

SGAP CAIRNS NEWSLETTER

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Society for Growing Australian Plants, Cairns Branch
www.sgapcairns.qld.gov.au

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Inside this Issue

Meeting Report - February 2017.....	1
Plants of the Tropics - <i>Xanthorrhoea johnsonii</i>	2
Gardening with <i>Xanthorrhoea</i>	2
What's happening in SGAP north Queensland.....	3
Tablelands Branch.....	3
Townsville Branch.....	3
Cairns Branch.....	3

Meeting Report - February 2017

Stuart Worboys

SGAP Cairns' new year got off to a great start with an interesting and educational talk from our President, Tony Roberts. Tony, the new curator of Cooktown Botanic Gardens, spoke to us on "Midgies, mozzies and mudskippers: The mangroves of Cairns."

Tony's talk covered all aspects of the mangrove world: from their worldwide distribution to the



Tony Roberts warned us against the giant green ants to be found in mangroves

influence of tides of their survival, and the importance of this habitat for the seafood most of us enjoy.

The meeting was well attended, with 18 members turning up to listen. In a surprising turn of events, we were joined by several members of Innisfail SGAP. It was great to see the members of our sister group in Cairns, and we hope to catch up with them later in the year.



Xanthorrhoea johnsonii on Mt Emerald, Atherton Tablelands.

Plants of the Tropics - *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*

Stuart Worboys

Xanthorrhoea johnsonii (Xanthorrhoeaceae) is a locally common member of the iconic Australian grass tree genus. Keith Williams appropriately calls this attractive small tree the "Northern Forest Grasstree". This is the classic grass tree of the northern tropical woodlands, occurring on rocky poor soils from the New South Wales central coast almost to the tip of Cape York. Its of relatively modest size, producing a trunk to 4 m tall. Occasionally you'll see one that is branched. Other species reported for northern Australia include *X. pumilio*, *X. latifolia*, and the spectacular, but as yet unnamed *Xanthorrhoea* sp. (Cape Bedford M.Gandini AQ601576).

Gardening with Xanthorrhoea

SGAP Townsville advise to propagate from seed. It is very slow growing while young, but plants will reach flowering

stage in 3-7 years. Good drainage and full sun are essential. Lack of drainage combined with too much water can cause crown rot in young plants. Similarly, too much water can cause nutrient toxicity.

Our plants, bought as fully developed but untrunked container plants, are growing well and flowering in an open situation unimproved soils on the Cairns hillslopes. They seem to thrive on neglect, having received no fertiliser and minimal soil preparation.



Xanthorrhoea sp. (Cape Bedford M.Gandini AQ601576).

Xanthorrhoea, from the Greek *xanthos*, yellow, and *rheo*, I flow; alluding to the resin ("gum") that flows from the stem.

What's happening in SGAP north Queensland...

Tablelands Branch

Meetings on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Excursion the following Sunday. Any queries, please contact Chris Jaminon on 4091 4565 or email hjaminon@bigpond.com

Sunday 26 March 2017.

Townsville Branch

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, February to November, in Annandale Community Centre at 8pm, and holds excursions the following Sunday. See www.sgaptownsville.org.au/ for more information.

Cairns Branch

Meetings and excursions on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Sunday 19 March 2017. Annual General Meeting. 12 noon, home of Stuart Worboys. To get there from Cairns City, head to Redlynch via Reservoir Road through Brinsmead. Cross Freshwater Creek and continue north over the Redlynch Bypass overpass. Take the next sharp left turn into the old Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road. Take the first right into Daphne Street, left into Harvey Road at the roundabout, then right again into Eugenia Crescent. Number 10 is immediately opposite Toona Terrace. After the meeting, perhaps head down to the Barron River for a stroll along the bike path.

