

SGAP Cairns

Society for Growing Australian Plants Inc., Cairns Branch
Celebrating our 40th year

NEWSLETTER 202 JULY 2020



CAIRNS SGAP MEETS AT GLENOMA PARK

Don Lawie

Sunday 21 June 2020 saw our first post-Corona meeting followed the classic procedure:

- greetings (but no handshakes or hugs);
- catch-up conversation;
- lunch;
- a discussion of plants on the specimen table;
- a plant walk; and
- afternoon tea to finish off.

Glenoma is an attractive park. The endless traffic of the Western Arterial Road zooms by to the east and the chuckling waters of Freshwater Creek make a welcome contrast as it bounds the park to the west. Our picnic table was covered by fallen flowers of the giant rainforest vine *Mucuna*

gigantea, looking like small green birds, and a mature fruit pod on the ground was opened to reveal the disc shaped black seed. These have common name of Burny Bean and they recalled memories of Bellenden Ker school days long ago when we delighted in rubbing them on a concrete floor and plonking them on a vulnerable part of a friend – they really do get very hot...

The Park has some really big trees: a giant exotic *Khaya senegalensis* - African Mahogany - stands sentinel beside the car park, while a belt of natural rainforest encloses the creek and a stand of trees in the open park area reach for the sky. Estimates of 40 metres in height for the Milky Pines *Alstonia scholaris* were agreed and a very large Burdekin Plum *Pleiogynium timorense* scattered its fruit liberally on the grass.

An unusual specimen on display at the show-and-tell table was a flowering cutting of a *Hoya* from Iron Range. The flowers were a muted pink – much paler than *Hoya macgillivrayi* which occurs in the same general area – and a part of a long tress of vine covered with flower. After discussion, it was decided that it was a specimen of *Hoya sussuela*, an attractive and rarely seen native.



SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS INC., CAIRNS BRANCH

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We walked across the park, crossed the creek by a new bridge and inspected a large plot of re-vegetation which runs along the creek and complements the natural vegetation there. Recent prolonged rain has benefited these rain-loving trees and they were (almost) universally bursting with new growth. Some *Premna serratifolia* were already mature, bearing masses of tiny green/purple fruit; species of Euphorbiaceae were

plentifully represented by *Mallotus* and *Macaranga* – which reflected their natural cousins creekside. Notably struggling were some *Callistemons*, perhaps they didn't like the soil? A wide, well-formed path follows the plot and continues on further, but I found the hot sun enervating and was glad to return to the coolness of the park and a welcome cuppa.



Hoya sussuela



The unimpressive blossoms of bleeding heart, *Homalanthus*.



