

Secrets of The Trees (an Ode to the Lemon Scented Gum)

There's a certain tree that gets me right in the heart space. It's botanical name is *Corymbia Citriodora* but it's commonly known as lemon scented gum.

My urban trees once numbered five but now there are only three holding on as urban development creeps ever closer to their potential demise. Their majestic, elegant forms stand on a corner of land sandwiched between two busy roads and almost surrounded by new houses.

As I pass them on my regular walks I'm often swept away by their refreshing lemony scent, which is especially powerful when the air is moist. Their scent speaks to me, reminding me to pay attention, a natural prompt to "be in the moment" as I catch a whiff. If I am lost in thought a waft of lemon scent brings me right back to where I am.

These magnificent trees with their curious often deeply wrinkled growth seem almost human due to their muscular form. These trees have a long history of use with the first occupiers of Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people traditionally using the oil from the leaves for medicinal purposes.

I worry for these trees in a time where development seems to override everything else, yet we are greatly concerned with global warming. With all that they have to offer, their beauty, shade, fragrance and food for animal populations, it is more important than ever that we protect these valuable trees.