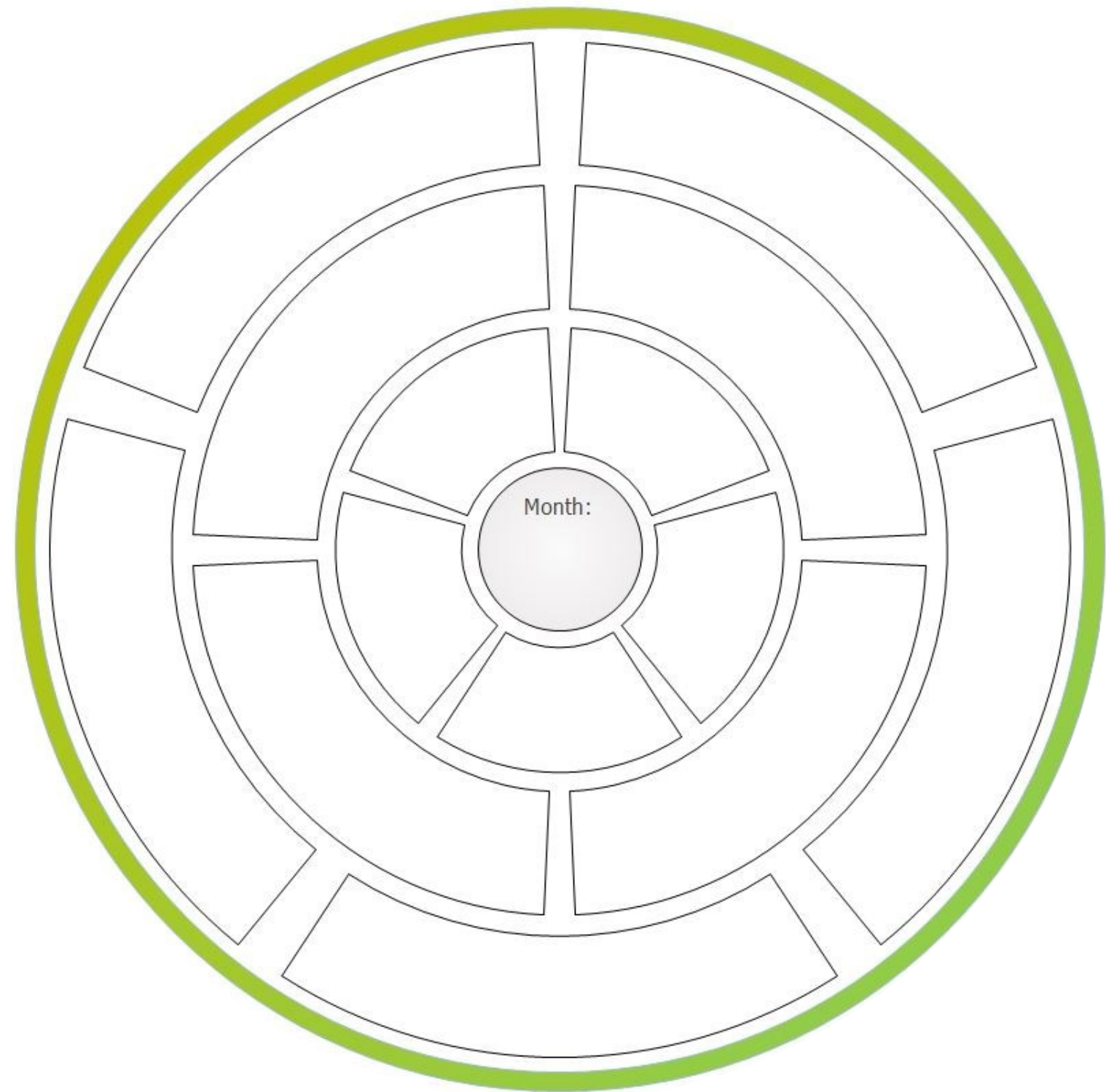
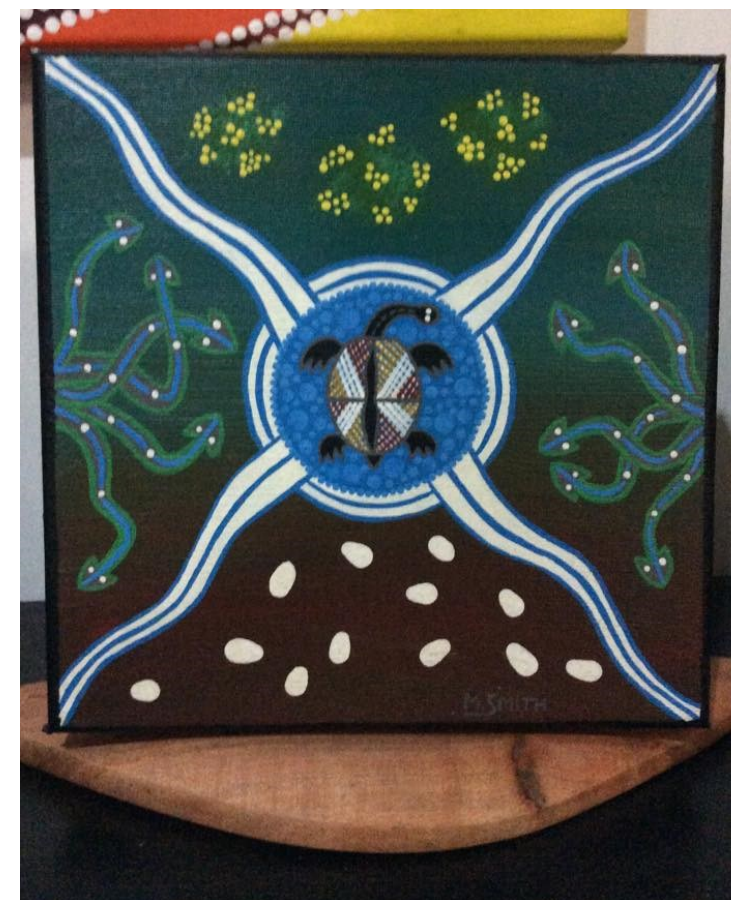




