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"Major cold: vulture flies stern and swift"

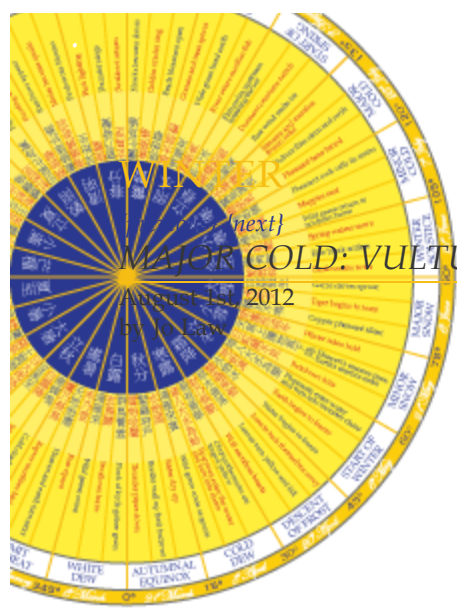
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THE ILLAWARRA AND BEYOND

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{OBSERVATIONS}

[Autumn](#)
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{CALENDAR}

December 2012

MTWTFSS

In this second pentad of 'Major Cold', the sun was warm but the air felt chill. The daytime maximums returned to mid-teens after having reached higher temperatures in previous days. Correspondingly, night time minimums sank to below 10°C. On a sunny day, we surveyed the beach after a storm and saw that the ocean brought to shore mostly sponges and cuttlefish. Our effort to regain normality after a prolonged period of sickness was once again foiled by another bout of illness. I, too, now long for the end of winter.

The bird featured by the Chinese Almanac in this pentad is the vulture (perhaps an intimation to the emperor's duty at this critical time of the season, rather than a sighting). The common name, vulture, is given to two distinct families of birds: *Accipitridae* (*Aegyptiinae*) and *Cathartidae*, whose similarities are the product of convergent evolution. The former, also known as 'Old World Vultures' are found in Asia, Europe and Africa, while species of the latter 'New World Vultures' are endemic in the Americas. Both families of birds scavenge, but *Accipitridae* species do so by sight and the *Cathartidae* species do so by smell. Neither families naturally occur in Australia.

Instead, the sight of flashing white wings moving swiftly across the sky is a common sight in eastern Australia. The intelligent Sulphur-crested Cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*) have myriad ways of making their presence felt. Recently, the large birds can be seen to congregate across the road on the stand of seemingly bare coral trees in the early morning

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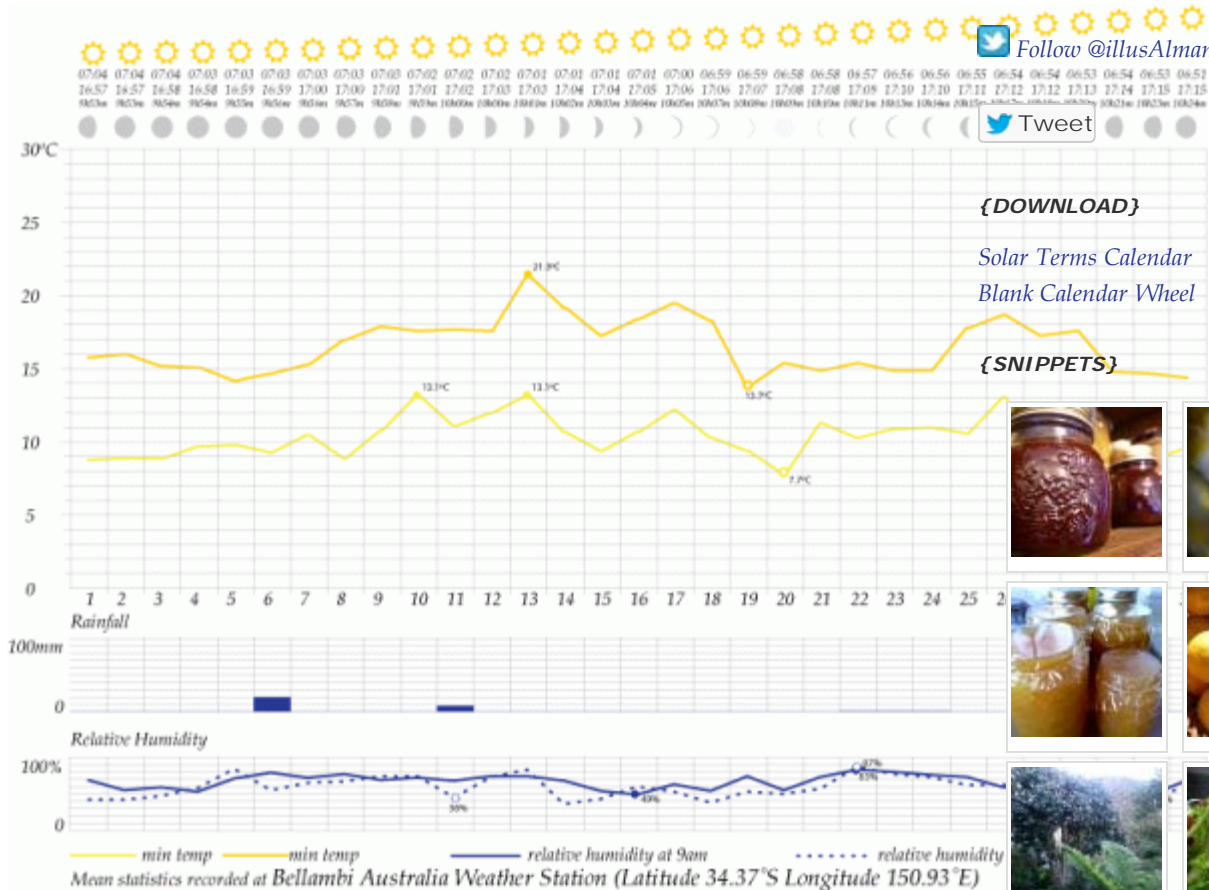
and early evening. Closer observations reveal that they are eating the sweet new shoots of the trees. In the backyard, they tasted some ten or so unripe oranges before deciding they were still too sour. Perhaps they would return in time for a citrus feast.

