Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project University of the Third Age

The **Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project** is a "branch" of the *New Shoots* project and a collaboration between The Red Room Company and Bundanon Trust.

New Shoots celebrates, cultivates and collects poems inspired by plants to deepen our personal and cultural connections with nature.

With support from the Dahl Trust, the project helped us meet and to make new emotional connections with eucalypts at Bundanon. Through this poetic lens we uncovered hidden stories and secrets of the iconic green giants we often take for granted.

Find out more about *New Shoots* redroomcompany.org/projects/new-shoots



visually identify Australia. There are over 900 eucalypt species which-have adapted to nearly every environment. Included in the Eucalypt family are the genus *Angophora* and the recently recognised *Corymbia*.

Eucalypts are believed to have evolved from ancient rainforest species in response to great changes in continental movements as well as the landscape, soils and climate of Australia. In south-eastern Australia, nearly all eucalypt species have green leaves and yellow-white flowers. Elsewhere, in tropical regions and Western Australia there are more spectacular flowers.





Mellifluous name ~ Corymbia maculata by Caroline D

Spotted gum, we visual humans call you
The magic of your dimpled, mottled trunk
Wrinkles of time,
Strong, grooved frozen ripples
Cool to my touch
Yet beyond that surface
Your inner heart is pulsing
Bringing nourishment from the earth
For flowers, leaves in buttressing roots.
My short span a pin prick in time
That you adorn for aeons.
Cluster close to others of your land
Support and share this earth.

Untitled by Rob O

Iron barks standing tall & strong providing shelter for the throng birds they feed & nest on limbs the furrowed bark where insects live lichen grows on southern side the thick bark tells the story of its life impenetrable to a fire the passes its life cut short for railway sleepers

A FORK IN THE IRONBARK TREE by Denis S

Tough, gnarled, strong the ironbark stands Reaching for the sun that bathes our lands Its roots are buried, its foundations firm Its trunk a totem tall and stout. What stories could this ancient arbor tell If only I had time to stop & listen? When did it say it all began? I gaze in awe at this wondrous giant Its usefulness for years so pliant. For flooring, sleepers, furnishings few It'll keep you warm in a fire too. The upper branches spread every which way, seekin the sun throughout the day and at night a haven provides for birds & animals to safely abide. But what's this at the ironbark's collar? A fork from a table not from the tree What could it tell or what should we see!



Untitled by Pam B

Oh to be evergreen –
Flourishing, enriching
Scribbly gum –
Artist dabbling...
Soft greens and greys.
Soothing,
Harbouring – to
A safe return to the light...of white.



The Gathering of the Eucalyptus Leaves by Wendy D

The gentle whisper of the wind could be felt Awakening all to the coming storm.

Leaves from the strand of the forest red gums
Rattled and crashed as its force increased
Tiny buds broke free as well
Not knowing where they would fall.

The birds crouched low - gripping their claws Whilst the forest red gum collars, discovered ants madly scurrying within:

They, like the spiders had to find escape and protection.

The suffering to come would bring fresh joy, For as drops of rain like tears began to fall Many leaves suddenly left their home And blew with the strengthening wind.

They gathered together in clumps Ready now, to begin life anew.

The glorious trees, birds and creatures Had been refreshed,

Whilst the gathering of the eucalyptus leaves Brought the needed change to feed them still.



Towering torso with lanky limbs
Tapering fingers stretching far and wide
The Forest Red Gum stands majestically
Grounded to the earth, the source of its
survival.

A true survivor of this ancient earth adaptable and versatile,
The patriarch of the family cluster.
Shedding its skin to smooth the way for new beginnings.

New Shoots: poetry inspired by plants



RED BLOODWOOD by Terry C

Sharp and fragrant eucalyptus
The smell of my childhood
No more store bought flowers
The city far behind.
A shack, no comforts
Life hard, challenging
A poor child, hurt and
changing

Welcomed to the embrace of home
The red gum tips
my mother's on floral hope
Draw me in, give me
courage

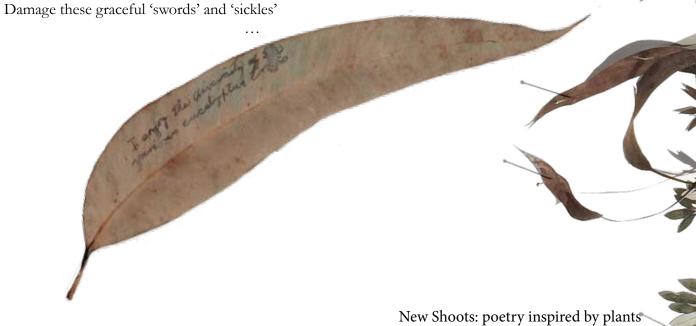
A memory for a lifetime.

Untitled by Jan M

They might break through and swallow those tiny, tiny, tiny tender fruit

On Forest Red Gum by Jan M

What do you think
of our 'knowledge'
When
you just 'are.'



My tree – by Luonie B

- . I found a baby spotted gum .
- . straight delicate determined .
- . random splotching in shades of green .
- . growing silently .
- . I only know adult spotted gums .
- . towering trees which shower me in blossoms .
- . will you grow this tall.
- . do birds rest in your branches .
- . your stories are shed each year .
- . beautiful clean skin appears . ready for another
- . purple pink grey green . rain rain rain . stay strong .

Spotted Gum by Merilynn W

You hide among the stands so camouflaged, Purple with pink and grey-to-blue you be -Reflecting the colours - sky and earth and rock.

Your buttressed roots determinedly anchored, You strive for sun to manufacture food To nourish branches, seed pods and yourself.

