



SGAP Cairns

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Newsletter 111

Society for Growing Australian Plants (Queensland Region) Inc., Cairns Branch
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Cooktown 2011

By Stuart Worboys

Once again, SGAP's June outing takes us to the historic Cooktown Botanic Gardens. Since 2002, SGAP Tablelands and Cairns branches have conducted an annual working bee at the Gardens. Always held in June, the working bee has contributed noticeably to the development of the gardens over the years.

The focus has always been the maintenance of the SGAP Garden and the Banks and Solander Garden. The latter is an exciting project – a special garden bed devoted to growing and showing the plants species collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander during their enforced stay on the Endeavour River some 240 years ago.

Each year there's mulching, fence maintenance and replacing losses (the wallabies have been very hungry over the years!). Once that's over, we

Please see *Cooktown 2011* on page 2

The Cape Grafton Collections Part 3

By R.L. Jago

In April's newsletter, Rob told the story of Cook's journey up the eastern coast of Australia in 1770, and the botanical side-story of the collections of Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander. I finish the story with Rob's description of type specimens known to have been collected by these early botanists at Cape Grafton. In this month's newsletter Rob discusses a member of the tomato family, *Solanum viridifolium*.

Although collected by Banks and Solander in 1770, the species was not formally named until 1852, when a description was published by the French botanist Michel Felix Donal.

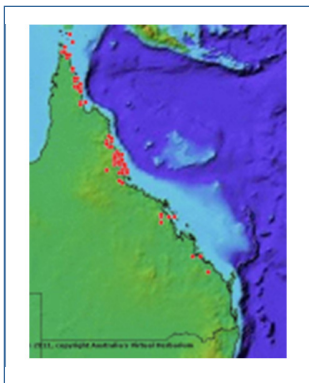
ORDER: Solanales

FAMILY: Solanaceae

Please see *Great Articles* on page 3

“an exciting project – a special garden bed devoted to growing and showing the plants species collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander”

- NAME:** *Solanum viridifolium* Dunal
- TYPE:** Near Cape Grafton, J. Banks & D. Solander 9th June 1770.
- SYNONYMS:** *Solanum viride*
- COMMON NAME:** Boolally a local Aboriginal name from the Barron River area.
- HABITAT:** Rainforests and their margins on a wide variety of substrates including beach sands and mangrove margins from near sea level to 1,220 metres altitude.
- PRONOUNCED:** sol-AIN-um vir-RID-e-FO-lee-um
- ETYMOLOGY:** The generic name is in reference to the Latin *solamen* solace or comfort presumably alluding to the reputed narcotic properties of the type species *Solanum nigrum*. The species epithet is derived from the Latin *viridis* green and *folius* leaved.
- CONSERVATION:** A common native species.
- DESCRIPTION:** An erect shrub to small tree to 7 metres tall with a stem to 30 cm diameter at breast height but usually much smaller. Young shoots very sparsely pubescent with minute stellate hairs; prickles on stems of young plants, absent from mature twigs. Leaves simple, alternate or paired often appearing to be in whorls of three, ovate or elliptic; leaf blade (lamina) 30-90 mm long x 20-60 mm wide, concolorous, entire; petiole 10-20 mm long. Inflorescence often branched, 10-50 flowered; peduncle 10-20 mm long to first fork, sometimes longer; rachis 20-40 mm long; pedicels 10-15 mm long, slightly longer in fruit. Calyx 3-5 mm long; lobes triangular with slender apices, 1-3 mm long. Flowers deeply incised, 15-18 mm diameter with stellate hairs, petals 4 or 5, white, cream, pink, blue, dark-pale purple, calyx green, white or cream. Anthers 3-5 mm long. Fruit a globular berry, 7-10 mm diameter. orange-yellow to red in colour. Seeds numerous, 2.5-3 mm long, light grey brown or yellow in colour.
- DISTRIBUTION:** Endemic to coastal Queensland from Torres Strait Islands south to Bulburin, south of Rockhampton usually along rainforest margins on a wide variety of substrates including beach sands from near sea level to 1220 metres altitude.
- NOTES:** One of several species of local plants collected at



Distribution of Solanum viridifolium
(map generated by Australia's Virtual Herbarium)

Cape Grafton by Banks and Solander in 1770 illustrated in Banks Florilegium from material collected at the Endeavour River in 1770 by Banks and Solander. This species is locally common in the Cairns Region in a wide variety of habitats.

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Don Lawie mulching the Banks and Solander Garden, 2007

work with the staff at Botanic Gardens to work out what other jobs need doing. Over the years, we've removed dangerous rotting bridges, poisoned woody weeds, and tidied the nursery. The latter job can be a little more alarming than it sounds, as very large spiders lurk beneath the pots.

But it's not all hard work – the working bee has always been a great social event, with generous morning teas provided by Nature's Powerhouse Café, evening barbecues and a Sunday outing to one of many local places of botanical interest.

Cooktown 2011 looks like being another productive and social event. Chris Evans, of the Tablelands SGAP, has kindly organized camping spaces with her friend, Vella. The property is located on Quarantine Bay Road (see the map, next page). Drive along Quarantine Bay Road for a couple of hundred metres, take the first road right, then the first driveway on the right. The driveway is narrow, and the house is not visible from the road. There is plenty of room for campers; electricity and hot showers are available. Camping is only \$5 per head per night for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and possibly Monday. There will be a barbecue on Saturday night, so bring something to barbecue for yourself, and something to share.



Trip Report – May 2011

By Stuart Worboys

May's outing took SGAP to the northern end of Wangetti Beach, the location of the best dry rainforest thicket on beach sands in the Wet Tropics. This is a very rare ecosystem within the Wet Tropics – elsewhere it has been cleared for coastal development, or has been degraded by weeds and grazing.



Vitex rotundifolia, an attractive ground cover occurring at Wangetti Beach

Although a “dry” rainforest, the area is surprisingly diverse. Rob's list for this area runs to eight pages, and can be found on our website: www.sgapcairns.org.au/SpeciesLists.



Mouth of Hartleys Creek, northern end of Wangetti Beach

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