

# Society for Growing Australian Plants Cairns Branch

## NEWSLETTER

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## EXCURSION REPORT, BARRON GORGE, 28 APRIL 2019

*Don Lawie*

Barron Gorge was formed by millions of years of erosion of the ancient Hodgkinson Formation by the Barron River. The ancient river flow was boosted at some stage by capturing the headwaters of the Clohesy and Mitchell Rivers during a geological event and the vigorous flow carved the present gorge. The gorge can be reached from Cairns by the Barron Gorge Road, which starts in Caravonica and winds its way up the ever-narrowing and spectacular gorge. At the road's end, the river is bridged to access the hydro-electric power station (visitor section closed) and there is a good shelter shed with picnic facilities on the bridge

approach.

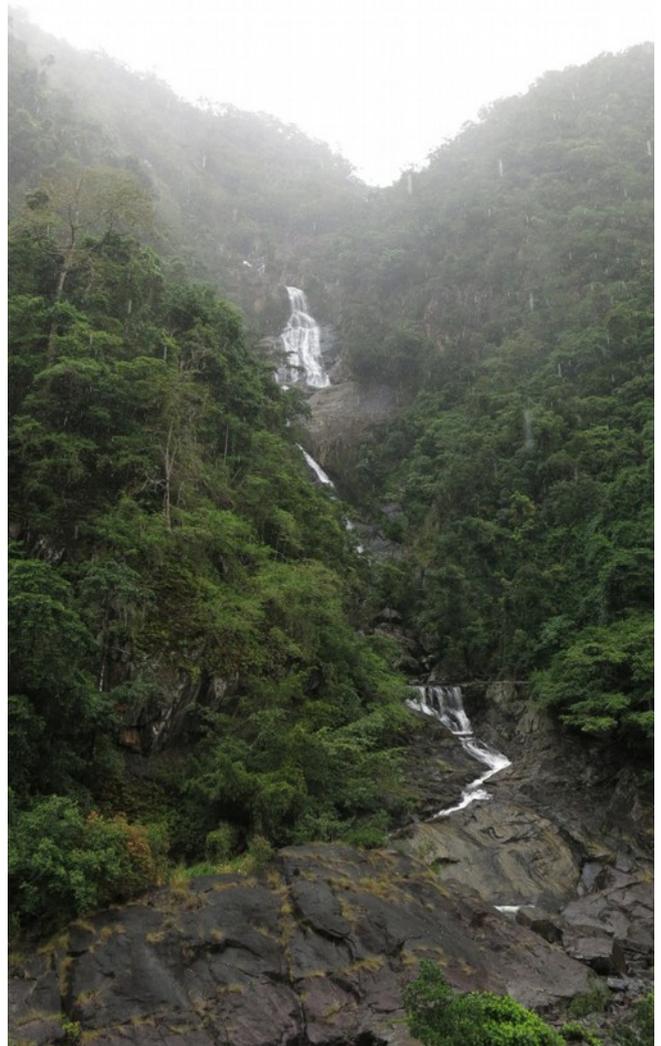
We met at the shed for lunch which was accompanied by discussion of our current projects. We have several initiatives in hand; Tina is making progress with her efforts to obtain permission for Cairns SGAP to collect propagating material from Rare and Threatened plants. Tina's plan is for us to propagate these plants and eventually have enough for them to be put into commercial nurseries and thus help to preserve them. It is an exciting project which will lead to an enhanced landscape of plants found only in our area.

Sharren has been investing considerable time and effort in planning for the 2020 NPQ "Yabba" to be held in Cairns next year. What at first seemed like a simple piece of logistics has developed into something more complicated, but Sharren has it all under control.



*Some were almost blown off the bridge. Who knew the Barron Gorge was actually a wind tunnel?*

deterred Cairns SGAP. We inspected the plants around the shelter shed adjoining the river. Notable was a palisade formation of the handsome fern *Microsorium punctatum* above a similar row of Birds Nest Fern *Asplenium nidus*. (Years ago at home a Red Necked Rail nested in one of these, laid five eggs).



*Surprise Creek Falls tumbling into the gorge.*

We ventured onto the bridge, a very strong concrete structure which afforded a scenic view of Surprise Creek Falls in full flow due to recent heavy rain. High above us the Kuranda Railway hugged the precipitous gorge rim. We were just getting into botanizing mode when we had a sudden weather event. A gale force wind roared up the gorge, horizontal sheets of rain engulfed us, a loud roaring (the Barron River Bunyip?) reverberated around the cliffs and several umbrellas were blown inside out (Rob said that they Resupinated - an apt use of an orchidological word). We were soaked in seconds but the gale was filled with ozone and we were invigorated by the drenching.

FLOWERING PLANTS-DICOTYLEDONS



*Schefflera actinophylla*, seen from above.