Seasonal Calendars

First Nations people have developed an intricate understanding of the environment over many thousands of years. One way to build on and share this knowledge is to construct a seasonal calendar to record natural events and make associations between these events.



**Relationship between the Turtle
and flowering Acacia.**

Artist Mick Smith

There are patterns in nature that occur around the same time each year, like Black wattles (*Acacia spp*) producing masses of yellow flower starting as early as June. When the Black wattle blossoms appear in southeast Queensland frosty weather sets in as the winds shift to the west to southwest. At this time the freshwater turtle will be nesting whilst on the coast the mullet and tailor spawning runs dominate the hunting season.

These events have been happening annually for thousands of years at roughly the same time and have been commonly known as indicators or triggers.

Knowledge of these patterns enables Indigenous peoples to predict the occurrence of one event by the appearance of another. There are widespread Aboriginal belief systems whereby a sequence of seasonal changes such as, plants flowering, fruits ripening, animals appearing in abundance and seasonal winds arriving, were believed to be all causally inter-related and inter-dependent, one triggering the next (Memmott, P. 2005).

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has included Indigenous seasonal calendars into their research and are also displayed on their website on the 'Indigenous climate, weather and culture' link. This will give you to an overview of the relationships between language, culture and environmental knowledge.

Some language groups had up to eight seasons throughout the year unlike the western philosophy of four. Usually these season are named after the resource availability for that period or the weather condition of that time of year.

Documenting the calendars has informed the scientific understanding of the relationships between people and the seasonal cycles of resource availability.

In the future the calendars may provide an important baseline for detecting ecological change associated with climate change. They have also had a positive social benefit by making Indigenous knowledge more accessible to school students and the broader community.



