

Society for Growing Australian Plants Cairns Branch

NEWSLETTER

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Excursion report June 2019

SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS AT BAYVIEW

Don Lawie

Our June excursion became one of those occasions when one simply runs out of adjectives to describe how one feels about the place visited. We were introduced to Anthony Lagois and Brian Moran's place in

May 2012, and now we can see how the project has matured over the intervening seven years.



Brian and Anthony - "Men of Trees"

About twenty years ago this Bayview Heights property of six acres was weed infested land and a rundown dwelling. Today, we see a magnificent residence and an arboretum of tropical trees and shrubs that any botanical gardens curator would love to have.

The landform is steep slopes and deep gulleys. The soil is a slushy, hungry clay. Natural vegetation is hillslopes coastal rainforest with dominant quandong and fig species. The soil for extensive garden beds was remediated by adding crusher dust and mulch in large amounts to open up the clay particles and add nutrients.

Plantings consist of swathes and terraces of carefully chosen, compatible rainforest species plus occasional bold forays into experimental attempts at dry tropical gems. A lower terrace adjoining the neighbouring block has matured well in our absence and now makes the ideal shield for them without obscuring the panoramic view of esplanade, harbour and shipping channel out to and beyond Green Island.



Inside the Mist House

Plant species have been sourced from many places and seed has been collected from purposed expeditions and propagated in the towering Mist House. This is a feature on its own; although erected from simple materials I saw a Sepik River *Haus Tambaran* in its sweeping curves while Pauline felt that she was gazing along the nave of a Gothic Cathedral. It is a place of beginnings, of promise of the wonderful plants that are growing within. A deep dam and an integrated watering system ensures continuing growth in dry times.

"Dry Times" have been replaced with drizzle times for far too long. Brian has a convincing theory that constant light rain has ensured that there is an excess of free ground water in the soil, resulting in the infiltration of *Phytophthora* attacking the roots of vulnerable species. Some prized specimens have succumbed and there may yet

be more casualties in spite of all attempts at containing the invader.

My favourite part of the garden was an uphill avenue of *Syzygium unipunctatum*, (which was *Waterhousea unipunctata* when planted) closely planted and a uniform height of four metres, allowing a passage between the sensual wine red new leaf growth, leading the eye up to an intriguing bend beyond which may lie, Who Knows?



Treading uphill through an avenue of *Syzygium unipunctatum*.

Too many of our members were unable to attend on the day and I hope that we can prevail on these Men of the Trees to allow us to

visit them again in, perhaps, a year or so allowing us to all be enthused at what can be done with forward thinking matched to hard work. I'd love to visit when the entrance hedge of *Syzygium erythrocalyx* (Johnstone River Apple) is in flower.



Ostrearia australicum



Sloanea

NEW SPECIES OF HEATHS IN TROPICAL QUEENSLAND

Victoria's floral emblem, *Epacris impressa*, or "pink heath" is a member of rhododendron family, Ericaceae. In common with many Australian members of the family, it is a small woody shrub with attractive flowers and sharp pointed leaves that typically grows in low shrublands on infertile soils. Southwestern and southeastern Australia are particularly rich in Ericaceae, with hundreds of named species. In the north,

however, the diversity in the family is much lower, with barely two dozen species recognised. Last month however, two new species of Ericaceae were described by Darren Crayn, Caroline Puente-Lelievre and Rigel Jensen in the scientific journal, *Australian Systematic Botany*.



Styphelia piliflora, photographed on Mt Emerald.

The first of these newly described species may be familiar to many SGAP members by its old name: *Astroloma* sp. Baal Gammon, first collected in 1980 by Bernie Hyland and Bruce Gray in the Stannary Hills. Genetic analysis has shown it is better placed in the genus *Styphelia*, and it has been named *Styphelia piliflora*, in recognition of its pilose (or hairy) flowers.

The second species was first reported by Rupert Russell, and collected in March 2013 by Rigel Jensen from a rocky knoll on Brooklyn Station. That population consisted of just a few plants. Another, much larger, population was subsequently discovered on a nearby rocky ridge and surveyed in January 2016. At first this was believed to be a northern population of *Leucopogon mitchellii*, however, when flowering specimens were found, the species could clearly not be assigned to *Leucopogon mitchellii* nor any other accepted species. The species has been named *Styphelia geniculata*.

Just a few days after formal publication of these new names, SGAP Townsville returned from their White Mountains excursion with photos of yet another new *Styphelia*. This species has also been called *Leucopogon mitchellii*, but to the experts at the Australian Tropical Herbarium it is clearly something new. The flowers are rich with nectar, clearly visible in the photographs, suggesting bird pollination..



