

SGAP Cairns

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

NEWSLETTER 207 FEBRUARY 2021



November 2020 excursion

Don Lawrie

SGAP CAIRNS TRAVELS CAPE YORK PENINSULA IN A MORNING

We had no need of four wheel drives, camping gear or anti crocodile spray. We took the easy way and followed the line of trees and shrubs planted by Anton Vanderschans about 20 years ago along Sawpit Gully in the then new subdivision of Forest Gardens in southern Cairns.

Anton sourced seed and cuttings of many interesting plants which grow along the peninsula and established them in a geographical planting along about 2 kilometres of the gully. Furthest west on the track represented The Tip and markers indicated areas such as McIlwraith Range, Iron Range etc. as we walked the path beside the gully.

A wet season creek flows down the gully but the stream was dry in mid November when we visited.

The path is well maintained and borders on suburban streets and houses on its southern side. Notable for the day was the variety of birds (about 20 species) both seen and heard with Torres Straits pigeons adding to the illusion of being on the peninsula with their soft coo-ing.

Some of the trees were familiar species from the Cairns area such as Flame Tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) in flower, dropping scarlet bells to carpet the path. Other flowering trees included Red Beech (*Dillenia alata*) with their distinctive butter-yellow flowers presenting an edible white aril, and numerous large Cluster Figs (*Ficus racemosa*) with many ripe fruit in bunches growing directly from the tree trunks. The fruiting figs and the flowering Black Beans (*Castanospermum australe*) would be responsible for many of the birds – lorikeets both rainbow and scaly-breasted performed acrobatics among the Black Bean flowers.

Plant of the day for me was a *Barringtonia acutangula* about 4 metres high and quite covered with pendulous racemes of small, softly red/black flowers. *Barringtonia* species are, to me, a useful wet weather/flood predictor. They flower about this time of year, produce their fruit, and when a flood



SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS INC., CAIRNS BRANCH

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2020-2021 COMMITTEE

President: Tony Roberts

Vice President: Don Lawrie

Secretary: Matt McIntosh (secretary@sgapcairns.org.au)

Treasurer: Val Carnie

Webmaster: Tony Roberts

Newsletter: Stuart Worboys (worboys1968@yahoo.com.au)



Syzygium ?bamagense

comes they drop them to wash away and start a new tree, so when the *Barringtonia* fruit are plump and ready to drop – get out your brolly and wellies...

[*Editor: It seems they made an impression on everyone. Val reports "After our excursion on Sunday to Forest Gardens plantings I was delighted to find 5 Barringtonia acutangula... in full flower just around the corner on my morning walk. Made my day."*]

We started the trek from the Laura area. The day was hot with unrelenting sunlight and temperatures into the 30's. By the time that we reached Iron Range I had had enough adventuring. A consensus was reached that we look for a shady park to take a break when our new member Helen Lawie earned her ration of brownie points for the year by announcing that we were just five minutes drive from her home. Helen and Matt went for some cars and the rest of us found some shade.

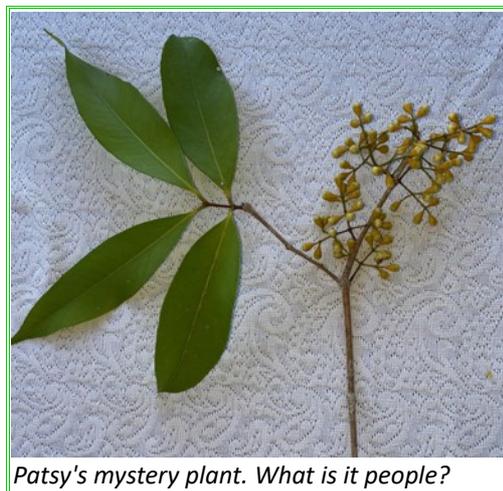
A late morning tea at Helen & Mark's segued into
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Barringtonia acutangula

lunch accompanied with vigorous discussion of various items (which I'll list separately in the hope that Mr Editor may print them for discussion).

The walk is well worth doing again in the wet season with a list of species that can be expected to be encountered. The absence of a suitable meeting place with shady parking and toilet facilities may be a problem.



Patsy's mystery plant. What is it people?

MEETING, SUNDAY 17 NOV 2020

Notes taken by Don Lawie

Perhaps we were stimulated by our walk along the Peninsula but as we lunched the ideas came thick and fast –and reached general consensus.

