberation for another. Not all patterns indicate pathology.

The key is to listen for differences even when things look similar.



DMC
DOUG MURRAY CONSTRUCTIONS

- Extensions
- Restorations
- Conversions
- Carpentry

0457 133 868

Lic no 38174



NIMBIN VALLEY TREE SERVICES

- Professional
- Tree Removals
- Tree Surgery
- Wood Chipping
- Mulch Sales
- Free Quotes
- Fully Insured

0492 910 060
nimbinvalleytreeservices.com.au



VALLI HOUSE
AESTHETICS & SKIN

Advanced cosmetic care
to enhance your natural beauty.



Karri Crossing Registered Nurse
now practicing at Valli House.

66 874 002 VALLIHOUSE.COM
35 MAIN ST CLUNES 2480

A PRIVATE CREMATION
– \$2750 includes GST –

- ✓ Loved one taken into our care 24 hours, 7 days
- ✓ All required mortuary attention and preservation
- ✓ Completion of all application and registration forms
- ✓ Doctor's cremation certificates
- ✓ Environmentally friendly cardboard coffin
- ✓ Private transport to crematorium and cremation fee
- ✓ Death registration and official BDM death certificate
- ✓ Return of ashes to loved one's family or friends

Pre-Paid Plan Available – No Administration Fees

Locally owned by Ben & Emma Little
Servicing Nimbin and surrounding areas

All Enquiries Welcome
1300 678 443
mail@dolphinfunerals.com.au



Tuntable Falls Early Childhood Centre

A welcoming environment
within a natural setting.



117 Upper Tuntable Falls Rd, Nimbin
Preschool program: Tue-Wed-Thurs 8:30am-4pm
6689 1179 tuntablepreschool@gmail.com



TUNTABLE FALLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL
Barefoot Education for the Future

0491466619 / tuntableschool@gmail.com / www.tuntablefallsschool.nsw.edu.au