A return to the shed for hot tea and coffee, then the group set off for some real plant spotting - Rob's list will tell all.

**Barron Gorge Species List**

Rob Jago and Stuart Worboys

FERNS & ALLIES

ASPLENIACEAE

- Asplenium nidus* Birds Nest Fern
- Asplenium paleaceum* Scaly Asplenium

BLECHNACEAE

- Doodia media* Rasp Fern

DAVALLIACEAE

- Davallia denticulata*

NEPHROLEPIDACEAE

- Nephrolepis obliterata*

POLYPODIACEAE

- Microsorium punctatum*
- Platynerium hillii* Northern Elkhorn Fern
- Pyrosia rupestris* Rock Felt Fern

PTERIDACEAE

- Adiantum atroviride* Common Maidenhair Fern
- Adiantum diaphanum* Filmy Maidenhair Fern
- Adiantum hispidulum* var. *hispidulum* Rough Maidenhair Fern
- Doryopteris concolor*
- \**Pityrogramma calomelanos* var. *calomelanos* Silver Fern
- \**Pteris ensiformis* cv. *Victoriae* Variegated Bracken

THELYPTERIDACEAE

- Christella dentata* Creek Fern
- Macrothelypteris torresiana* Pale-wood Fern

GYMNOSPERMS

ARAUCARIACEAE

- Agathis robusta* Queensland Kauri Pine

ACANTHACEAE

- \**Dipteracanthus prostratus* Bell Weed

ANACARDIACEAE

- Euroschinus falcatus* var. *falcatus* Blush Cudgerie or Pink Poplar
- \**Mangifera indica* Mango
- Rhus taitensis* Sumac

APOCYNACEAE

- Hoya australis* subsp. *australis* Wax Flower
- Ichnocarpus frutescens*
- Parsonia longipetiolata* Green-leaved Silkpod
- Secamone elliptica* Corky Milk Vine
- Tabernaemontana pandacaqui* Banana Bush

ARALIACEAE

- Polyscias elegans* Celerywood
- Schefflera actinophylla* Umbrella Tree

ARISTOLOCHIACEAE

- Pararistolochia deltantha*

ASTERACEAE

- \**Crassocephalum crepidioides* Thickhead
- \**Cyanthillium cinereum* var. *cinereum* Purple Fleabane
- \**Elephantopus mollis* Tobacco Weed
- \**Sphagneticola trilobata* Singapore Daisy
- \**Synedrella nodiflora* Cinderella Weed
- Youngia japonica*

CASUARINACEAE

- Casuarina cunninghamiana* River She Oak

CELASTRACEAE

- Euonymus australiana*

CLEOMACEAE

- \**Cleome aculeata* Spider Flower

COMBRETACEAE

- Terminalia sericocarpa* Damson

CONVOLVULACEAE

- \**Ipomoea hederifolia* Cardinal's Flower

CRASSULACEAE

- \**Bryophyllum pinnatum* Resurrection Plant

CUCURBITACEAE

- Trichosanthes pentaphylla*



Flower buds and leaves of *Trichosanthes pentaphylla*.

**ELAEOCARPACEAE**

*Elaeocarpus grandis* Silver Quandong;  
Murrigan

**EUPHORBIACEAE**

*Aleurites rockinghamensis* Candlenut  
*Claoxylon hillii* Hill's Brittlewood  
*Codiaeum variegatum* var. *moluccanum*  
*Macaranga involucrata* var. *mallotoides*  
*Macaranga tanarius* Blush Macaranga  
*Mallotus philippensis* Red Kamala  
*Mallotus repandus*

**FABACEAE**

\**Centrosema molle* Centro  
*Derris* sp. (Claudie River L.J. Webb+ 8348)  
\**Desmodium tortuosum* Beggar Weed

**LAMIACEAE**

*Callicarpa pedunculata* Velvet Leaf  
\**Hyptis capitata* Knobweed  
*Plectranthus apreptus*

**LAURACEAE**

*Cryptocarya hypospodia* Northern Laurel

**MAESACEAE**

*Maesa haplobotrys*

**MELIACEAE**

*Dysoxylum pettigrewianum* Spur Mahogany

**MENISPERMACEAE**

*Pachygone ovata*

**MIMOSACEAE**

*Adenantha pavonina* False Red Sandalwood  
*Falcataria toona* Acacia Cedar; Mackay  
Cedar  
\**Mimosa pudica* var. *unijuga*

**MORACEAE**

*Ficus congesta* var. *congesta* Red Leaf  
Fig  
*Ficus hispida* Hairy Fig; Boombil  
*Ficus microcarpa* Small-fruited Fig  
*Ficus variegata* var. *variegata* Variegated  
Cluster Fig  
*Ficus virens* var. *virens* White Fig  
*Ficus virgata* var. *virgata* Figwood  
*Streblus brunonianus* White Handlewood

