



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

Cairns Branch  
PO Box 199  
Earlville Qld 4870

Newsletter No. 90  
July 2009

## 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  
Newsletter Editor: Andrew Picone [andrew.picone@jcu.edu.au](mailto:andrew.picone@jcu.edu.au)

## Dates to remember

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

**NEXT MEETING** will be at Josephine Falls. Meet at the car park at 11am for lunch then a walk along the track to the circuit. For further info check the QPWS site:

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=125>

**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)

## Stuart's Rare Flora Project

As mentioned in the previous two newsletters, Stuart Worboys is compiling a series of fact sheets about the rare flora of the Cairns Regional Council area. Each newsletter will include one of the fact sheets Stuart has prepared. Have a read and get back to him with any feedback. This month it's *Amomum dallachyi* on pages 3 and 4.

*"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)).

# Cooktown Botanic Gardens

## Work Party Report: Pauline Lawie

This our eighth consecutive year of working in the Cooktown Botanic Gardens would have to be our best year yet. Twelve starters, two-thirds from the Tablelands, once again weeded, mulched, pruned and added plants to the Banks and Solander, SGAP and other gardens. We accounted for just over half the Cooktown orchids attached to trees last year, relocated orchids, mostly salvaged from road works, to suitable sites – natives into the SGAP garden, exotics onto exotic trees. Teams led by Garry vigorously attacked the *Albizia* infestation and made inroads into rampant *passiflora*. Old bridges, now replaced by new ones, across the stone pitched water course were demolished. Stuart probably found out later that he had muscles he didn't even know about; the mighty large timbers might have been unsafe but were still heavy.

Our “best ever” tag is based on a week-end very well organised. Sam Nielly, currently acting Gardens' boss, is very cooperative and keen on our involvement. Between us we agreed what jobs should or could be done and, at Don's suggestion, these were listed on the blackboard. As they were completed, others were added. We were all able to choose work that reflected our interests and abilities; what could be more satisfying. Sam and other staff, Kylie, Dianne and Cameron all worked with us enthusiastically. Machinery and tools were readily available and Kylie's calls of

“caffeine time” and “I've got the best job in Cooktown” reflected the atmosphere. The 16 of us were hosted to lunch by Cook Shire Council, thanks to Sandy at Natures PowerHouse.

The Gardens are looking better each time we visit. All were delighted to find that the pond had been drained and the “mulch” from the bottom was being slowly removed. There are plans to get the water systems running through the channels into the pool working properly again. The grounds were well watered and very few wallabies were observed, though we were assured they are still and always will be a problem. Moves are afoot to replace the dog wire fences with something more appropriate. We took heart from finding the plants in the nursery, while not up off the ground, at least on plastic. Disappointingly, the library of reference books has been decimated.

Our camping grounds were as delightful as before and we were made most welcome. Next year is already OKed. In contrast to last year we had very light winds and actual dew on the ground. The downside of this is that on the last day the dreaded sand flies made a vicious come back when they were not expected at all, catching me unawares. Only half of us camped but the remainder of the party joined us for Saturday night dinner. A very pleasant and satisfying outcome for a well worthwhile SGAP effort.

## ZINGIBERACEAE

### *Amomum dallachyi* F. Muell. (green ginger)

#### Other names

Sometimes misspelled '*Ammomum*'.

Green pineapple ginger; ginger; gaynggay

#### Conservation status

Rare (Nature Conservation Regulation 2006)

#### Description

A large herb (ginger-lily) comprising several tall leafy canes arising from a short underground stem. Canes are usually 1.8 – 2.5 m tall, but have been reported to 4 m[1].

Leaves range from 16 to 50 cm long and 2 to 9 cm wide. Largest leaves occur in the middle of the cane, decreasing substantially in size towards the tip. Leaves are hairless, with a short stem (occasionally stemless) and a long, soft, pointed tip. Crushed leaves sometimes have a spicy smell.

Inflorescences grow directly from the underground stem on short peduncles. Flowers and fruits appear at ground level. Flowers are cream to yellow, with golden yellow or apricot-coloured centres. Fruits are borne on stems 1-2 cm long. Ripe fruits are green, up to 4 cm long, and covered in soft green spines. Seeds are numerous, brown, embedded in a translucent white aril.

#### Similar species

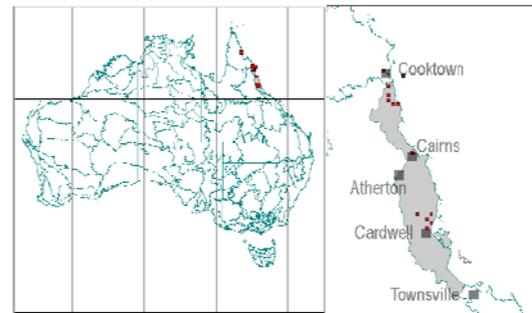
Several native gingers have flowers/fruits that arise at ground level. Green ginger can be distinguished from these species by: green stems and leaves (other species may be streaked with red or purple) that decrease markedly in size both towards the tip of the cane and towards the base; all parts of the plants being hairless; and its unique spiny green fruits.

#### Habitat and ecology

Green ginger has been recorded from lowland mesophyll rainforest on soils derived from granite or metamorphic rocks, at altitudes from sea level to 300 m[2]. Often occurs near the forest's edge, or in disturbed forests, where light levels are higher than beneath the closed canopy of the forest interior.

The pollination biology of this species is not known, however the broad yellow lip of the flower[2] is consistent with pollination by large solitary bees[3]. Fruits have been observed in January and February.

#### Distribution



Green ginger is endemic to Queensland. It is known to occur from Claudie River (on Cape York Peninsula) to Tully.

#### Conservation notes

The most significant threat to this species is clearing associated with development within its lowland rainforest habitat.

#### Bibliography

1. Cooper, W. and W.T. Cooper, *Fruits of the Australian Tropical Rainforest*. 2004, Melbourne: Nokomis Editions.
2. Hyland, B.P.M., et al., *Australian Tropical Rain Forest Plants: Trees, Shrubs and Vines*. 2003, CSIRO Publishing: Melbourne.
3. Sakai, S., M. Kato, and T. Inoue, *Three pollination guilds and variation in floral characteristics of Bornean gingers (Zingiberaceae and Costaceae)*. *American Journal of Botany*, 1999. **86**: p. 646-658.

ZINGIBERACEAE

*Amomum dallachyi* F. Muell. (green ginger)



*Habit*



*Leaves*



*Fruits*

## SGAP Cairns Branch Tentative Excursion List

Month	Location	Coordinator	Status
July	Josephine Falls		Confirmed
August	Fitzroy Island		Confirmed
September	Chillagoe	Ing	
October	Mt Windsor	Andrew	TBA
November	Yarrabah		

**Editors Note:** Any updates on the upcoming field trips? I'll be asking QPWS next week about Mount Windsor. Also, I started my own photo gallery on 'flickr' and I was thinking it would be good to do for the SGAP Cairns branch. I'd be happy to take this on as part of the newsletter job. Have a look at my site at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bunya-nut/sets/> and let me know what you think. it would be easy to set up, is free and could help to keep the newsletter file size small but provide an opportunity for a lot more photos to be seen by everyone.

**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)**