



Society for Growing Australian Plants Cairns Branch

Newsletter 157

March 2016

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EXCURSION REPORT – ISABELLA FALLS, 21 FEBRUARY 2016

Stuart Worboys

SGAP Cairns' first trip for 2016 took us to Isabella Falls. Located on McKinnon Creek, in the headwaters of Wrights Creek, this is a very accessible short walk located in beautiful rainforest at the foot of the Lamb Range. We had a great turnout for the first walk of the year, and were pleased to be joined by Val Carnie, Ing Toh and Nicole Kenyon as well as the regulars.

The rainforest was relatively cool and shady, a pleasant contrast to the extreme heat and humidity of nearby suburbia. The rainforest here is a “complex notophyll vine forest”, typical of the hillslopes around Cairns. Canopy species we saw included *Terminalia microcarpa* (damson), *Chisocheton longistipitatus*, *Cryptocarya hypospodia* (northern walnut), *Elaeocarpus grandis* (quandong) and *Castanospora alphandii* (brown tamarind). In the shadowed understorey of this forest grow two interesting plants. One of these, *Corymborkis veratrifolia* (cinnamon orchid), we were privileged to catch in flower. The other, *Acalypha lyonsii* is extremely rare, found only on the Cairns hillslopes west of Edmonton and Redlynch. This attractive small shrub has proved amenable to cultivation, and can be seen in some of the more tasteful gardens around town.

After our walk, we all sat down for a drink and Mary's home-made biscuits (thanks Mary). With it's proximity to Cairns, pleasant creek and tall rainforest, Isabella Falls was a very pleasant way to start off 2016.

Isabella Falls Species

List

Including species used in rehabilitation. * indicates an introduced species

Ferns and fern allies

DRYOPTERIDACEAE

Coveniella poecilophlebia

POLYPODIACEAE

Microsorium punctatum

Basal flowering plants

LAURACEAE

Cryptocarya hypospodia
Cryptocarya laevigata

MYRISTICACEAE

Myristica ?insipida (nutmeg)

PIPERACEAE

Piper caninum

Monocots

ARACEAE

Epipremnum pinnatum
Pothos brownii

ARECACEAE

Calamus caryotoides

ASPARAGACEAE

Cordyline cannifolia

COMMELINACEAE

**Tradescantia spathacea* (Moses in a cradle)

FLAGELLARIACEAE

Flagellaria indica (supplejack)

HEMEROCALLIDACEAE

Dianella bambusifolia

ORCHIDACEAE



Corymborkis veratrifolia (white cinnamom orchid), rarely seen in flower.

Corymborkis veratrifolia

SMILACACEAE

Smilax australis

ZINGIBERACEAE

**Zingiber spectabile* (beehive ginger)

Eudicots

ACANTHACEAE

**Sanchezia parvibracteata*

ANACARDIACEAE

Buchanania arborescens
**Mangifera indica* (mango)
Rhus taitensis

APOCYNACEAE

Ichnocarpus frutescens
Melodinus australis
Wrightia laevis (white cheesewood)

ASTERACEAE

**Ageratum conyzoides* (bluetop)

ARALIACEAE

Polyscias australiana (ivory basswood)
Polyscias elegans (celerywood)

BIGNONIACEAE

Pandorea pandorana (wonga vine)

CANNABACEAE

Celtis paniculata

CELASTRACEAE

Hedraianthera porphyropetala

COMBRETACEAE

Terminalia microcarpa (damson)

ELAEOCARPACEAE

Elaeocarpus angustifolius (blue quandong)

EUPHORBIACEAE

Acalypha lyonsii
Codiaeum variegatum subsp. *moluccense*
Macaranga tanarius
Mallotus philippensis

FABACEAE

Derris sp. *Daintree* (D.E. Boyland 469)
**Mimosa pudica* (sensitive weed)

ICACINACEAE

Gomphandra australiana

LAMIACEAE

Faraday splendida

LOGANIACEAE

Strychnos minor (snakewood)

