

SGAP CAIRNS NEWSLETTER

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Society for Growing Australian Plants, Cairns Branch

www.sgapcairns.qld.gov.au

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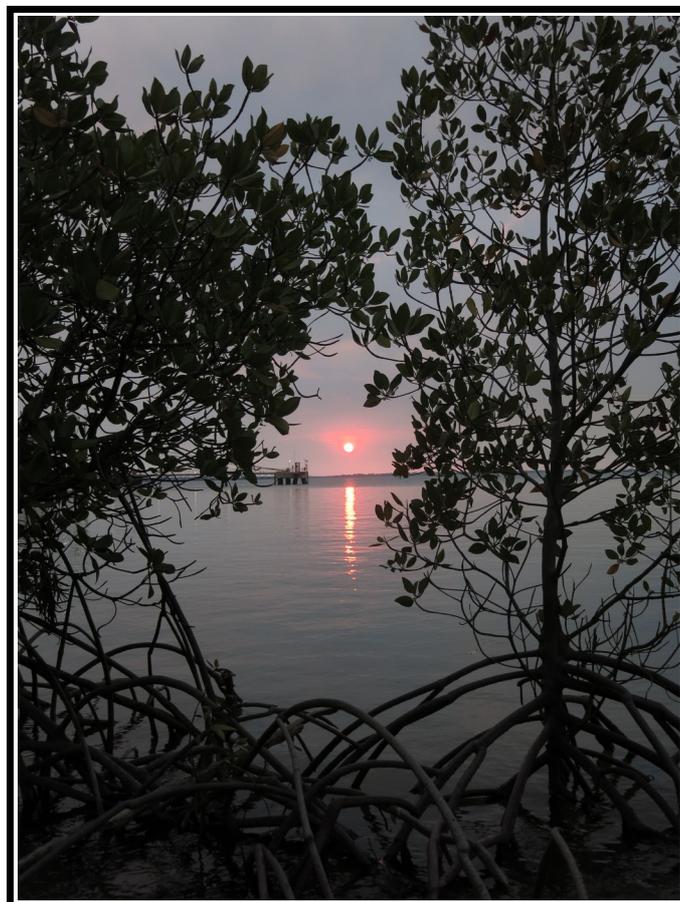
Inside this Issue

2017 Welcome.....	1
Plants of the Tropics - <i>Scaevola taccada</i>	2
Gardening with <i>Scaevola</i>	2
Weipa, late dry season.....	3
What's happening in SGAP north Queensland.....	4
Tablelands Branch.....	4
Townsville Branch.....	4
Cairns Branch.....	4

2017 Welcome

The Cairns Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants will start off 2017 next Sunday at the Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitors Centre, in Collins Avenue Edge Hill. Our President, Tony Roberts, will be speaking on the rich web of life hidden in the mangroves right on Cairns' doorstep.

The title of the talk is *Midgies, mozzies and mudskippers: The mangroves of Cairns*.



*Bushfire sunset at Weipa, with red mangroves (*Rhizophora*) in the foreground.*

Tony's talk will be followed by our first meeting for the year, and lunch (please bring a plate). New members welcome!



Scaevola taccada. Photo by B. Navez.

Plants of the Tropics - *Scaevola taccada*

Stuart Worboys

Scaevola taccada (Goodeniaceae) goes by a number of common names: Fanflower, Cardwell Cabbage, Sea Lettuce Tree, Beach Scaevola, Beach Naupaka, Merambong and Ngahu. It's a familiar shrub of tropical beaches across the Indo-Pacific, occurring from east Africa to Polynesia - hence the wide variety of names. It has large fleshy leaves, white fan-shaped flowers, and white fruits that float and are transported by ocean currents. John Beasley reports the crushed leaves are excellent for preventing fogging in scuba

masks. In the Caribbean, where it is an introduced species, it has become invasive, displacing the native *Scaevola plumieri*.

Gardening with Scaevola

In the garden, Beach Scaevola is a fast growing, hardy plant. The texts say that it prefers a sandy soil, moderate moisture and full sun, however, ours are growing well on clay soils on the Redlynch hillslopes. It responds well to pruning or hedging.

Propagation is by seed, or from cuttings. Seed can be slow to germinate (3-9 months) a useful adaptation for something that may be floating around the ocean for months on end. Soaking overnight in seawater before planting may speed germination slightly.

Cuttings should be up to 50 cm long, with the lower leaves removed. They should be placed in potting mix or a sandy soil, and watered daily.

Scaevola means "left-handed", and refers to the one-sided, fan shaped flowers. Gaius Mucius Scaevola was a legendary Roman hero, who demonstrated his bravery by forcing his right hand into an altar fire and holding it there until it was consumed.

Weipa, late dry season

By Stuart Worboys

Some photographs from a trip to Weipa in November last year. Fires had impacted the entire landscape, but recent rains brought out a tiny bit of colour in the ground layer.



Brunoniella acaulis



Drosera petiolaris



Hidden in the leaf litter, *Curculigo ensifolia*.



Coelospermum reticulatum



What's happening in SGAP north Queensland...

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

Saturday 26 February 2017. For the first excursion this year Roger [Yuruga nursery] has invited us to visit his garden and that of his friend Russel Slater in Kuranda. Meet from 9.30 for 10 am departure at the recreational centre on Fallon Road, about 600 m from the highway, look for the tennis courts and don't cross Jum Rum Creek.

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.

Cairns Branch

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

Sunday 19 February 2017. First meeting for the year at the Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitor's Centre, Collins Avenue, Edge Hill - see map below. Meet 10:30 a.m.

