

AUSTRALIAN NATIVE PLANTS SOCIETY 2013 CONFERENCE

'Diversity is in our Nature' is the theme of the 2013 Conference of the Australian Native Plants Society Australia, which is being hosted by the Society for Growing Australian Plants (Qld Region Inc).

The 2013 conference is to be held at the Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast – more information at www.sgapqld.org.au/anpsa2013.html.

As our contribution to the conference Boyd is keen to organize a display of photographs that showcases the beautiful and bizarre flora of the tropical north. His idea for the display is a simple one: assemble a set of pictures showing closeups of various plant structures, (i.e. flowers, leaves fruits).

Add the **family, genus species** and **common name** in one font across the bottom of each picture, but in different colours for each different picture.

Boyd will write a brief propaganda blog on a page to be displayed with the photos. (cont. next page)



Excursion to the Gandini's Garden, May 2013

By Don Lawie

Mary and David built on a vegetated steep block – it seems, many years ago, and we've inspected it numerous times over the years; today's trip allowed us to revisit plants that have become well established and marvel at some of Mary's rare species. The large gazebo on the lawn, festooned with the beautiful *Tecomathe* "Shannon" made the ideal spot to gather for lunch and enjoy the view of Cairns City, far down below us. Conversation centred on a possible discovery by Ing of an epiphytic orchid *Acriopsis javanica* in rainforest near Tully. If confirmed this will be an extension of the range of this little known orchid which closely resembles the widespread (in the Wet Tropics) *Cymbidium madidum*.

Of course, Mary had several *Cymbidium madidii* for us to compare with Ing's photo, but Ing was on a field trip and we'll continue to speculate on the matter. Mary's orchid knowledge is encyclopaedic and we had many different orchid species, both terrestrial and epiphytic, to look at and discuss during our walk.

A feature of the front lawn is a pond enclosed within granite boulders, with a flowering pure white *Nymphaea* flower as a central feature. Two different varieties of *Abelmoschus moschatus* allowed comparison

of flower and leaf shape, and a very large *Amorphoballus paeonifolius* dwarfed a smaller *Amorphoballus galbra* and *A. gigas* which were returning to their subterranean sojourn for the dry season.

A single, perfect flower on a Cook town orchid, *Dendrobium bigibbum* had evaded the constant insect depredation which bedevils this orchid in our area by hiding within the canopy of a small leafy shrub.

David built Mary a shadehouse cut into a cliff and it was yet again an Aladdin's Cave of treasures. We tasted the fruit of the native ginger *Amomum dallachyi*, a local endemic, and marvelled at the size of a King Fern *Angiopteris evecta* with its giant fronds thrusting to the shadecloth roof. For comparison Mary has grown an as yet small *Marattia salicina* and Rob demonstrated the method of distinguishing between the two ferns which, both being giants and occurring in similar habitats, can be



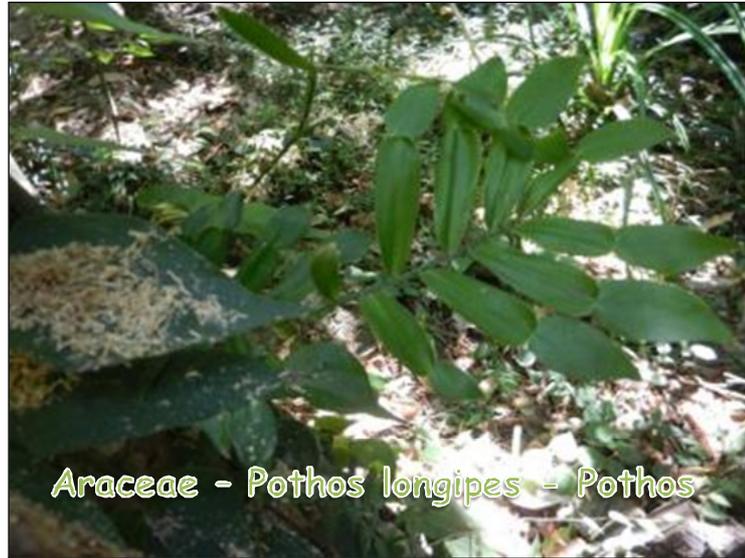
One of the Herbarium's researchers, Ashley Field, earlier this year published the major outcome of his doctoral research – a reclassification of the tassel ferns, *Huperzia*. It turns out that true *Huperzia* is a terrestrial group, with a growth form and spore features that distinguish it from the mostly epiphytic group we're familiar with in the Wet Tropic. All Australian epiphytic tassel ferns are now known as *Phlegmariurus*. Ashley admits this is a klunky and inelegant name, but the rules of plant naming don't allow names to be discarded on the basis of ugliness.