Mystery *Styphelia* from the White Mountains. Photo by John Elliott, NPQ Townsville Branch.

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

Cairns Branch

Saturday 27th July

Meet 9am at the Botanic Gardens
Depot off Garden St (see map below).
The Depot is reached by:

1. When arriving from Cairns, head down Hope Street to the Walker Street intersection. The River of Gold Motel is on the left here.
2. Turn right down Walker Street and head towards the gardens.
3. Before you reach the gardens, make a little dogleg - turn left onto May St, then right onto Furneaux St, which will take you down to the sports oval and the Depot.

The morning will be spent cleaning up the SGAP garden and orchid house. Members need to wear closed-in shoes, a long sleeve shirt, long pants and a hat to meet WHS requirements. Those that have steel capped boots please bring them as we have special jobs for you! Members are welcome to bring a plant or two to add to the SGAP garden. In the afternoon there will be a brief meeting and walk around the gardens to assess the preparation work for the Banks and Solander Anniversary in 2020.

Saturday night BBQ. Food provided.
Venue TBA.

Sunday 28th July

Start 9am. Meeting point TBA.

Excursion to the following three sites

- Cooktown bore fields, possibly collect Banks and Solander plants.
- Site of *Livistona concinna*
- Stonewall railway cutting. Mangroves, *Melaleucas*, swamp, bit of everything!

Accommodation: Camping is available at the Botanic Gardens from Friday through to Monday. Facilities are basic, with a toilet block and one shower at the depot. Alternatively you can book your own accommodation in town.

Notes:

- People usually arrive on the Friday and head back on the Monday.
- To attend, members must be a current member of their local branch and have paid the regional membership fees.
- BYO food for the weekend (except for Saturday night)
- Please RSVP to secretary@sgapcairns.org.au by Tuesday 9 July 2019. (do not reply to this email). Please include number of people attending if you would like to camp at the gardens completed volunteer registration form.

Townsville Branch

Meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, Annandale Community Centre. Excursions the following Sunday. Website:

www.npqtownsville.org.au

Contact: John Elliott (Secretary) jw-elliott@aapt.com.au

The July outing is a planned trip to the Mt. Zero area. Following the heavy rainfall of February we should expect that the landscape will be in good shape - hopefully much better than the last couple of visits when drought reigned supreme.

This is a full day trip so bring lunch, water and the usual sun protection. Mt. Zero is to the west of Paluma so the access is north along the highway and then up the range road and through Paluma.

Meet at the quarry on the left (southern) side of the road at 9:30am. Measure 17 km from the "Paluma Range" sign at the top of the hill at the entrance to Paluma village and you should find yourself at the meeting point. Allow 1.5 hours for the drive from Townsville.

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.

As a few people are going to the Cooktown weekend it has been decided to delay the next excursion for a week. The new date is **August 4th** and we will be going [hopefully] to Goldsborough Valley. Please let Chris know if you want to join in. Meet near the first toilet block inside the park from 9.30 for 10 am departure. This will be a mostly walking excursion.

Society for Growing Australian Plants, Inc.
Cairns Branch.