Premna serratifolia fruit



Mallotus mollissimus



Flowers of *Diplocyclos palmatus*, a relative of cucumbers

Species list, compiled by Rob Jago and Stuart Worboys

| Flowering Plants | Family | Species | Common Name |
|------------------|----------------|---|------------------|
| | Anacardiaceae | <i>Pleiogynium timorense</i> | Burdekin Plum |
| | Anacardiaceae | <i>Semecarpus australiensis</i> | Tar Tree |
| | Annonaceae | <i>Cananga odorata</i> | Ylang Ylang |
| | Apocynaceae | <i>Alstonia scholaris</i> | Milky Pine |
| | Apocynaceae | <i>Alstonia spectabilis</i> | |
| | Araceae | <i>Epipremnum pinnatum</i> | |
| | Araceae | * <i>Syngonium ?podophyllum</i> | |
| | Arecaceae | * <i>Ptychospermum microcarpa</i> | |
| | Asteraceae | * <i>Sphagneticola trilobata</i> | Singapore Daisy |
| | Burseraceae | <i>Canarium acutifolium</i> | |
| | Combretaceae | <i>Terminalia microcarpa</i> | Damson |
| | Cucurbitaceae | <i>Trichosanthes pentaphylla</i> | |
| | Elaeocarpaceae | <i>Elaeocarpus grandis</i> | Blue Quandong |
| | Euphorbiaceae | <i>Mallotus mollissimus</i> | |
| | Fabaceae | <i>Acacia holosericea</i> | |
| | Fabaceae | <i>Mucuna gigantea</i> | Burny Bean |
| | Lamiaceae | <i>Oxera splendida</i> | Potato Vine |
| | Lamiaceae | <i>Premna serratifolia</i> | |
| | Lauraceae | <i>Cryptocarya triplinervis</i> var. <i>riparia</i> | |
| | Lauraceae | <i>Endiandra longipedicellata</i> | |
| | Malvaceae | <i>Trichospermum pleiostigma</i> | |
| | Meliaceae | <i>Dysoxylum gaudichaudianum</i> | |
| | Meliaceae | * <i>Khaya senegalensis</i> | African Mahogany |
| | Moraceae | <i>Ficus benjamina</i> | |
| | Moraceae | <i>Ficus destruens</i> | Rusty Fig |
| | Moraceae | <i>Ficus drupacea</i> | |
| | Moraceae | <i>Ficus racemosa</i> | Cluster Fig |
| | Moraceae | <i>Ficus variegata</i> | Variegated Fig |
| | Myristicaceae | <i>Myristica globosa</i> | Native Nutmeg |
| | Myrtaceae | <i>Corymbia torelliana</i> | Cadaghi Gum |
| | Myrtaceae | <i>Syzygium tiemeyanum</i> | Watergum |
| | Orchidaceae | <i>Dendrobium teretifolium</i> | Pencil Orchid |
| | Passifloraceae | <i>Adenia heterophylla</i> | Lacewing Vine |
| | Phyllanthaceae | <i>Bridelia insularis</i> | |
| | Rosaceae | <i>Prunus turneriana</i> | |
| | Rubiaceae | <i>Morinda citrifolia</i> | |
| | Rubiaceae | <i>Nauclea orientalis</i> | Leichhardt Tree |
| | Sapindaceae | <i>Castanospora alphandii</i> | Brown Tamarind |
| | Sapindaceae | <i>Cupaniopsis flagelliformis</i> | |
| | Sapindaceae | <i>Ganophyllum falcatum</i> | |
| | Sapindaceae | <i>Harpullia ramiflora</i> | |
| | Sapindaceae | <i>Toechima daemelianum</i> | Cape Tamarind |
| | Urticaceae | <i>Pipturus argenteus</i> | |
| | Vitaceae | <i>Leea novoguineense</i> | Bandicoot Berry |
| | Vitaceae | <i>Tetrastigma nitens</i> | |
| Ferns | | | |
| | Woodsiaceae | <i>Diplazium dietrichianum</i> | |

Some thoughts for 2021

Peter Radke of Tablelands Branch has been giving thought to joint activities for 2021. His suggested destinations are distant, but two of the best wildflower destinations in north Queensland: Cooktown and Elim Beach in June and the White Mountains/Burra Range in August or September. This is just a starting point for discussion and planning. What do people think?

Growing tropical plants from seed

Sharren Wong

When I first started trying to grow tropical trees and plants from seed I looked at all sorts of books and sites before deciding to heed all advice then experiment on my own. Over time I also had the benefit of volunteering at the Council Nursery in Stratford where all plants are grown from seeds. I was able to collect and contribute seed, and see some experimental work done with germination. I am happy to share a few of my experiences.

