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# Society for Growing Australian Plants (Queensland Region) Inc.

Cairns Branch  
PO Box 199  
Earlville Qld 4870

Newsletter No. 84  
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## Society Office Bearers

<b>Chairperson</b>	Ann Mohun	40 310 551
<b>Vice Chairperson</b>	Mary Gandini	40 542 190
<b>Secretary</b>	Greg Keith	40 981 130
<b>Treasurer</b>	Robert Jago	40 552 266

**Membership Subscriptions- Qld Region-** Renewal \$39.00, New Members \$44, each additional member of household \$1.00

**Cairns Branch Fees** -\$10.00 Full Year

To access our Library for loan of books, please contact David Warrington

## Dates to remember

**Cairns Branch Meetings and Excursions – third Saturday of each month, except for December & January, when we are enjoying our Christmas Break.**

**NEXT OUTING** will be held on Saturday Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, meeting at Cairns Botanic Gardens, 1200.

**Tablelands Branch – Sunday following the meeting on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Any queries please contact Chris Jaminon 4095 2882 or [hjaminon@bigpond.com](mailto:hjaminon@bigpond.com)**

## Trip Report

### Babinda Boulders

By Don Lawie

This was our last outing for the year, so we made it a Christmas break-up. Took along some extra tucker to share, and we all got together in the larger shelter shed near the parking area. Reminiscenced about the year past and looked forward with enthusiasm to next year's adventures.



Lunch over, we took a typical SGAP walk along the Devil's Pool Track, pausing to admire, evaluate, identify and occasionally argue about the vast variety of plants encountered. We've had a number of trips along this track over the years and it was rather sad to see that many Old Friends had been wiped out by Cyclone Larry in March '06. Now, 2 ½ years later, Cairns Regional Council have done a mighty job in clearing the damage and re-building the track and bridges. I reckon that this walk presents the best viewing of lowland tropical rain forest available in the Wet Tropics, and in a very accessible manner.

**Combined Species List from SGAP visits to BABINDA BOULDERS. Thanks to Mary Gandini**

#### **Angiosperms**

*Aceratium megalospermum*

*Acmena* sp.

*Acronychia acidula*

*Alphitonia whitei*

*Alpinia arctiflora*

*Alpinia modesta*

*Alstonia scholaris*

Since we had Mary and Pauline with us, we had to find some orchids. Pauline was much chuffed to find a small specimen of the Cinnamon Orchid, *Corymborkis veratrifolia*, near where there used to be a healthy colony pre-Larry. A small Golden Penda tree, *Xanthostemon chrysanthus*, growing at the edge of the fence that protects people from the "Washing Machine Pool", has always been a good orchid host. Today it boasted good specimens of *Bulbophyllum baileyi*, *Dendrobium baileyi*, *Dendrobium toressae*, and *Dendrobium prenticei*. On the other side of the lookout was another mass of *D. prenticei*, and there used to be a large *Eria kingii* on a precarious perch which must have eventually toppled into the torrent. A larger Golden Penda here used to be loaded with orchids but it was damaged pre-Larry and felled – right into the rapids.

At the bridge further along we were pleased to see two large clumps of Tassel Ferns, high up on trees and safe from collectors. An easy walk back, smoko in the shed while Ing and Andrew enjoyed a swim in the bracingly cool pool, and our outing was over.

(A footnote: I recently returned to the Washing Machine Pool, this time in my SES Uniform, as yet another unwise young man had gone for a swim there and drowned such a waste of youth and strength in such a place of beauty...).

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*Aneilima* sp.

*Antirhea tenuifolia*

*Apodytes brachystylis*

*Archidendron whitei*

*Archontophoenix alexandrae*

*Ardisia pachyrrachis*

*Argophyllum* sp.