**MYRISTICACEAE**

*Myristica globosa* subsp. *muelleri*

**MYRTACEAE**

*Eugenia reinwardtiana* (Little leaf form)  
*Melaleuca viminalis* Red Bottlebrush  
\**Psidium guajava* Guava  
*Syzygium tierneyanum* River Cherry  
*Tristaniopsis exiliflora* Kanuka Box

**OLEACEAE**

*Chionanthus ramiflora* Native Olive  
*Jasminum elongatum* Native Jasmine  
*Olea paniculata* Native Olive

**PETIVERIACEAE**

\**Rivina humilis* Coral Berry

**PHYLLANTHACEAE**

*Breynia cernua* Fart Tree  
*Cleistanthus semiopacus* Rusty  
Cleistanthus  
*Glochidion philippicum* Buttonwood

*Phyllanthus cuscutiflorus* Pink Phyllanthus

**PIPERACEAE**

\**Peperomia pellucida*  
*Piper caninum* Native Pepper

**PITTOSPORACEAE**

*Bursaria tenuifolia* Sweet Blackthorn

**PROTEACEAE**

*Buckinghamia celsissima* Ivory Curl Tree;  
Spotted Silky Oak

**RHAMNACEAE**

*Rhamnella vitiensis*  
*Ventilago ecorollata*

**RUBIACEAE**

*Aidia racemosa* Archer Cherry  
*Gynochthodes umbellata*  
*Nauclea orientalis* Leichhardt Tree  
*Neonauclea glabra* Hard Leichhardt  
\**Oldenlandia corymbosa*  
*Tarenna dallachiana* subsp. *dallachiana*  
*Timonius timon* var. *timon* Timonius

**RUTACEAE**

*Micromelum minutum* Lime Berry

**SAPINDACEAE**

*Atalaya rigida*  
*Ganophyllum falcatum* Daintree Hickory  
*Guioa acutifolia* Glossy Tamarind  
*Harpullia pendula* Tulipwood

**SOLANACEAE**

\**Solanum seaforthianum* Brazilian  
Nightshade

**SPARRMANNIACEAE**

*Trichospermum pleiostigma* Whitfield Ash  
\**Triumfetta rhomboidea* Chinese Burr

**URTICACEAE**

*Dendrocnide photinophylla* Shiny Leaf  
Stinger  
\**Pilea microphylla* Artillery Plant;  
Military Fern  
*Pipturus argenteus* Native Mulberry

**VERBENACEAE**

*Lantana camara*  
\**Stachytarpheta cayennensis*  
\**Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*

**VITACEAE**

*Leea novoguineensis* Bandicoot Berry  
*Cissus vinosa*  
*Tetrastigma thorsborneorum*

**FLOWERING PLANTS-MONOCOTYLEDONS****ARACEAE**

*Epipremnum pinnatum* Native Monstera  
\**Syngonium podophyllum* Goosefoot

**COMMELINACEAE**

*Aneilema acuminatum*  
\**Tradescantia zebrina* Wandering Jew

**DRACAENACEAE**

\**Sansevieria trifasciata* Mother-in-laws  
Tongue

**HEMEROCALLIDACEAE**

*Dianella bambusifolia*



Several weeds thrive in the Gorge area - mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*) is one.

**LAXMANNIACEAE**

*Eustrephus latifolius* Wombat Berry

**PANDANACEAE**

*Benstonea monticola* Scrub Breadfruit

**POACEAE**

*Cyrtococcum oxyphyllum*

\**Megathyrsus maximus* var. *maximus*

*Oplismenus compositus*

## Art to Commemorate the Banks and Solander 250th

*Nilavan Adams, Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens Botanic Art Group.*



*Telopea speciosissima*. Watercolour by Nilavan Adams.

In 2020, Australia will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Captain James Cook's arrival in the east coast of Australia. Planning for the celebration is underway with numerous institutions and societies involved along the whole route of Cook's journey.

The Florilegium Society at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney is planning an exhibition entitled the Banks & Solander Project as part of these celebrations. Artists from Australia and overseas are invited to participate in this project. A list of selected plants has been compiled from those collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander during the Cook historic voyage.

Nilavan Adams, one of the artists, has nominated *Malaleuca viridiflora*, Broad-leaved Paper Bark, native to north Queensland, and *Leptospermum squarrosum*, Peach Flowered Tea Tree, as the subjects for her project. It is anticipated that submissions of the completed artworks will be finalised during the second half of 2019.

## Branch news

The excursion for May (19th) is Behana Creek, details can be found in the at the end of this newsletter. Please RSVP to [secretary@sgapcairns.org.au](mailto:secretary@sgapcairns.org.au).

