

# Dhinawan (emu)

[NB These notes include the names of Aboriginal people who have passed away]  
YR Yuwaalaraay, YY Yuwaalayaay, GR Gamilaraay (GYY)

A pdf of the dictionary can be downloaded from: <https://yuwaalaraay.com/reference/>

## The word 'dhinawan'

The word **dhinawan** in YR YY GR is from:

**dhina** foot

**-wan** prominent feature (like 'big foot?')

GYY words start with 'dh' rather than 'd'. Our pronunciation guide is on the website <https://www.winanga-li.org.au/yaama-gamilaraay/learning-resources/garay-letters-words-and-literacy/>

## Dhinawan words

See the Labelling activity below for parts of the dhinawan, special dhinawan words, etc.

*Other dhinawan words:*

<b>bagabaga</b>	emu chick (striped) YY
<b>barrgay</b>	emu chick YR, YY, GR
<b>bulawaa</b>	emu pair YR, YY
<b>buubuwin</b>	emu decoy YY
<b>gambadhuul</b>	group of emus YR
<b>ganduwi</b>	one male emu YR, YY
<b>ganurran</b>	14 or 15 emus YY
<b>gayaangay</b>	five or six emus YY
<b>mirrun</b>	emu net YY
<b>ngurran.gali</b>	sitting emu YR, YY
<b>wugalwugal</b>	four emus YY
<b>munun</b>	emu spear YR, YY

## Cultural knowledge & new language uses

1 Dhinawan males raise the chicks. For this reason, we have used the picture of a father dhinawan for Father's Day (Yaadha Bubaa-gu).

2 Dhinawan are used in the names suggested for months, together with the suffix -gil from gilay, 'moon':

**Bulawaa-gil** time we see bulawaa, breeding pairs of emus (April)

**Barrgay-gil** time we see barrgay, emu chicks after their stripes have gone (July)

## Traditional uses

*Information from the dictionary:*

**dhii** (meat)

Cooked in a hole in the ground.

**gawu** (eggs)

From the dictionary:

“Ted Fields said that this is what you do to an emu egg before cooking it. You spin it and toss it up in the air, then lay it on the ashes or coals. When it is cooked the egg will stand up on the rounder point.”

**??** (oil)

Used to protect people’s skins in cold weather.

**dhunbil** (sinew)

Used to make **dhunbilyabi** (sinew string) There is a big sinew at the back of the emu’s leg, with two or three strands. It was teased out into little threads, and then twisted up into a line, like a rope. It is very strong when twisted very tight. It was used to make kangaroo-skin blankets, nets, and bags, etc.

## Hunting

*Information told in 1971 Fred Reece to Janet Mathews (linguist) by Fred Reece, a Yuwaalaraay man who was born in 1890:*

“The only way to trap them was to surround a mob at a drinking place, eating, and sneak up in a circle, or wait near water. Get up a tree nearby with a munun, the emu spear, and spear him, or in the water if there is plenty of rubbish in the water, or in the lignum. The emu comes back to the same place to drink, as long as he is not disturbed. The mostly come between 10 and 11 for water, summer time. Paint yourself with mud so they can't smell you, big long spear so you can reach him. He won't run very far before he will drop.”

Sources available from [hilary\\_smith@xtra.co.nz](mailto:hilary_smith@xtra.co.nz) or [jgiacon@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jgiacon@ozemail.com.au)

## Cooking

*Information told around 1971 by Fred Reece to Janet Mathews (linguist) by Fred Reece:*

“Fill it with bushes and hot stones - must be eucalyptus leaves because the people like that flavour. when the stones are hot, get bunches of leaves, wrap the stones in them and in emu feathers put them inside the emu, and repeat till the cavity is full.

Tie the legs together with a piece of leg sinew - now a bit of tie wire usually that part is out of the fire to get the sinews out of the leg - there’s a lot of meat on the thigh and if you don’t take the sinews out it is very hard to eat.

When plucking cut the leg from the front to the back, take the rough skin off the leg, and off the sinews. Twist the leg round and round and round, keep pulling and twisting, pulling and twisting, pulling and twisting, until it starts to take effect up in the leg and it loosens all the ?fibre? up in the meat, it will let go and you pull all the sinews clean out. they keep all the sinews.

Cut it off the leg altogether, and they dry it, and keep that for making nets, tease it all up for making nets for carrying kiddies, anything lizards, porcupine, goanna. That's their bag - they tease it out and twist it up on their legs into a cord. The women (old women) twist it on their legs you got to keep it dry, away from water.