*Argyrodendron peralatum*

*Aristolochia tagala*

*Atractocarpus fitzalanii*  
*Atractocarpus hirta*  
*Austromyrtus floribunda*  
*Austrosteenisia blackii*  
*Balanophora fungosa*  
*Barringtonia calyptrata*  
*Beilschmiedia bancroftii*  
*Boehmeria macrophylla*  
*Breynia stipitata*  
*Brombya platynema*  
*Caesalpinia traceyi*  
*Calamus australis*  
*Calamus motii*  
*Calamus radicalis*  
*Callicarpa sp.*  
*Callistemon sp.*  
*Canthium kuranda*  
*Cardwellia sublimis*  
*Carnavonia araliifolia*  
*Castanospermum australe*  
*Centotheca lappacea*  
*Ceratopetalum virchowii*  
*Cerbera floribunda*  
*Cissus sp.*  
*Citronella smythii*  
*Cordyline cannifolia*  
*Cyperus pedunculatus*  
*Cryptocarya mackinnoniana*  
*Cryptocarya pleurosperma*  
*Curculigo*  
*Delarbrea michieana*  
*Dendrochne sp.*  
*Dianella atraxis*  
*Dinosperma stiptata*  
*Dioscorea transversa*  
*Diploglottis pedleyi*  
*Diploglottis smithii*  
*Dysoxylum klanderii*  
*Dysoxylum parasiticum*  
*Dysoxylum pettigrewianum*  
*Elaeagnus triflora*  
*Elaeocarpus grandis/angustifolius*  
*Endiandra compressa*  
*Endiandra palmerstonii*  
*Epipremnum pinnatum*  
*Eupomatia laurina*  
*Eupomatia sp. Noah's Head*  
*Eustrephus latifolius*  
*Fagraea cambadgii*  
*Faradaya splendida*  
*Ficus benjamina*  
*Ficus congesta*  
*Ficus copiosa*  
*Ficus pantoniana*  
*Ficus variegata*  
*Flagellaria indica*  
*Freycinetia excelsa*

*Freycinetia scandens*  
*Garcinia warrenii*  
*Gardenia merekin*  
*Gilbaea adenopetala*  
*Geophila repens*  
*Gornocormis saxifraxioides*  
*Gymnostachys anceps*  
*Harpullia frutescens*  
*Helicia nortoniana*  
*Hernandia albiflora*  
*Hollandea sayeri*  
*Hornstaedtia schottiana*  
*Hoya australis*  
*Hypolytrum nembrum*  
*Hypoxis sp.*  
*Hypserpa laurina*  
*Hyptis sp.*  
*Irvingbaileya australis*  
*Ixora baileyi*  
*Lassianthus strigosus*  
*Leea indica*  
*Leptospermum flavescens*  
*Lethedon setosa*  
*Linospadix microcarya*  
*Livieria acuminata*  
*Lomandra hystrix*  
*Litsea bindoniana*  
*Macaranga inermis*  
*Mackinlaya sp.*  
*Medinilla balls-headleyi*  
*Melaleuca sp.*  
*Melicope broadbentiana*  
*Melicope xanthoxylioides*  
*Melodinus australis*  
*Merremia peltata*  
*Musa banksii*  
*Myristica globosa*  
*Myristica insipida*  
*Neolitsea dealbata*  
*Neosepicaea jucunda*  
*Neostrearia fleckeri*  
*Niemeyera prunifera*  
*Ophiorrhiza australiana*  
*Oplismenus sp.*  
*Pandanus monticola.*  
*Pandorea pandorana*  
*Pararistolochia sp.*  
*Phyllanthus clamboides*  
*Phyllanthus hypospodus*  
*Phyllanthus riparia*  
*Phyllanthus sp.*  
*Piper caninum*  
*Piper novae-hollandiae*  
*Polyscias australiana*  
*Polyscias elegans*  
*Polyscias mollis*  
*Polyscias purpurea*  
*Pothos longipes*

*Rhaphidophora australasia*  
*Rhaphidophora petriei*  
*Ristantia pachysperma*  
*Rhysotoechia robertsonii*  
*Rubus alcifolius*  
*Rubus molluccana*  
*Salacia disepala*  
*Samanea saman*  
*Sauraria andreana*  
*Schefflera actinophylla*  
*Schistocarpea johnsonii*  
*Solanum sp.*  
*Storkiella australiense*  
*Syzygium allilignium*  
*Syzygium australe*  
*Syzygium boonjee*  
*Syzygium cormiflorum*  
*Syzygium forte*  
*Syzygium gustavoides*  
*Syzygium kuranda*  
*Tabernaemontana orientalis*  
*Tetracera nordtiana*  
*Toechima erythrocarpa*  
*Urticaceae sp.*  
*Waterhousia hedraiophylla*  
*Wendlandia sp.*  
*Wilkiea sp.*  
*Xanthostemon chrysanthus*

#### **Gymnosperms**

*Bowenia spectabilis*  
*Lepidozamia hopei*

## **A Trip to the Windsor Tableland**

by Andrew Picone

While the Windsor Tablelands have been protected under World Heritage legislation since 1988, Mount Windsor National Park was only recently declared. The park is not open to the public and you can only get in there with a research permit. I volunteered to help out PhD research student Jeremy Little who has a number of weather stations up there. Jeremy's research is centred on the climatic variation between rainforest, wet sclerophyll forest and savannah along the western boundary of the wet tropics and the implications of climate change.

