

Sun 20/06/24 – Chat with Sue Fielding about Cassia Hill.

Me - Can you talk with me about a reciprocal relationship you have with a plant?

Sue - When I think about an individual plant, I don't see it as separate from country. It's part of the whole matrix of life, animate and inanimate, where it arises. I remember walking through a beautiful grove of silver cassia* after good rain, branches heavy with yellow flowers and lush green growth. The experience of the place was very affecting. I've returned many times to this area in Tjoritja National Park, east of Mparntwe with an intention to quietly sink into the place. Not talk or read books, not even write. To go as openly as I can, which takes a little while to get to from a busy life. Then relaxing and opening into a kind of receptivity.

Me - So is it a kind of visual thing, or is it more than that?

Sue - No it wasn't a visual thing, it's just that I remember the vividness of the visual, but I more strongly remember the feeling. The feeling was that country was an entity. That I was in company. I started talking and had a sense that there was something listening and occasionally something replying. There was a connection flowing backwards and forwards, it was a real sensation.

I find the country around Mparntwe, Alice Springs to feel open in a benevolent way. Terrible things have happened here and continue to happen but the country itself has a sweetness, a life beyond what happens 'on the ground'. It's *really* special to be able to just go and *be* in it, without intention, and things happen.

I remember being in this place, walking through this grove of Silver Cassia with their sage green leaf and bright yellow flower, and it was just the most beautiful experience. It was very bright and light and joyful. Cassia is a plant that reminds me of joy. I have planted it in my garden here in town. And when it throws off seedlings, I collect them, pot them and look after them. I then give them to people or plant them somewhere else in my garden because I love them.

* *Senna artemisioides*