MALVACEAE

Argyrodendron peralatum
**Triumfetta rhomboidea*

MELIACEAE

Aglaia sapindina
Chisocheton longistipitatus (cream mahogany)

Dysoxylum gaudichaudianum (ivory mahogany)

MORACEAE

Ficus hispida
Ficus pantoniana (climbing fig)
Ficus virens (banyan fig)

NYCTAGINACEAE

Pisonia umbellifera (birdlime tree)

OLEACEAE

Chionanthus ramiflora (northern olive)
Jasminum simplicifolium subsp. *australiense* (native jasmine)

PASSIFLORACEAE

**Passiflora suberosa* (corky passionfruit)

PITTIOSPORACEAE

Pittosporum ferrugineum

RHIZOPHORACEAE

Carallia brachiata

RUBIACEAE



The deep blue, almost metallic fruits of *Lasianthus kurzii* (blue rubi).

Lasianthus kurzii (blue rubi)
Tarenna dallachiana

SAPINDACEAE

Castanospora alphanthii (brown tamarind)
Cupaniopsis flagelliformis
Ganophyllum falcatum (Daintree hickory)
Guioa acutifolia (northern guioa)
Mischocarpus lachnocarpus
Synima cordierorum

VITACEAE

Cissus hastata
Leea novoguineense (bandicoot berry)
Tetrastigma nitens

EXCURSION REPORT – OFF TO CHILLAGOE WITH TABLELANDS SGAP

Stuart Worboys

Tablelands SGAP newsletter last month mentioned an excursion to Chillagoe on Sunday 28 February, so we seized the opportunity to head west for a pleasant weekend in the Gulf Country. Now, although Chillagoe's a long drive for us coastal people, it offers a vastly different landscape to the dazzling green of the tropical coast. Once you cross the Great Dividing Range and leave behind the irrigated farmland around Dimbulah, you enter the rugged, infertile hills of the oddly named Featherbed Range. There's nothing soft and comfy about this landscape. The last few kilometres into Chillagoe are marked by the imposing grey pinnacles of limestone covered by dry rainforest – the very thing that makes the district so exciting for biologists.

We arrived in town late on Saturday afternoon, and overnighed in the simple comfort of Chillagoe Observatory and Eco Lodge. The Lodge was full of chatty grey nomads, so it was just as well be booked ahead.

The next day we headed out to the pre-ordained meeting spot on the eastern edge of the Ramparts Section of Chillagoe National Park. Around the foot of the limestone outcrops was a woodland of *Eucalyptus cullenii*, *Eucalyptus leptophleba* and bloodwoods. In response recent rains, the ground layer was a rarely seen green, with grasses and herbs beginning to sprout and flower. In disturbed areas there were lawns of *Indigofera linifolia*. Along the road, I found the foetid ephemeral herb

Notoleptopus decaisnei at the north-east limit of its range, and I spotted a gorgeous little *Brunoniella australis* on the road's edge. Further up the hill, the limestone rock outcrop offered protection from fire and has allowed the development of dry rainforest communities. Here, fire-sensitive species like *Ficus*, *Brachychiton australis*, *Flueggea leucopyrus*, *Glossocarya calcicola* and *Gyrocarpus americanus* find a refuge.



Gnarled and twisted, like a natural bonsai - *Macropteranthes montana*.

When the Tablelands crowd eventually arrived, we potted off to a nearby limestone pinnacle, where a spectacular surprise awaited. A barely visible track wound its way up through the dry rainforest to an overhang high on the pinnacle. The rocks scattered around the floor were polished by generations of human occupation, and overhead white lines and stars were painted in mysterious patterns. The overhang was open to cooling breezes, and offered spectacular views to the north and west. One could imagine generations of the country's original occupants sleeping, eating and looking out over their land from this beautiful location.

Lunchtime was rapidly approaching, so we leapt into our cars and drove into town. On the edge of town, Chillagoe Creek flows over a

limestone outcrop into a large deep swimming hole, known locally as the "Bogey Hole". We were surprised (and perhaps a little relieved) that the place wasn't full of wet noisy happy kids. In the cool shade of overhanging *Melaleuca fluviatilis*, *Pandanus*, and *Timonius timon*, we settled down for lunch and a chat.