You shelter, and you nurture other lives: The spider whose web entraps helpless bugs, The orange-scarlet fungus making orbs.

You bear the scars of life with stoic grace: Branches once strong and lithe become just twigs; You grow burl moles upon your motley skin.

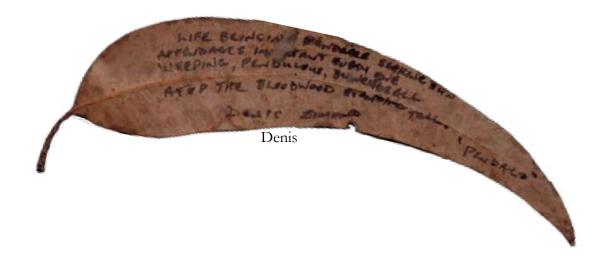
Untitled by Lynette S

I am a spotted gum, standing tall
I love the breeze blowing through
my leaves and my branches
Rain falls and is so welcome
To be the resting place and
occasionally a home for
numerous birds, animals
and insects is a joy

The Bloodwood by Alan W

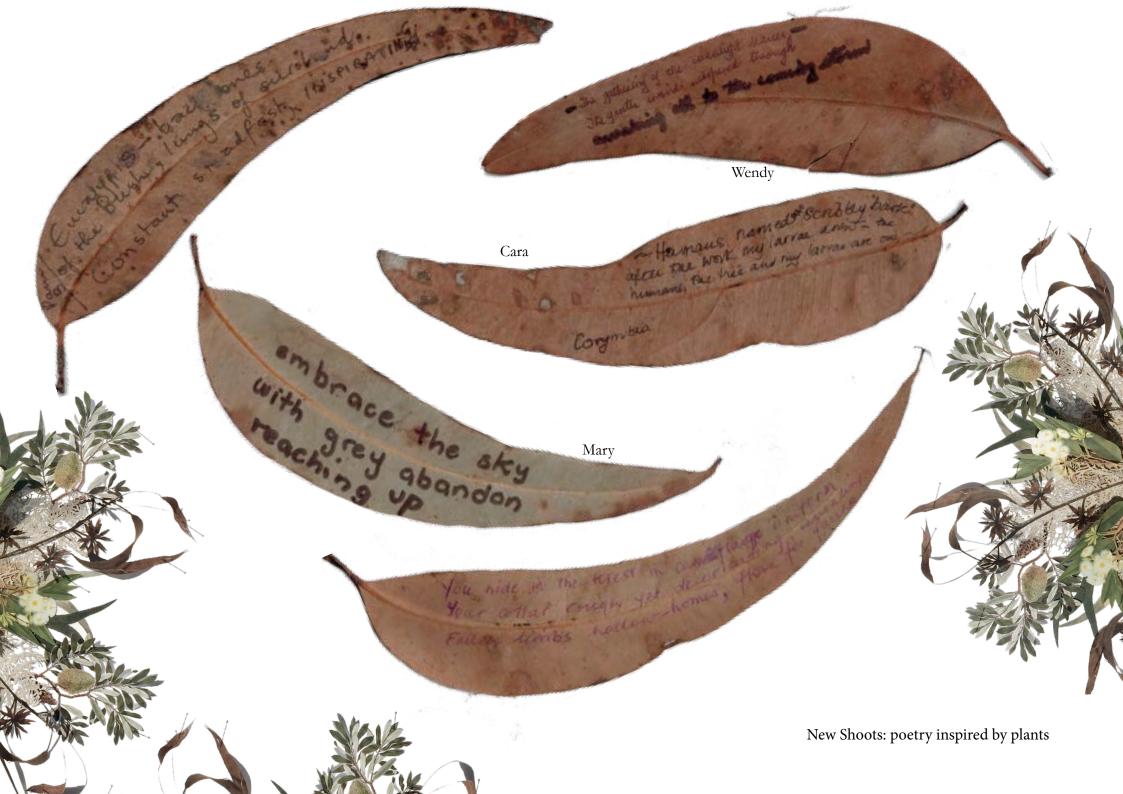
Leave me alone
My brothers and sisters weep.
Who will be next
To feed your greed and selfishness

We live too.
You think we feel no pain
But what do you really know
In your short meaningless lives.



New Shoots: poetry inspired by plants







New Shoots poet-in-residence

Eileen Chong is a Singaporean poet, now living Sydney, Australia. Burning Rice (Australian Poetry, 2012) was shortlisted for the Anne Elder Award, Australian Arts in Asia Award and the Prime Minister's Literary Award. Her other books are Peony (Pitt Street Poetry, 2014) and Painting Red Orchids (Pitt \$treet Poetry, 2016).

The Red Room Company's vision is to make poetry a meaningful part of everyday life. We create poetic arts projects and learning programs in collaboration with a spectrum of poets, schools, communities and partners for positive social impact. Our mission is to make poetry accessible to all, especially those who face the greatest barriers to creative opportunities.

Established in 1993 Bundanon Trust supports arts practice and engagement with the arts through its residency, education, exhibition and performance programs. In preserving the natural and cultural heritage of its site Bundanon promotes the value of landscape in all our lives.

The Bjarne K Dahl Trust focuses on eucalypts, an Australian icon and a significant aspect of Australia's natural environment and biodiversity. We envisage a public inspired by and appreciative of eucalypts.

Shoalhaven University of the Third Age (U3A) is part of an international movement which promotes and practices lifelong learning by providing low cost educational opportunities for retired people in a relaxed and informal environment. No prior educational qualifications are required; no degrees are awarded.

Find our more about their Eucalyptus Eco Poetry Project http://redroomcompany.org/education/projects/university-third-age/