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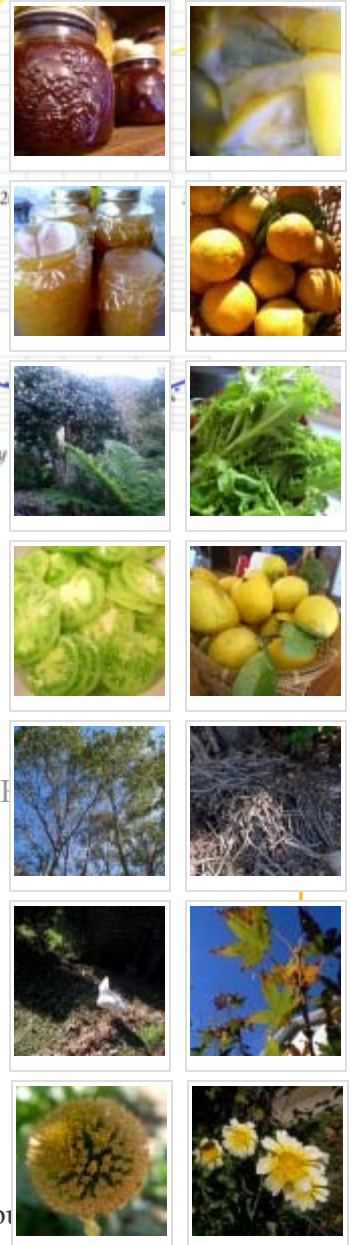


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2 RESPONSES TO “MAJOR COLD: VULTURE FLIES STERN AND SWIF

d
 August 2nd, 2012 at 18:58

get well! Its like neither of you are actually here.
 Will make a roast next week.

Jo Law
 August 2nd, 2012 at 20:32

In the reckoning of the Chinese Almanac (and after translating to southern hemisphere's dates), 8th is the 'Start of Spring'. I hope the end of winter will also mark the end of sickness (at least for the year)!

{NOTABLE COMMENTARIES}

IllusAlmanac Illustrated

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Almanac

2:39 PM Jan 12, 2012

@girlnagun Meanwhile,

fan-mania continues here whether hot or cold/ Faa!! Faa!! chirps the small one.



IllusAlmanac Illustrated Almanac

4:46 PM Dec 20, 2011

@girlnagun Yellow-tailed,

Red-tailed, may I ask? Just the sulphur-crested vandals here ripping off upripe passionfruits!



IllusAlmanac Illustrated Almanac

1:49 PM Nov 15, 2011

@girlnagun A cicada shell

on a mulberry leaf: where are the cicadas? Then we heard a song that night <http://t.co/z2WRL0qP>



HollisBridgeman Hollis Bridgeman Law

2:48 PM Nov 13, 2011

@IllusAlmanac: more...?

Lzzzzz....d....Zzzzzz...

<http://t.co/UMv7syaG>