ANPSA 2013 CONFERENCE (cont.)

Boyd will mail the pictures to Brisbane HQ, and they will put up the pictures. This display style would effectively complement the theme of this year's conference "Diversity in Nature".

Boyd is still chasing pictures (like the ones to the right. If you have any you think would be suitable, please pass them on to him at
boydlenne@hotmail.com.



May Excursion Report (cont.)



Amomum dallachyi fruit

confused with one another. The insectivorous pitcher plant *Nepenthes mirabilis* was growing well in a hanging basket and again for comparison Mary had a couple of exotic species of *Nepenthes*.

Mary made a comprehensive study of the only Australian *Rhododendron*, which occurs on high mountain peaks in the Wet Tropics, and has several different varieties doing fairly well at this lower and hotter elevation. Their home ground is cold, wet and windy.

Back to the gazebo for afternoon

tea while Rob discoursed on the plant specimens on display and identified plant photos. Where would we be without Rob? Commiserations to Bianca who is recovering from a broken arm while Rob does the housework, and a big welcome to Patsy on her first experience of the world of SGAP.



The Gandini's *Xanthorrhoea* sp. Cape Bedford (M.Gandini AQ601576) in 2007



Dendrobium bigibbum



Phlegmariurus phlegmarioides, formerly *Huperzia phlegmarioides* (Ashley Field)

Our principal orchid researcher, Katharina Schulte, is currently in New York presenting outcomes of her group's research. It appears that she will be reporting the findings of a major review of the groups within *Dendrobium*, using DNA analysis to reveal their evolutionary relationships. More updates to come.

On a recent trip to Coen, I came across this attractive and delicate little herb. Its unusual growth form first caught my eye – a tiny little wreath of compound leaves sitting atop a stem about 10 – 15 cm tall.

A couple of days later I found the plant in flower (flowers open only in the morning, which enabled me to identify it as *Biophytum petersianum*. The species was first described from Eastern Africa, and is widespread throughout Asia. It is reputed to have medicinal properties, and its relatives are reported to be touch sensitive.

What really caught my attention with this species was the accidental discovery that it was touch sensitive. A gentle tap to the centre of the plant will cause its leaves to rapidly close up – see the pictures below.

I'd be interested to know if anyone else has come across this herb before, or knows anything about it.

An unusual touch-sensitive plant from Cape York

Biophytum petersianum,
Oxalidaceae



20 seconds



21 seconds



23 seconds



27 seconds

A Grand Day Out

By Boyd Lenne

The idea for a trip to Davies creek had many excited proponents. My ulterior motive was to become more conversant with the plants outside the rainforest zone past the Dividing Range. Robert Jago wanted to visit an old friend (more details later). And everyone was hoping to see a fresh flush of wildflowers brought on by the late wet season rain.

The Davies Creek area is a must see for any of you who have yet to visit. Granite riverbeds meander through overhanging *Tristaniopsis exiliflora*. The lowlands sport a fairly complex wet sclerophyll ecosystem with various fruiting and rainforest trees as well as explosively flowering Proteaceae and a wonderfully diverse supply of Fabaceae. The granite pinnacles of the surrounding hills provide a majestic backdrop to the family friendly wading and camping haven below.

