

Emu Downs Wind & Solar Farm Moojar Trees.



Nuytsia floribunda

Nuytsia floribunda is a hemiparasitic plant found in Western Australia. The species is known locally by Yued Noongars as the Christmas tree because it displays bright flowers during the Christmas season. The Noongar names for the plant are moojar, moojerool, munjah and mutyal.

In bloom

For the Noongar people, Indigenous Australians historically from southwest Western Australia, December and January is a season called Birak. It is during this time the Moodjar tree flowers bright orange. The vivid orange flowers of the moodjar are traditionally used to make a lightly alcoholic brew called mungitch. The sweet drink is brewed over several days by soaking the flowers in fresh water and the drink is used to celebrate the abundance of food traditionally on offer during Birak. Birak is also lore time on Yued Boodja. It is that time of year when Noongar people host ceremony and celebration with other cultural groups along the coastline.

Yued dreaming

In local Yued dreaming, stories passed down from ancestors shows why the Moojar is of such cultural and spiritual significance to Noongar people in the past, and still today. It serves as a marker for significant ceremony and burial sites. During lore time, when the tree is in flower, it shows in significant places around the country. Yued ancestors have always enforced that people show respect for the Moojar and to protect the tree where possible. A Yued legend associated with the Moojar is that when a Noongar person dies their spirit enters the tree where they wait for Birak. When the tree flowers, their spirit goes west to Kooranup (over the ocean) to be with their ancestors. During Birak, celebrations are held on the seashores to honour the spirits of the ancestors and celebrate the continuation of cultural lore and traditions.

By Margaret Drayton

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