Working on today's experience, a reconnaissance of the planned venue would be of value. The meeting place was at a shopping centre but all the businesses had shut down . The walk, once we found it, was uphill all the way in hot sunshine. There were no seats along the way. A recce may have found a better place to meet and to start the walk at the top finishing at a delightful little pool in the creek (But no toilets). This was a last minute venue due to a cancellation and there was no time for a recce. The meeting place chosen was ideal but who was to know that the whole shopping centre had gone bust...

Meeting time: we have of late been meeting at 10 a.m. Today we waited for half an hour in case of latecomers. The previous practice of meet for lunch at noon then set off about 1 p.m. gave latecomers plenty of time to arrive.

Our practice of notifying the Hon Sec that we will be participating is to be encouraged; it obviates the pointless waiting for nobody.

We usually try to plan a venue close to Cairns during the wet months. This was applauded but we need to have an alternative and we agreed that the old Friends of the Gardens venue was far more user friendly for us than the flash new visitor centre. We could, instead of an excursion, have a discussion centring on a subject such as, Tassel Ferns and see what develops. Or, some of our more erudite members could give a short talk on a plant subject of their choice followed by Q & A. Or have a Guest Speaker.

Our members are growing older (well, I am) and no longer have the stamina of 30 years ago. Our yearly programme could cater for them as above whilst still providing fun and adventure among the wonderful flora in which we live, on other excursions. A designated Excursions Officer could ensure that proposed venues are in fact suitable.

I hope that the above does not sound like whingeing; we do have a wonderful time with excursions that only SGAP could provide.

RUSSELL RIVER PLANTS

More weird and wonderful plants from the Penny's



The cauliflorous flowers and shiny fruits of Sarcopetalum harveyanum, a rainforest vine found from the Wet Tropics all the way to eastern Victoria. Sarcopetalum means "fleshy petals".



Cairns Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants 2020 Chairperson's Report

Tony Roberts

Cairns Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants has had another great year with many interesting locations visited and most of the members getting involved. We found thankfully, that the COVID restrictions did not affect our activities as much as they affected other branches further south.

In **March** we held our Annual General Meeting at Stuart's place in Redlynch. The following members were elected into Committee roles:

- President: Tony Roberts
- Vice President: Don Lawie
- Secretary: Matt McIntosh
- Treasurer: Val Carnie
- Newsletter Editor: Stuart Worboys
- Webmaster: Tony Roberts

Our **April** and **May** excursions were cancelled due to COVID restrictions and in June we surveyed the mature plantings of Glenoma Park and revegetation planting along Freshwater Creek.

July saw a small group of members head up the range to Davies creek and in **August**, a large contingent visited Cattana Wetlands, where we farewelled our great friends and local members Rick and Sharren, who were heading south to be closer to family.



SGAP Crew at Cattana Wetlands in August

We visited Henrietta Creek in **September**. The long drive was made worthwhile by the lush rainforest and picturesque Nandroya Falls.

The **October** Excursion was to the beautifully designed and award winning house and garden of Jan McLucas and Bradley Smith at Edge Hill where the garden celebrated Australia's endemic Wet Tropics plants.

We visited the Anton van der Schans designed Cape York Plantings in Forest Gardens in **November**. It had been 10 years since our last visit and it was interesting to see its evolution.

December saw an almost full complement at Tony & Trudi's place for our Christmas break up and to farewell 2020.

I would like to thank the committee members for their efforts throughout the year; Don for keeping the President in check, Matt for keeping everyone up to date, Val for balancing the books and Stu for producing the all-important newsletter.

Reminder

State branch fees are due by 1st April. Membership enrolment and renewal form is included with this newsletter.

Upcoming events

Townsville

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

Website: www.npqtownsville.org.au

Contact: jw-elliott@aapt.net.au

Tablelands

Wednesday 24 February. Annual General Meeting. 7:30 pm, Tolga CWA Hall.

Sunday 28 February. Excursion to Irvinebank, Mt Misery and Silver Valley Road. Come join us for a Sunday excursion to the Mt Misery / Silver Valley Road and have a look at what has come up after the rains. 4WD ONLY. If you wish to come please ask around as there will be plenty of people with space. Meet 9.30 a.m. at the Irvinebank Park under the big figs opposite the toilet block.

Excursion officers: Bert and Chris Jaminon, 40914565.

Cairns Branch

Sunday 21 February. Excursion to Babinda Golf Club, southern end of Hospital Street Babinda. Meet at the club house 12 noon - we can lunch under the verandah. There will be a kettle for those who wish to have a cup of tea, but bring your own ingredients. Plenty of chairs as well as toilets. **Bring some plants from your garden for show and tell.** Thanks to Patsy for organising this!