www.sgapcairns.org.au

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2018-2019 COMMITTEE

President: Tony Roberts

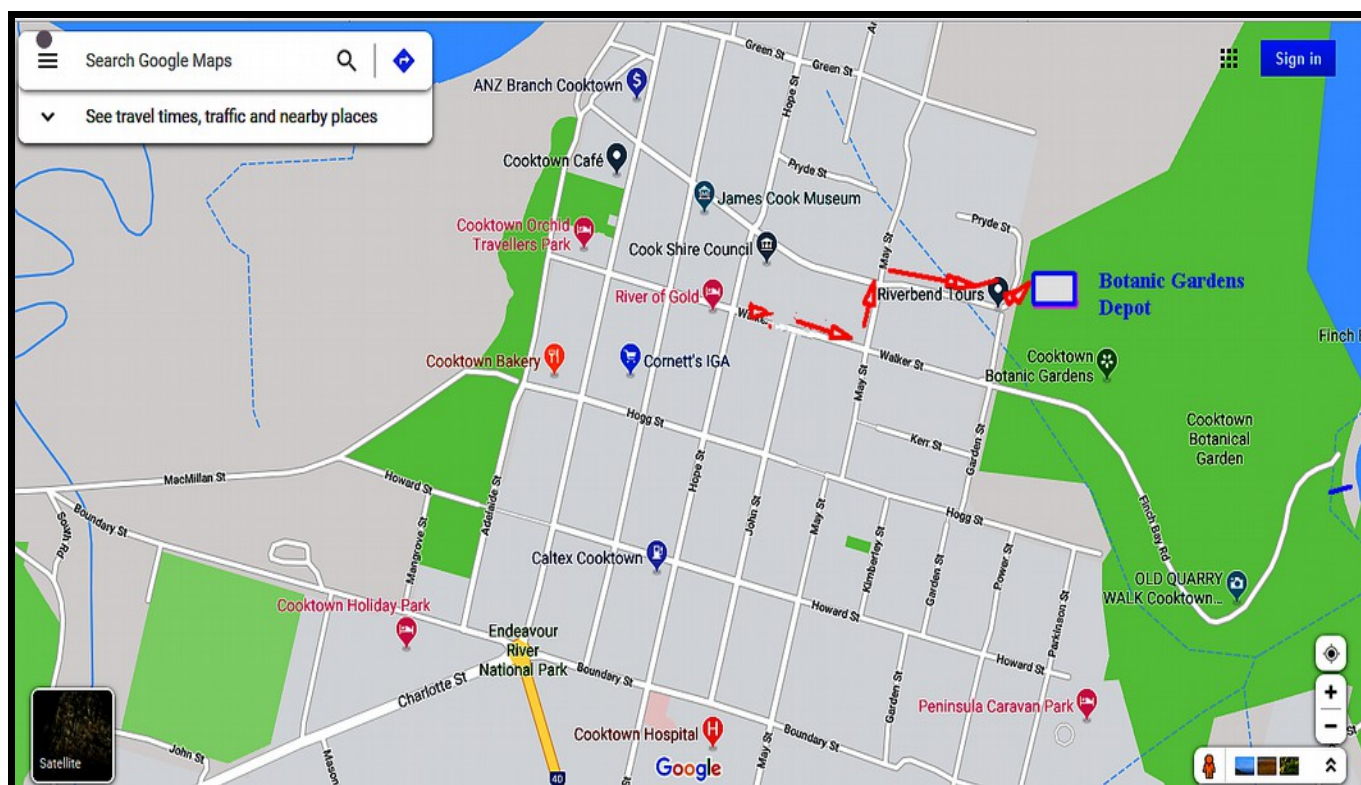
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Secretary: Sandy Perkins (secretary@sgapcairns.org.au)

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Webmaster: Tony Roberts

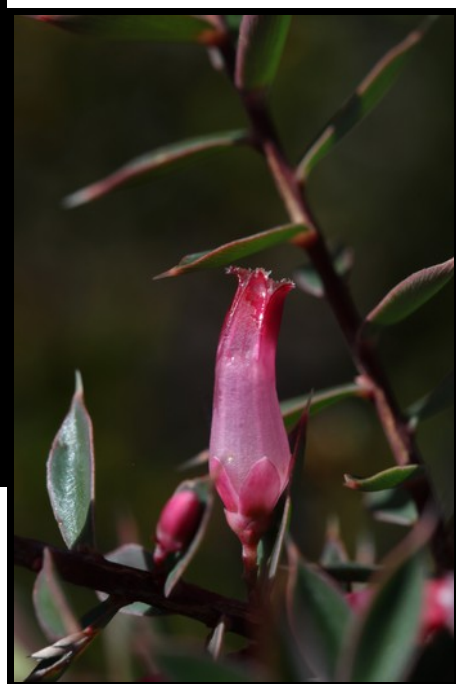


Townsville White Mountains excursion

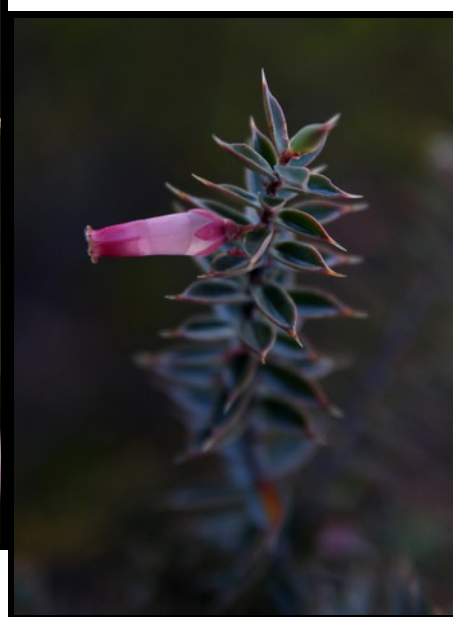
More images by John Elliott



*Betsy Jackes examining the white sandstones that are the home of the new *Styphelia*.*



*New *Styphelia**



*New *Styphelia**