For those members that need to pay their 2019 branch fees you can pay by EFT! (BSB 034 167 Account number 850790) Please put your name in the reference section. Branch fee is \$10 (which includes family/partners)

## RED-FLOWERED WEEPING TEA TREE

*Photos by Russell Joshua*

Daintree plant enthusiast, Russell Joshua, recently spotted something odd immediately east of Wangetti Rifle Range. Growing amongst the paperbarks on the site was a red-flowered *Melaleuca leucadendra*! Red flowers in *Melaleuca viridiflora* are fairly common, and I've seen one or two red-flowered *Melaleuca nervosa*, but red flowers on *M. leucadendra* is not something I've heard of before.

Russell has considered other options:

- It's *M. viminalis* (formerly *Callistemon viminalis*). Definitely not as leaf structure and arrangement totally wrong to be *viminalis* and the flower structure is not right either.
- It's *M. quinquenervia*, again leaf structure all wrong. Apparently there is a red cultivar of this though.
- And a few locals told him it was *M. viridiflora* - but the tree simply does not match the shrub like morphology, and nor do the flowers.

Unfortunately, the branches were too high to collect, but he was able to get some good photos. This would be a good one for tropical horticulture. Has anyone else seen or heard of red flowered *M. leucadendra*?



*Red-flowered Melaleuca leucadendra near Wangetti Rifle Range.*

# Shelburne Bay, Cape York

I recently visited Shelburne Bay on Cape York, taking the opportunity to botanise in the swamps, heathlands and rainforests of that vast open landscape. Here are a few photos from the trip.



Once considered rare, *Brachychiton vitifolius* is actually extremely common on the northern Cape. It rarely grows more than a metre high. It propagates easily and thrives on neglect.



Pastel flower lives up to its scientific name of *Pseuderanthemum variable*. Unlike its counterparts in Cairns, its flowers are pure white, lack any markings, and its leaves are lime green rather than dark green.



The landscape south of Shelburne Bay is a vast heathland growing on white sand. The shrubs here are low and spiky, and only a few species can survive on these extremely infertile soils.



*Decaschistia peninsularis* is a tiny relative of the hibiscus, with big showy flowers.



Until a few years ago, this little shrub was lumped in with *Polyscias australiana*. However, this Cape York species has much smaller leaves, and rarely exceeds a metre in height. It's now known as *P. zippeliana*.



The fruits of *Polyscias zippeliana* - twice the size of *P. australiana*.



The starburst-like flowers of *Asteromyrtus brassii*.



On the trip, Queensland Herbarium botanists had a rare opportunity to map *Gahnia* swamps, an unusual and difficult to access vegetation community. PS There were no crocs here!



Ant plants (*Myrmecodia platytyrea*) and rattleskulls (*Dischidia major*) were extremely common in these landscapes.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING...

## **Cairns Branch**

Sunday 19 May 2019.

Excursion to Behana Gorge. Meet at the Behana Gorge carpark at 12 noon.

How to get there: travel south from Cairns, past Gordonvale and Walsh's Pyramid. Just past the Pyramid, turn right onto Behana Gorge Road. Drive to the end. If you cross Behana Creek, you've gone too far!

## **Townsville Branch**

Meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 8pm, Annandale Community Centre. Excursions the following Sunday. Website: [www.npqtownsville.org.au](http://www.npqtownsville.org.au)

Contact: John Elliott (Secretary) [jwelliott@aapt.com.au](mailto:jwelliott@aapt.com.au)

## **Tablelands Branch**

Meetings on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm, Tolga CWA Hall. Excursions the following Sunday.

Excursion officers: Bert and Chris Jaminon, 40914565.

Sunday 26 May 2019.

The next excursion will be along Wooroora / Glengordon / Mandalee roads to the south of the Kennedy Highway connecting Ravenshoe to Innot Hot Springs the long way. Meet at Ravenshoe visitors centre from 9.30 for 10 am departure.



*The sands of Shelburne Bay support a wealth of carnivorous plants - a sure sign that the soils there are impoverished. Instead of obtaining their nutrients from the soils, carnivorous plants like this pitcher plant (*Nepenthes mirabilis*) rely on other nutrient sources. Their leaves are modified to form pitchers, which trap insects and break them down in a pool of digestive fluid contained in each leaf. In the background you can see tufts of the attractive swamp plant, *Balaskion**

## **2019 Committee**

**President:** Tony Roberts

**Vice President:** Pauline Lawie

**Secretary:** Sandy Perkins

**Treasurer:** Val Carnie

**Newsletter Editor:** Stuart Worboys

**Webmaster:** Rick Wong

**Contact:** [secretary@sgapcairns.org.au](mailto:secretary@sgapcairns.org.au)