The venture began with a jovial argument about the meetings to come in the next 4 months. Then we played our favourite game of "How many trees can Rob Jago identify without leaving our smoko area" (15 this time, not a bad effort for a sclerophyll area Rob)

Some of the early finds were of interest. *Lophostemon grandiflorus* demonstrated what a diverse family Myrtaceae can be. *Petalostigma pubescens*, the Quinine bush was laden with fruit -if Don Lawie tells you to eat one, don't try it!

The *Dodonea lanceolata* was also heavily in seed. Some of our flowering plants included the dainty *Pimelea sericostachya*, *Wikstroemia indica*, a range of cylindrical flowering *Acacia* species, *Ludwigia octovalvis*, *Wahlenbergia* sp. *Banksia aquilonia*, various

Fabaceae and a particularly gorgeous group of *Grevillea pteridifolia*.

We also found the root parasitic trees, *Santalum lanceolatum* and *Exocarpos latifolius*. The *Pandanus whitei* had some gorgeous copper emblazoned fruit on show.

Rob and I spotted an *Acacia* laden with flowers and bounded over the river to investigate. Oh well, only an *Acacia flavescens*. Still good for a photo though. There was also a particularly photogenic *Clerodendrum floribundum* in fruit. The crew had a brief smoko while I walked up a spur hoping to find more Fabaceae in flower (a couple of weeks late for most of them)

At this point, most of us decided to go up to the waterfalls to visit the aforementioned old friend of Rob Jago's. Our target was the Rob's own endemic - *Senna* sp. Davies Creek (R.L.Jago 3758) which only grows in this restricted cliff side location. Like many *Senna*'s, it has an attractive yellow bilaterally symmetrical flower with flattened seed pods and glossy pinnate leaves. The specimens were in fine form with flowers, juvenile pods and mature pods all on show. The plant foliage and flowers are attractive, but it has limited potential as a garden plant.

Needless to say, the top of the Davies creek falls are stunning, well worth a visit. That was the end of the day. Thanks again to Rob for being guide and teacher to Mary, Don, Pauline, Patsy and myself.

June excursion reports – Davies Creek

I'm able to present two reports for last month's excursion – thanks to Don and Boyd!

By Don Lawie

A perfect early winter day: Bright sunshine, birds singing, plants blooming, and the pleasant sound of Davies Creek chuckling by in several minor channels. We enjoyed the welcome shade of a *Lophostemon grandiflorus* as we lunched at one of numerous strategically sited tables and developed an excursion programme for the remainder of the year.

Davies Creek National Park is situated in the dry Savannah Woodlands in the Mareeba district, six kilometres off the Kennedy Highway and 21 km west of the Kuranda turn-off. The creek erupts from a narrow gorge to an open space of smooth flat granite flows dotted with granite boulders large and larger. The surrounding pale schist soils support a population of not-very-large Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus granitica*), Bloodwoods (*Corymbia erythrophloia* and *Corymbia clarksoniana*), and occasional *Grevillias*. Boyd had recce'd the area recently, and he pointed out two mature specimens of *Grevillia pteridifolia*, the Fern-leaved *Grevillia*, showing their beautiful orange-coloured inflorescences. *Grevillia parallela* dotted the area but they were all immature.

The creek splits into numerous channels, quite small at this time of year but it would be an impressive torrent in the Wet Season. The area is well used by day visitors, and young people dashed through the shallow water disregarding its icy temperature. Vegetation has colonised islands in the stream; a clump of *Pandanus whitei* had large soccerball sized fruit, and a marshy spot supported a variety of wetland plants including yellow-flowered Willow Primrose (*Ludwigia* sp.) sedge, *Ageratum conyzoides* (Bluetop Weed), and a colony of tiny *Polygala paniculatum* which Rob demonstrated

to have a strong Oil of Wintergreen aroma when the roots are crushed. I must have compounded many gallons of Methyl Salicylate Liniment during my pharmaceutical career, and Methyl Sal. Is the official name for Wintergreen Oil, the odour redolent of football dressing rooms. Another plant with pharmaceutical connotations was the Quinine Bush, *Petalostigma pubescens*, with shiny dark leaves and numerous small fruits. And another, the Sandalwood Tree *Santalum lanceolatum*, grew sparsely on rock outcrops. Sandalwood Oil was once used as a treatment for Gonorrhoea and we old-fashioned pharmacists have a private smile when it is now used as an attractive perfume.