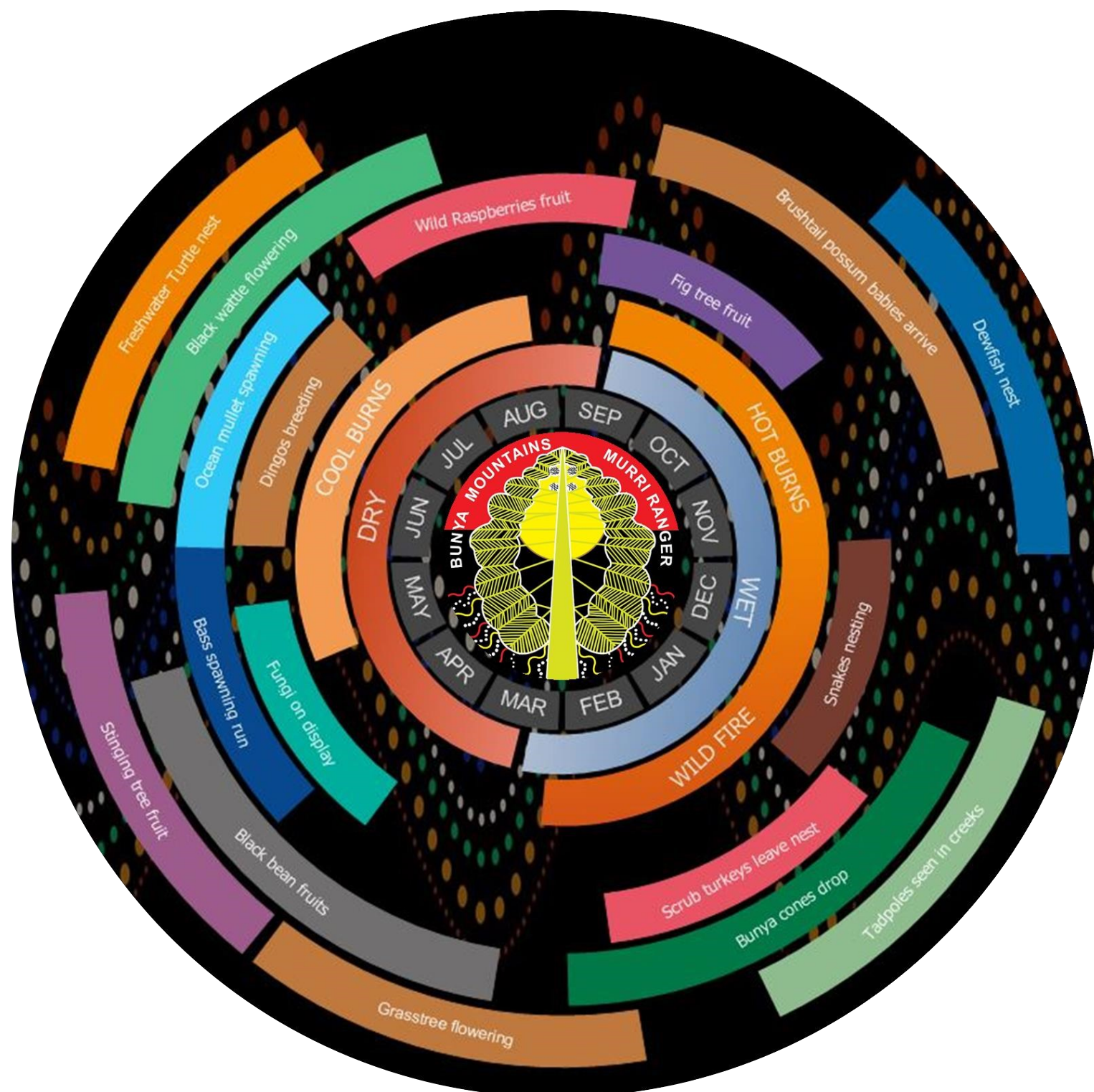
Murri Rangers seasonal calendar

Notice the patterns that occur at the same time.

Example:

- ♦ Black wattle flowering occurs the same time as the fresh water turtles nest.

These occurrences were triggers that would allow indigenous people to know when and also when not to hunt certain animals



Create your own seasonal calendar

Use the circle graph to record observations of the environment around you.

Include:

- ♦ Animals observed, for example lorikeets returning.
- ♦ Plant response to time of year, for example flowers present, fruit emerging, new growth.
- ♦ Non-biological observations for example wind direction, wet or dry, storm season etc..