After lunch, it was time to head back east, but not without one last stop. About 50 km from Chillagoe, on a wide sweeping bend of the Burke Developmental Road, is a small patch of *Macropteranthes montana*. These unusual little trees look like natural bonsais. In their natural habitat, they always appear gnarled and hard-done-by. Their twisted branches are lined with tufts of tiny silver leaves. Their flowers are tubular with a pair of large wings at the base, varying in colour from pale green to red. We spent some time admiring these unusual twisted trees. Peter Radke pointed out their rarity, with a range extending roughly from Mt Carbine to Einasleigh to Ravenshoe. Nearby, in the shade of scattered *Eucalyptus melanophloia* (silver-leaved ironbarks) was a thicket of large-leave wattles, *Acacia meiosperma*, which have a similarly narrow distribution.

Further downhill, towards broad gully crossed by a rail bridge, we found a patch of attractive flowering succulents, including *Portulaca bicolor*, *Sarcostemma viminalis* and *Polycarpaea spirostylis*. Hidden amongst the grass was a delicate little fern, *Cheilanthes pumilio*. Across the railway line were trees with bright yellow trunks that turned out to be *Corymbia leichhardtii* (yellowjackets).

After thoroughly exploring the bush at this isolated location, we piled into our cars for the long ride home. Thanks to Tablelands SGAP for organising the trip and welcoming us.



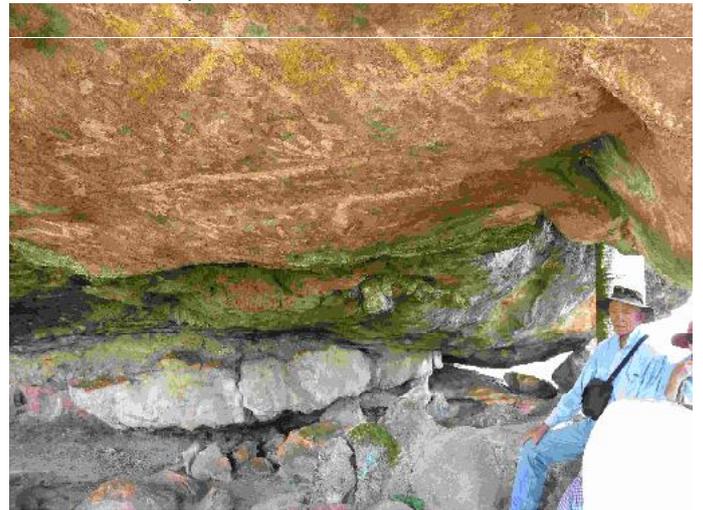
Happy lunchers on the banks of Chillagoe Creek.



Flower of *Macropteranthes montana*



Silver-leaved ironbark, *Eucalyptus melanophloia*



Mysterious rock art in a limestone overhang



Brunoniella australis



Portulaca bicolor



Tephrosia



Indigofera linifolia

Chillagoe Species

List

Includes observations from the Chillagoe National Park Ramparts Section (NP), the Bogey Hole lunch spot on Chillagoe Creek (CC), and a brief roadside stop between Almaden and Pentland (A).

Ferns and Allies

PTERIDACEAE

- Cheilanthes pumilio* (A)
- Paraceterach muelleri* (NP)

Monocots

PANDANACEAE

- Pandanus* sp. (CC)

POACEAE

- **Chrysopogon aciculatus* (Mackie's pest, CC)
- **Echinochloa colona* (awnless barnyard grass, NP)
- Heteropogon triticeus* (giant spear grass, NP)
- Perotis rara* (comet grass, NP)
- **Themeda quadrivalvis* (grader grass, NP)
- Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass, NP)

TACCACEAE

- Tacca leontopetaloides* (Polynesian arrowroot, NP, A)

Eudicots

ACANTHACEAE

- Rostellularia adscendens* (NP)

AMARANTHACEAE

- Achyranthes aspera*
- **Alternanthera ficoidea* (NP)

