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

Cairns Branch  
PO Box 199  
Earlville Qld 4870

Newsletter No. 88  
May 2009

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## Society Office Bearers

<b>Chairperson</b>	Tony Roberts	40 551 292
<b>Vice Chairperson</b>	Mary Gandini	40 542 190
<b>Secretary</b>	Ing Toh	40 310 551
<b>Treasurer</b>	Robert Jago	40 552 266

**Membership Subscriptions- Qld Region-** Renewal \$40.00, New Members \$45, each additional member of household \$2.00 **Student** - \$35.00, **Cairns Branch Fees** -\$10.00 Full Year

To access our Library for the loan of publications, please contact David Warmington

## Dates to remember

**Cairns Branch Meetings and Excursions – third Saturday of each month.**

**NEXT MEETING** will be at Ella Bay on 16 May. Details on page 3.

**Don't forget** that SGAP's Cooktown working bee is on next month: 20 and 21 June. More details next newsletter.

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

**Townsville Branch General Meetings** are the second Wednesday each month. Contact John Elliot: [jw-elliott@aapt.net.au](mailto:jw-elliott@aapt.net.au)

## Field Trip Report – Yuruga Native Nursery

*“Yuruga Nursery is Australia’s largest tropical native plant nursery, located on the Atherton Tablelands in north Queensland.”*

On the 18 April SGAP Cairns visited Yuruga Nursery. Following are a series of photos taken by Stuart Worboys. Special thanks to Peter and Ann Radke for showing SGAP folk around on the day. Much appreciated!



*Above: Morning Tea with Peter and Ann at their main office.*



*Left: Shade houses where mass produced forestry stock is grown*

*Right: Peter explaining some nursery operation matters.*

*Below left: Peter in the Clonal Solutions lab*

*Below right: a barred frog (?) helping out with the potting.*



## Ella Bay Field Trip Details

Our next field trip will take place on Saturday 16th May when we will visit Ella Bay National Park with our brothers and sisters from the Innisfail branch. We will meet outside the Restaurant/Post Office complex on Flying Fish Point Esplanade at 0900 (there is a small park opposite the complex with toilet facilities). From the Restaurant area we will drive to the old camping area where we will park our cars and walk along the beach, exploring the beach environment along the way. There will be an opportunity for those less energetic to remain and explore around the camping area which is a floristically interesting area. Andre from the Innisfail Branch advises to bring proper footwear for walking along the beach where both soft and hard sand surfaces will be experienced and a cut lunch, plenty to drink and sun protection.

Tony



## Rare Flora Project

I've started to put together factsheets about the rare flora of the Cairns Regional Council area. I'll try to include a couple of these with each newsletter. I would welcome comments on these - whether there's any typos, factual errors, suggestions for layout improvement, or little bits of information that will fit on to the A4 page, I'd very much welcome them.

Thanks,

Stuart Worboys ([worboys1968@yahoo.com.au](mailto:worboys1968@yahoo.com.au)).

# NEPENTHACEAE

## *Nepenthes mirabilis* Lour. Druce (tropical pitcher plant)

### Other names

Pitcher plant.

*Phyllamphora mirabilis*, *Nepenthes alicae*

### Conservation status

Endangered (Nature Conservation Regulation 2006, Qld) – Bramston Beach population. Populations of this species on Cape York are not currently under threat.

### Description

A scrambling vine growing on nutrient poor soils. Leaves are broad, fleshy and hairless, from 10 – 40 cm long and 2 – 8 cm wide[1]. Leaves end in a long tendril, which wraps around surrounding vegetation, and used as a climbing aid. Some tendrils bear a variably sized (up to 18 cm long) pitcher. The pitchers are about half-full of water, into which the plant secretes digestive enzymes. Insects falling into these pitchers are digested, and the nutrients absorbed by the plant.

Male and female flowers are borne on separate plants. Flowers are carried in many-flowered racemes, up to 30 cm long. Petals are usually reddish brown, but vary from green to almost black. Fruits are brown when ripe, up to 3 cm long, round in cross-section, and split to release wind-borne seeds.

### Similar species

The pitcher plant is unmistakable— no other species in the Wet Tropics has carnivorous pitchers at the end of its leaves.