To start off with, germination times can vary greatly and some seed is very fickle and seems to germinate at will or not at all!! Don't be surprised that something will germinate quickly one time then another time after you have given up on it altogether, it will start sprouting. Some other important points:

- Many tropical trees and plants produce seed that have a very short shelf life as the embryo of many tropical fruit is viable for a short time. Once the seed has dried out it is no longer viable as the embryo has died, *e.g. Dillenia alata, Ochrosia eliptica*.
- Flesh surrounding seeds is there for various reasons but usually needs to be removed in order to allow or speed up germination. This removes any germination inhibitors, allows hydration and stimulation of germination and removes food for insects and fungus that will severely interfere with successful germination and growth of seedlings, *e.g. Phaleria clerodendron, Cerbera floribunda, Carallia brachiata, Macaranga* and *Syzygium* species, and so on.
- Seeds that have a thin seed coat covering a soft or green flesh, typically show signs of germination in a relatively short time after planting. These seeds need to be planted on or near the top of soil not deeply covered, *e.g. Castanospermum australe*
- Seed that has a hard, woody coating, often take a long time to germinate. To speed up the germination process the seed coat may need to be broken or penetrated, without harming the delicate embryo, *e.g. Eleocarpus grandis* or the Blue Quandong. This seed can take years to germinate. Cracking the hard seed may speed up germination. So also can putting the seed in a moist, friable soil and closing it in a plastic bag.

Intsia bijuga, or kwila, has a hard seed case that can be easily penetrated using a file to scrape the side of the seed slightly. Soaking the seed overnight in water then allows the seed to swell and germination time is reduced considerably. Again, don't plant the seed too deep. Try to think about how the seed is treated in nature and create similar conditions.

- Generally fruit that produce dry seed have a longish shelf life and can be stored for a reasonable

length of time and remain viable, e.g. *Acacia* species, *Melaleuca* species and *Alphitonia* species.

- Some dry (winged) seed will germinate with little or no soil covering so scatter over the surface of the seed mix and keep moist.
- Tiny seed doesn't need to be buried deep. Mixing with sand will help to prevent clumping and aid in a more scattered germination pattern.
- Seed that has a hard coating may benefit from soaking in water or even a slightly acidic mix in order to speed up germination.
- Removing outer shells and flesh from seed can be laborious and messy but worthwhile in the long run. Remember many tropical fruit have toxins and you should wear gloves and wash your hands thoroughly after touching the flesh.

On the whole, patience is required when growing any plants from seed. Germination times vary wildly from species to species and sometimes within seasons for the same species. A helpful guide to get you started can be found in "Growing Australian Natives Plants from Seed" by Murray Ralph. However not all seed is covered and details can be scant. In some cases you just need to experiment.

Please forgive the limited advice, I am sure you could all start adding to this document and your experiences will be greatly appreciated. Let my feeble beginnings be a challenge to you all to start sharing your experiences in growing plants from seed.

Growing *Aristolochia acuminata* (Cairns Birdwing Butterfly Vine) from seed.

Rick Wong

1. Make sure your seed is correctly identified.
2. Use fresh, clean, dry seed for best results. Separate the seed flakes. Use a good quality potting mix with lots of humus eg Searls Premium Mix
3. Scatter seed on top of soil and lightly cover with soil. (Seed may be exposed and will still germinate. Don't bury it.)
4. Keep the seed/soil moist but well drained at all times (don't let it dry out).
5. Germination will take 3-5 weeks.
6. Once the seedlings start to grow, watch out for the eggs of butterflies, particularly the Big Greasy as the caterpillars will show no mercy!
7. The best time to plant is when the seed pod dries and splits open, although the seed does have a good shelf life. Seed can be planted all year round.



*Feeding this magnificent creature is the real reason for growing *Aristolochia acuminata* from seed.*

Reminder - memberships

A reminder that, to participate in SGAP Cairns activities, you need to be a member of the Queensland State organisation.

Membership is only \$40 per year, due on the 1 April. Fees can be paid by direct deposit.

For more details, and the membership form, visit <https://npq.org.au/aboutus/membership-page>

Cairns Branch membership is \$10 per year, and can be paid at the monthly meeting.

Native Plants Queensland

Covid-19 Guidelines for Meetings and Excursions

Introduction

This document is a Guide and covers the Society's guidelines (COVID Safe Plan) regarding leading and participating in the Society's activities* in a world impacted by COVID-19.