APOCYNACEAE

- Alstonia actinophylla* (milkwood, CC)
- Sarcostemma viminale* subsp. *brunonianum* (caustic vine, A)
- Wrightia saligna* (A)

ASTERACEAE

- **Bidens bipinnata* (NP)

BIGNONIACEAE

- Dolichandrone heterophylla* (NP)
- **Tecoma stans* (tecoma, CC)

BIXACEAE

- Cochlospermum gillivraei* (kapok, A)

CARYOPHYLLACEAE

- Polycarpaea ?spirostylis*

CLEOMACEAE

- Cleome viscosa* (NP)

COMBRETACEAE

- Macropteranthes montana* (A)
- Terminalia aridicola* subsp. *chillagoensis*

COMMELINACEAE

- Commelina ensifolia* (NP)

EUPHORBIACEAE

- Croton arnhemicus* (Hard Cascarilla, NP)
- Euphorbia hirta* (NP)

FABACEAE

- Acacia humifusa* (A)
- Acacia meiosperma* (A)
- Acacia umbellata* (A)
- Bauhinia carronii* (CC)
- Crotalaria medicaginea* (NP)
- Crotalaria montana* (NP)
- Indigofera linnaei* (NP)
- Phyllodium hackeri* (A)
- Rhynchosia minima* (NP)
- **Senna occidentalis* (coffee senna, NP)
- **Stylosanthes scabra* (NP, A)
- Vachellia bidwillii* (corky wattle, NP)
- **Stylosanthes hamata* (NP)
- **Tamarindus indica* (tamarind, CC)
- Tephrosia* sp. (CC)

HERNANDIACEAE

- Gyrocarpus americanus* (helicopter tree, NP)

LAMIACEAE

- Glossocarya calcicola* (NP)
- **Mesosphaerum suaveolens* (Hyptis, NP)
- Premna acuminata* (NP)

LECYTHIDIACEAE

- Planchonia careya* (cocky apple NP)

LOGANIACEAE

- Strychnos lucida* (NP)

MALVACEAE

- Abutilon ?oxycarpum* (NP)
- Brachychiton australis* (broad-leafed bottle tree, NP)
- Hibiscus meraukensis* (native rosella, NP)
- Grewia retusifolia* (dogs balls, NP)
- Melhania ?brachycarpa* (NP)
- **Sida acuta* (NP)
- Waltheria indica* (A)

MELIACEAE

- **Azadirachta indica* (neem, CC)

MENISPERMACEAE

- Tinospora smilacina* (NP)

MORACEAE

- Ficus opposita* (sandpaper fig, NP)
- Ficus virens* (CC)

MYRTACEAE

- Corymbia confertiflora* (NP)
- Corymbia dallachiana* (A)
- Corymbia ?erythrophloia* (NP)

- Corymbia leichhardtii* (yellowjacket, A)
- Eucalyptus cullenii* (Cullen's ironbark, NP)
- Eucalyptus leptophleba* (Molloy box, NP)
- Eucalyptus melanophloia* (silver-leaved ironbark, A)
- Melaleuca ?acacioides* (A)
- Melaleuca fluviatilis* (CC)

NYCTAGINACEAE

- Boerhavia* sp. (NP)

OLEACEAE

- Jasminum didymum* (native jasmine, CC)

PHYLLANTHACEAE

- Breynia oblongifolia*
- Flueggea leucopyrus* (NP)
- Flueggea virosa* subsp. *melanthesioides* (whitecurrant, NP)
- Notoleptopus decaisnei* (NP)

PLUMBAGINACEAE

- Plumbago zeylanica* (NP)

PORTULACACEAE

- Portulaca bicolor* (A)

PROTEACEAE

- Grevillea mimosoides* (NP)

PUTRANJIVACEAE

- Drypetes deplanchei* (NP)

RUBIACEAE

- Timonius timon* (tim tim, CC)

SANTALACEAE

- Exocarpos latifolius* (NP)

URTICACEAE

- Pouzolzia zeylanica* (graceful pouzolzbush, NP)

VIOLACEAE

- Hybanthus enneaspermus* (spade flower, NP)

VITACEAE

- Ampelocissus gardneri* (NP)
- Cayratia trifolia*

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Cairns Branch

Meetings and excursions on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

20 March 2016 – Annual General Meeting. 12 noon, new visitors centre (next to the Wild Bean Cafe), Cairns Botanic Gardens, Collins Avenue, Edge Hill. See map.