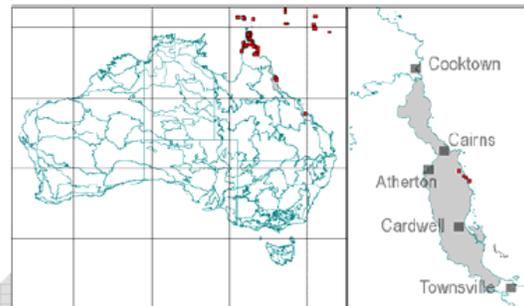
Two other species of pitcher plant have recently been confirmed from the Jardine River wetlands near the tip of Cape York – *Nepenthes tenax* and *Nepenthes rowanae*[2].

### Habitat and ecology

Occurs in near-coastal wetlands, low heathlands or *Melaleuca*-dominated swamps, on seepage areas and along creeklines. Generally a scrambling vine on poor soils in open woodland or heathland habitats, or on the edges of lowland rainforest. Regrows vigorously after clearing.

Flowering has been observed in the early to mid wet season (January to February). Pollinators unknown, though probably small insects. Seeds dispersed by wind.

### Distribution



In the Wet Tropics, only occurs in open lowland swamps and woodlands near East Russell and Bramston Beach. Also occurs from southern China, through south east Asia and New Guinea[3].

### Conservation notes

Populations at Bramston Beach are threatened by clearing, coastal development and sustained lowering of water tables caused by groundwater extraction. Although rare disturbance events can benefit the species, ongoing clearing and disturbance (such as in pasture, or along road verges) will lead to replacement of populations by short-lived weedy species.

Maintenance of extensive, open, swampy or *Melaleuca*-dominated habitats in the coastal lowlands around Bramston Beach will ensure the survival of the southernmost pitcher plant populations in Australia.

### Bibliography

1. Hyland, B.P.M., et al., *Australian Tropical Rain Forest Plants: Trees, Shrubs and Vines*. 2003, CSIRO Publishing: Melbourne.
2. Clarke, C. and R. Kruger, *Nepenthes tenax* C. Clarke & R. Kruger (Nepenthaceae), a new species from Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. *Austrobaileya*, 2006. 7(2): p. 319-324.
3. Stanley, T.D., *Nepenthaceae*, in *Flora of Australia*. 1982, Australian Government Publishing Service: Canberra. p. 7-8.

NEPENTHACEAE

*Nepenthes mirabilis* Lour. Druce (tropical pitcher plant)



*Habit*



*Male flowers (left). Immature fruit (right)*



*Seedlings*

## SGAP Cairns Branch Tentative Excursion List

Month	Location	Coordinator	Status
May	Ella Bay National Park	Tony	Confirmed
June	Cooktown Botanic Gardens	Pauline	Confirmed
July	Josephine Falls		
August	Fitzroy Island		
September	Chillagoe	Ing	
October	Mt Windsor	Andrew	TBA
November	Yarrabah		

**Note** that I have added a couple of columns to this table just to ensure we aren't left in a situation where we all thought someone else was organising something. I'll try and fill in the gaps by next news letter.

This list is tentative and a couple of places require some prior approvals to arrange. Also, Cooktown, Chillagoe and Mt Windsor are best undertaken as extended trips. Further information will be provided closer to the date. It was also agreed at the last general meeting that the nominator of a place makes the necessary arrangements or investigations enabling us to visit.

**If you have any book reviews, pictures, notes on growing tropical Australian plants, interesting photos or trip reports you'd like published in this newsletter, please send them to [andrew.picone@jcu.edu.au](mailto:andrew.picone@jcu.edu.au)**

**Editors Note:** this newsletter was put together in a *relatively short period* of time (euphemism for rush) early one morning before I disappeared into the bush that same day. I had planned to write something up on a recent trip Stuart and myself did up to the McLeod River near Mount Carbine. Maybe next issue. But next issue I'll include something on the McIlwraith Range, which is where I'm going today when I finish this newsletter.

Also, apologies for not getting to the last meeting. I was all set to go but had to abandon due to car trouble (after I offered car pooling). Unfortunately I'll also miss Ella Bay as I'll still be up the Cape. So, apologies in advance.



*Stu's Mountain from Hoop Pine Hill, McLeod River*