The emu - put him in the hole - the hole is nice and hot - if too much fire take some out - make a hole on the fire, throw some leaves, scatter them about, in so he won't burn. A good emu he's always very fat and he'll burn very quick if you don't have these leaves. Scatter the leaves pretty quick over the coals and ashes, put feathers on top of the leaves, again drop the emu in very quick, put the feathers on top of the emu -feathers got to be next to the skin, and leaves on top of that and on goes your fire.

And when all the fire is on cover him with dirt that you dug out of the hole, and make it airtight, as well as you can, if there is not enough dirt get some more from where the fire was and put that hot dirt over the top of it.

And when he's cooked be very careful - the leaves are there to flavour it and to stop the dirt from getting on the meat - the emu is steamed - it's two or three hours cooking - you mustn't be too hungry.

Original interview text sources available from [hilary\\_smith@xtra.co.nz](mailto:hilary_smith@xtra.co.nz) or [jgiacon@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jgiacon@ozemail.com.au)

## Gawarrgay

Emu in the Sky, spirit emu - YR, YY

Notes:

- 1 In English, this is the 'Coal Sack', or dark space in the Milky Way near the Southern Cross.
- 2 From the dictionary:  
Ginny Rose said that its nest is similar to an emu's but the eggs are pure white, and its generally 'upside down' stance in the sky during autumn and winter relates to the (earthly) emu's breeding cycle. Also a featherless emu which lives underwater and hates people, and is highly feared. Thought to be related to *Garriya* and to live in the same deep waterholes.'

Resources:

- 1 YouTube video (2:22) Through our Eyes - Dhinawan 'Emu in the Sky' with Ben Flick <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzFYFutiwoA>
- 2 Picture book (draft, from Yaama Gamilaraay! project) *Gawarrgay: Emu in the Sky*

Activities:

- 1 Read and/or listen to and/or watch the story
- 2 Drawing/painting: Children can draw their own version or use the template: Emu in the Sky - [www.artyfactory.com](http://www.artyfactory.com)

# Dhinawan Yulu-gi

## The emu will dance

### Notes:

- 1 There may be cultural constraints around traditional dhinawan dance, e.g. boys and girls hold their hands in different ways.
- 2 We use the hyphens as in the dictionary, e.g. yulu-gi (to show the future tense suffix at the end of the word), but some people prefer not to use the hyphens, e.g. yulugi, but it's the same word.
- 3 Some people pronounce the -gi as in English 'giant', and some as in English 'girl'. The second way is in line with our standardised pronunciation guide.

### Resources:

- 1 Music (3:51)  
Mitch Tambo - *Dhinawan*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFnk166ewNA>
- 2 Video (total video 7:50, emu at 3:44)  
Keyna Wilkins (piano & flute); Gumaroy Newman (Didjeridu); Dave Barnett (dance)  
*Yulugi: Dawn and Emu* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JlcMrrxwDQ>

### Activities:

Dance!

For boy's basic stance (with tail), see <https://youtu.be/WLNebYV3ubl>

## Dhinawan craft

### 1 Traditional symbols art/story-telling

#### Note:

There can be cultural considerations about the use of traditional symbols (see essay by Marshall Bell).

#### Ideas:

Listen and draw about the story of traditional emu hunting, with or without Aboriginal symbols.

Draw a map or story of emus on their country (from their knowledge/experience)

#### Resources:

Gamilaraay symbols (essay from Gamilaraay artist Marshall Bell):

<https://wag.com.au/calendar/2012/you-can-do-that-or-what/>

## 2 Labelling



<https://www.topteacher.com.au/resource/emu-label-craft/>

*Special emu words:*

**gundiirr** emu feather YR, YY

This word is specially for emu feathers, which have two parts. Used for decorations.

**bubudhala** emu tail YR, YY

The big bunch of feathers at the back of an emu.

*Other words:*

**dhina** foot, footprint YR YY GR

**murru** beak, nose GR

**wuru** neck GR

**buyu** leg, especially lower leg GR

**yulu** claw, fingernail, toenail YR YY GR

Another way to draw the emu might be using "handprint art":



<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/153333562290463580/>

## 3 Origami

For older children?

*Instruction sheet:*

Possibly adapt the crane from [www.jayzeebear.com/origami/crane/index.html](http://www.jayzeebear.com/origami/crane/index.html)

*Videos:*

Easier level: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lj9oIPsw3j4>

More difficult: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IExZKUBwRTA>

## 4 Gundiirr (emu feather) earrings

*Instruction sheet:*

Dangly Feather Earrings: from <https://www.cutoutandkeep.net/projects/dangly-feather-earrings>

*Videos:*

<https://www.happyfamilyart.com/diy-jewelry/earrings/feather-earrings-tutorial/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpJg2B5pawM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCNYmgrPb48>

*Sources of dhinawan feathers:*

<https://www.emuridge.com.au/shop/gift-pack-emu-feathers/>

<https://feather.com.au/collections/emu>