It is intended that this guide be read by both leaders and participants of activities.

First and foremost, members must abide by all the Federal and State COVID-19 regulations that are in place at the time they are participating in a Society activity. The remainder of this document puts some of these regulations, post the Stage 3 relaxing of Queensland's restrictions effective the 4th July, in the context of our Club's activities. This plan will evolve as restrictions are adjusted by the Federal and State governments.

Native Plants Qld COVID-19 Guidelines

1. Members must not partake in an activity if they are feeling unwell due to symptoms including fever, sore throat, cough, or if they have returned from overseas in the previous 3 weeks.

2. No more than 2 per vehicle with the second person, if not from the same household, being in the rear seat on the passenger side of the vehicle (exceptions apply for elderly or disabled passengers).

3. Participants should use their own pen to sign on & bring hand sanitiser with them to use at sign on and to take on the activity.

4. EVENTS:

- Fewer than 500 people – no approval needed when following a COVID Safe Event Checklist.
- 500 to 10,000 people – need a COVID Safe Event Plan approved by local public health unit.

5. Unless the start times are staggered, and there is no interaction between the group, we must be careful at the meeting point, ensuring that no more than 100 members gather in a group and that we greet each other whilst maintaining social distancing. Gatherings are allowed in a home but must adhere to the 4 square metre rule.

Members must register for activities (not just turn up). Contact the Branch President or nominated activity leader prior to the day of the event. Splitting activities that are oversubscribed into two or more groups is not permitted.

6. When walking/cycling, the 4 square metre rule must apply between participants and when walking we should maintain 1.5m when approaching others from the opposite direction.

7. Morning and afternoon teas and lunches are not to be shared. Anti-bacterial wipes, sanitisers and soap must be used prior to eating (BYO), with tables and seats being wiped down. It is preferable that you bring your own chairs, to enable and ensure the 1.5 m distance.

8. Leaders must check National Park websites regarding Park closure and/or tracks and picnic areas are open. These guidelines are constantly changing.

9. Leaders should carry a copy of the Roadmap to easing Queensland's restriction FACT SHEET Update (Available at <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/roadmap-to-easing-queenslands-restrictions>).

10. Any personal fines (\$1336.00) incurred are the responsibility of the individual & not the Society, Branch or the activity leader.

11. Be mindful of the potential fine of \$13000 to NPQ if found in breach (fines can be handed out by Qld Police, QPWS staff, etc.)

12. Handling of incidents, particularly if person to person contact is required.

a. Leader nominates a qualified first aid responder

b. Mask, gloves, and apron are on hand

c. Other members maintain social distancing in their attempt to assist

d. Relevant emergency responders are known and contactable

Flowering in July



Pandorea pandorana



Bombax ceiba



Grevillea glauca

Upcoming events

Townsville

12 August - Regular meetings recommence.

Meetings of Native Plants Queensland - Townsville Branch on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, Annandale Community Centre. Excursions the following Sunday.

Website: www.npqtownsville.org.au

Tablelands

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

26 July - Davies Creek. Meet at 9.30 am at Car Park/Toilets near creek at bottom of hill - a little over 6 km from the Highway

30 August - Mt Lewis. Please ring Peter Radke on 0418 719 748 for more details.

Cairns Branch

Sunday 19 July 2020 - Davies Creek Falls and beyond.

Meet 12 noon at Davies Creek Falls carpark. To get there from Cairns, turn west at Smithfield Shopping Centre and head up the Kuranda Range. Bypass Kuranda and continue towards Mareeba.

21 km past the Kuranda traffic lights, turn right onto Davies Creek Road. This is a gravel road, and can be a bit bumpy and dusty at times, but it's 2WD friendly all the way. Six km from the Davies Creek Road intersection you reach the campgrounds and toilet (the only ones available). From here, it's another 2 km up a steep winding road to the Davies Creek Falls carpark. Please advise if you plan to attend - secretary@sgapcairns.org.au