With both Pauline and Mary on the lookout we had to find some orchids: first find was a healthy *Cymbidium madidum* at eye level in a little midstream glade. It is always heartening to find an orchid growing undisturbed in a place where it could be so easily "collected". Shepherd's Crook Orchids, so named because of the shape of their inflorescence which at maturity straightens and elongates so as to cast its tiny seed to the breezes, were found to be numerous among the clumps of Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra* and Spear Grass. Each mature plant was surrounded by a clutch of progeny, so it appears that the breeze doesn't blow all that well here. These orchids were a bit ragged since they were preparing to move to their subterranean sojourn over the dry season, to re-emerge after the first storms of summer.

We rounded off the day back under the *Lophostemon*, looking forward to our next educational outing.

JUNE EXCURSION PHOTOS – DAVIES CREEK



The furry, intensely bitter fruits of *Petalostigma pubescens*



Pandanus whitei



Islands in the stream – Davies Creek

The great collectors

Prominent botanical collectors in the tropical north, and the plants they've collected

This year, we've given much discussion to preparing a garden bed, or set of garden beds at the Cairns Botanic Gardens. These are to be dedicated to

the great botanical collectors who have lived, or collected extensively in the tropical north. This month I present a listing of Cairns region collections by

Alan Cunningham and Eugene Fitzalan. The listings are not comprehensive – I have the full list if anyone wants it.. Now get out and start propagating!!

Allan Cunningham (13 July 1791 – 27 June 1839) was an English botanist and explorer, primarily known for his travels in Australia to collect plants. He was active in Australia from 1817 to his death in 1839¹.

Although a prolific collector (notably at Endeavour River), his collections from the Cairns area are few:

- *Macaranga tanarius* (collected at Fitzroy Island)
- *Panicum mitchellii* (collected at Cape Grafton)

Eugene Fitzalan was born in Londonderry, Ireland, on 12 July 1830, died in South Brisbane, Queensland, on 22 June 1911.

A trained gardener and nurseryman, Fitzalan came to Victoria in 1849, moving to Queensland in 1859. He later settled at Bowen, before moving to Cairns in 1887². Many of his specimens from Cairns are held in Melbourne; only a few are mentioned here:

- *Alphitonia whitei*
- *Alstonia muelleriana*
- *Callitris macleayana*
- *Cordyline cannifolia* R.Br.
- *Coronidium rupicola*
- *Cryptocarya lividula*
- *Cyathea rebecca*
- *Deplanchea tetraphylla*
- *Duboisia myoporoides*
- *Grevillea glauca*
- *Helicia australasica*
- *Hypoestes floribunda* var. *floribunda*
- *Leea indica*

- *Lithomyrtus obtusa*
- *Mallotus mollissimus*
- *Medicosma fareana*
- *Melastoma malabathricum* L. subsp. *malabathricum*
- *Micromelum minutum*
- *Neosepicaea jucunda*
- *Phyllanthus lamprophyllus*
- *Pitaviaster haplophyllus*
- *Pittosporum rubiginosum*
- *Polyosma hirsuta*
- *Polyscias elegans*
- *Polyscias murrayi*
- *Psilotum complanatum*.
- *Rhysotoechia mortoniana*
- *Sarcopteryx martyana*
- *Selaginella longipinna*.
- *Sloanea langii*
- *Solanum viridifolium*
- *Syzygium cryptophlebium*
- *Vandasina retusa*

¹ [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Cunningham_\(botanist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Cunningham_(botanist))

² <http://www.anbg.gov.au/biography/fitzalan-eugene.html>



Upcoming Events

CAIRNS SGAP

20 July 2013 – Walsh’s Pyramid
(see details below)

17 August 2013 – Bramston Beach.
Meet at grassed park 11.00 am

21 September 2013 - Stony
Creek. Meet at Car Park 10 am.

October 19 - Fitzroy Island – When
booking, don’t forget to ask for a
locals discount.