Mount Windsor National Park is beyond three locked gates, one of which is guarded by a nest of wasps. The climb up to the tableland along the only access road from the south,

provides many grand vistas of dry boulder strewn valleys and steep, rocky escarpments. Vegetation becomes gradually greener and mesic. Savannah gives way to taller forest and eventually to rainforest.



**The view**

Reasonably dense stands of *Agathis robusta* occurred sporadically in dryer, lower altitude rainforest and often along the margins. At the higher altitudes, the main access road cut through some impressive stands of *Callitris macleayana* growing with *Banksia aquilonia* in a short, wind-swept community with many other rainforest species.



***Callitris macleayana***

Up on the gently undulating tableland itself, tall rainforest is the dominant vegetation type. Although logging is meant to have been extensive prior to world heritage listing, a small area of forest beside the main access road and a creek was apparently left for study purposes. This is evident by a large Red Cedar with a '1' painted on the trunk. There were also many wooden pegs, slowly decomposing, scattered around this patch of forest.



**Red Cedar**

Heading west are Australia's northern most occurrences of wet sclerophyll forest. *Eucalyptus grandis*, *E. resinifera* and other open species. This is also the northern most occurrences of many species of fauna including the yellow-bellied glider which depend on wet sclerophyll forests. Then still further west are dryer forests, often with a heath component in the understorey, until still further west the ubiquitous savannah dominates. This all happens on the tableland at around 900 to 1000 metres altitude.

As you can only get into Mount Windsor National Park for research purposes, I reckon it would make a great extended field trip for SGAP one long weekend.

## Christmas Plants around the World

(Extract from ARNOLDIA; V19, P59-60)

*"THE practice of using decorated trees in religious celebrations extends into antiquity. The old Germanic priests hung lights on the sacred trees beneath which they offered sacrifices. Wherever they travelled, the Roman legions decorated pine trees with little masks of Bacchus in the festival of Saturnalia. European legend attributes the origin of Christmas trees to an eighth-century Englishman, St. Boniface, a missionary in Germany. Before a crowd of barbarians one Christmas Eve, he cut down a sacred oak beneath which they had made human sacrifices. A young fir tree which had remained undamaged by the fall was presented to the people with the explanation, "This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight." The holy tree it has remained. Legend also has it that Martin Luther was the first to use lights as part of the decorations for Christmas. The earliest authentic record of Christmas trees as we know them today is in a manuscript in which a Strassburg merchant wrote in 1605, "At Christmas, they set up fir trees in the parlours at Strassburg and hang thereon roses cut out of many coloured paper, apples, wafers, goldfoil, sweets, etc."*

*Most historians are in agreement with the St. Boniface legend that the first Christmas tree was a fir. The custom originated in the beech belt of central Europe where a single green fir in the defoliated brown beech forest becomes strikingly symbolic. It is from this area that the practice of using a tree as a part of the Christmas celebration spread throughout the Christian areas of the world. The trees of the new areas were usually conifers closely resembling the fir of central Europe. As the custom spread into areas where plants of this type were not available, often the substituted trees were neither closely related, nor similar in appearance to the fir. In many areas, shrubs or herbaceous plants were also used for making Christmas wreaths and other decorations."*

(For the complete article visit <http://arnoldia.arboretum.harvard.edu/pdf/articles/1547.pdf> )

Historically, in Australia, a native *Araucaria* planted in a pot was recycled for many years as a living tree at Christmas while *Callitris* was often used as a cut tree. A novel substitute was *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, although an angiosperm had foliage similar to a pine tree. Coincidentally, *Exocarpos* is in the family **Santalaceae**.

The Australian states have each got their Christmas tree or shrub, whose spectacular floral display peaks around the 25<sup>th</sup> December.

Western Australia has the Western Australian Christmas Tree, *Nuytsia floribunda* which occurs in the Loranthaceae, the same family as the Mistletoe beneath which “I saw mamma kissing Santa Claus”.

New South Wales has a Christmas Bush, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* in the Cunoniaceae, and Christmas Bells, *Blandfordia grandiflora* in Blandfordiaceae.

Victorians also have a Christmas Bush, *Prostanthera lasianthos* in the mint family as do South Australians and Tasmanians who share *Bursaria spinosa* in the Pittosporaceae

To be different, we Queenslanders have a Christmas Orchid, *Calanthe triplicata*.

**If you have any book reviews, pictures, notes on growing tropical Australian plants or trip reports you'd like published in this newsletter, please send them to me: Tony Roberts – email [travelling\\_botanist@yahoo.com.au](mailto:travelling_botanist@yahoo.com.au)**

**The Office Bearers of the Cairns Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants, (Queensland Region) wish their members and other readers of the newsletter a pleasant and safe festive season and hope to see you all next year.**

