## *hardenbergia violacea*
*«native sarsparilla, happy wanderer»*

# GROUNDWORK

QUT

GROUNDWORK is a creative research project exploring plants as social materials, developed by visual arts researchers KEITH ARMSTRONG, RACHAEL HAYNES, LEAH KING-SMITH, COURTNEY PEDERSEN and CHARLES ROBB with assistance from CAITLIN FRANZMANN.
The project has been generously supported by a seed grant from the QUT More-Than-Human Futures Research Group.

This plant is named Warraburra in Kattang language of the Worimi people of Port Stephens and Great Lakes regions of coastal New South Wales. Australian Indigenous people use many parts of this plant from the roots to the flowers as a food source, medicine and weaving material. Rather than acknowledging such wealth of traditional plant knowledge, many early colonial settlers experimented with plants that appeared familiar and named them accordingly. For example, Native Sarsparilla was used as a tea-based medicine due to the similarity of its leaves to sarsaparilla. This plant's botanical name is in honour of a 19th century Austrian patron of botany, Franziska Countess von Hardenberg - a name far removed from the land on which it grows. Words can shape what we see. And names can be shaped by what we see. **Can you see the Happy Wanderer in the way this vine gently climbs and twists around other plants? Does this travelling characteristic remind you of someone you know?**

## *hibiscus heterophyllus*
*«native hibiscus»*

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Hibiscus species come from a very big family and some have been cultivated for so long that their origins remain obscure. Australia has about 40 native species, including Hibiscus heterophyllus. This plant was recorded frequently in early European exploration of Meanjin (Brisbane). Botanist Allan Cunningham noted the immediate banks of Maiwar (Brisbane River) "clothed in a profusion" of flowers. Not only does this plant produce beautiful flowers, it has edible and medicinal parts, and contains useful fibres in its bark. Native Hibiscus is one of several plants that have provided Australian Indigenous people with fibres to make string, dilli bags and nets. Whether through traditional or contemporary forms, fibre work continues to communicate connection to ancestors, place, histories and technologies. **Are there plants in your garden that connect you with your ancestors? Who holds the stories and memories among your family or friends?**

## *pittosporum revolutum*
*«brisbane laurel»*

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Contrary to its common name, Pittosporum Revolutum occurs beyond Brisbane, in rainforest to dry eucalypt forest habitats across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. It is an attractive shrub with dark green foliage and yellow tubular flowers. When ripe, the large orange fruit split to reveal vibrant red seeds covered in a sticky resin. The genus Pittosporum is named after these sticky seeds, derived from the Greek word for pitch (pitta) - a glue like substance. Many plants have developed a variety of mechanisms for seed dispersal, working with gravity, wind, water, and animals to ensure dispersal and survival well away from the parent plant. The sticky seeds of this species adhere to animal bodies or are ingested by birds and some vertebrates. The colour and smell of the ripe fruit help to attract foragers. **How are seeds dispersed in your garden? Can you think of an instance where someone you know as thrived by working with, and adapting to, their environment?**

My plant story...

*pittosporum revolutum*
*«brisbane laurel»*

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