TABLELANDS SGAP

Meetings on the **4th Wednesday of
the month.**

Excursion the following Sunday.

Any queries, please contact Chris
Jaminon on 4091 4565 or email
hjaminon@bigpond.com

TOWNSVILLE SGAP

Meets on the **2nd Wednesday of
the month**, February to
November, in Annandale
Community Centre at 8pm, and
holds excursions the following
Sunday.

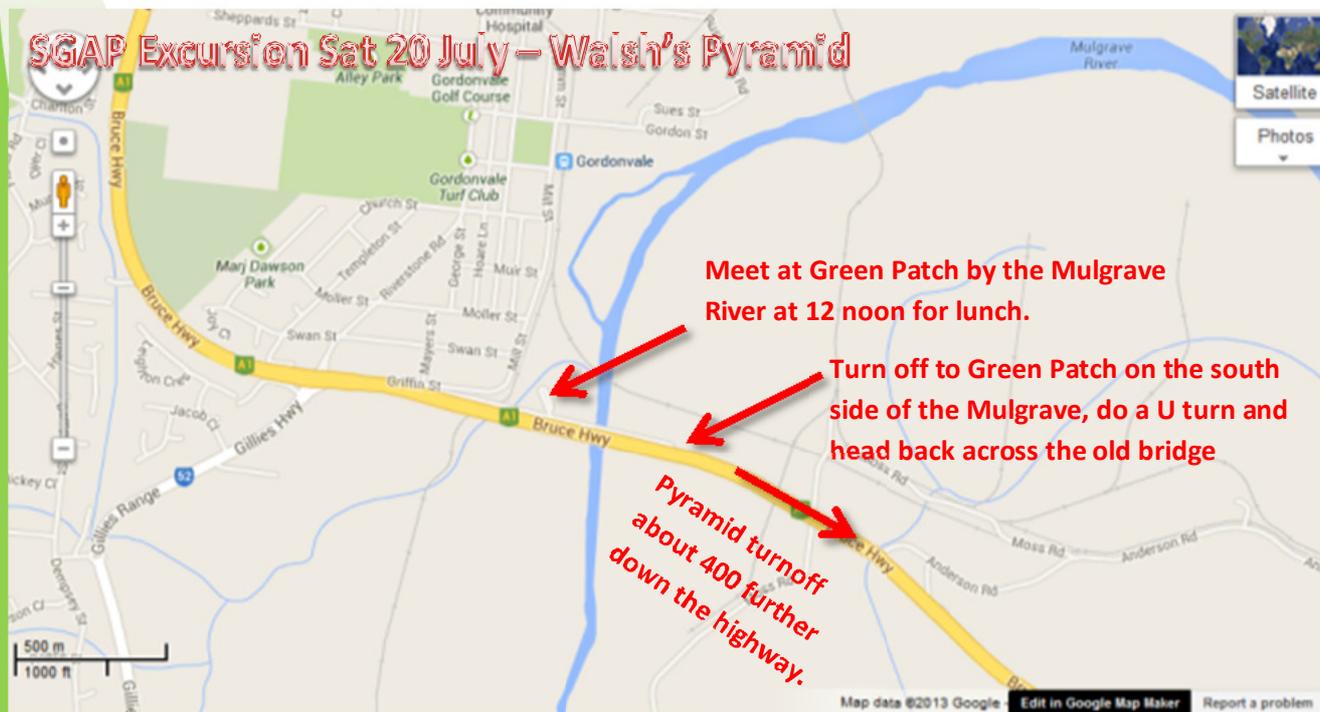
See www.sgaptownsville.org.au/
for more information.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

10-16 August 2013

ANPSA Biennial Conference,
Sunshine Coast. Held every two
years, this is the conference of our
national parent organization.

See www.sgapqld.org.au/anpsa2013.html for more information.



SGAP CAIRNS 2013 COMMITTEE

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