April 2016 – Russell River / Russell Heads.

May 2016 – Daintree River

June 2016 – Stannary Hills

July 2016 – Emerald Creek Falls

August 2016 – Julatten (to be confirmed)

September 2016 – Cattana Wetlands, Smithfield

October 2016 – Jumrun Nature Walk, Kuranda.

Tablelands Branch

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

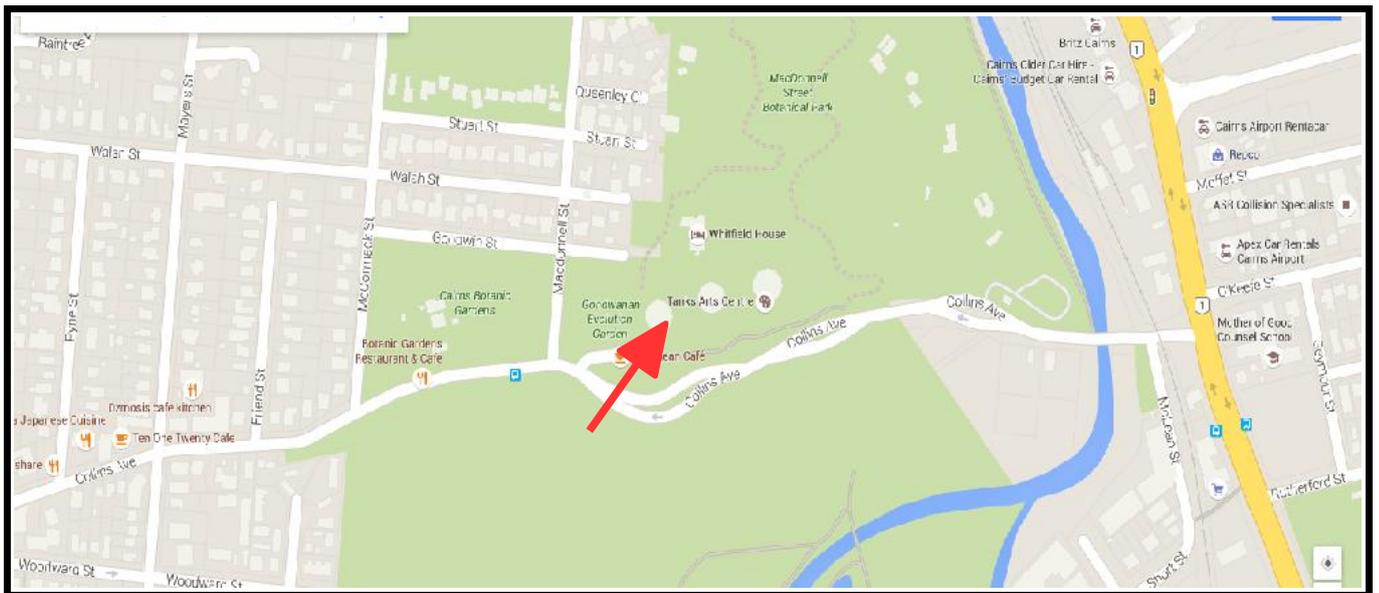
Sunday 27 March 2016

Weather permitting, Tablelands SGAP will drive the high altitude powerline corridor at Mount Emerald 4WD required. Alternatively, member's gardens at Tolga will be visited.

Townsville Branch

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.



SGAP CAIRNS 2015 COMMITTEE

Chairperson Boyd Lenne

boydlenne@hotmail.com

Vice-chairperson Pauline Lawie

Treasurer Stuart Worboys

Secretary Coralie Stewart

Newsletter Stuart Worboys

worboys1968@yahoo.com.au

Webmaster Tony Roberts