



Society for Growing Australian Plants

Cairns Branch Inc.

Newsletter 218, March 2022

February Excursion Report

Cairns SGAP explores the mangroves of Cairns Inlet

Over the years that I have been a member of Cairns SGAP, we have had an intermittent interest in the mangroves that are such a prominent feature of our waterfront. At one stage we were going to compile a book and took many photos; but where are they now?

On Sunday 20 February 2022 we decided to have a look at the immense stands of mangroves that cover the large feature in Cairns Inlet – Admiralty Island. Twenty eight SGAPPers and visitors set off in two boats. We had some luminaries on board; NPQ President Roger Kitchen was in the North, for reasons later revealed, and four members of Tablelands Branch SGAP, including the soon-to-be-life Member of SGAP Queensland Region, Peter Radke.

We set off from the Marlin Wharf, once a site for Hollywood Stars to show off their prowess in killing giant fish, past the impressive fleet of Sea Swift who supply the islands of the Torres Strait and Cape York, sitting next to the Grey Funnel Line of the RAN. The Skipper of the day of our 10 man boat was Botanist and former Navy man Tony, but the big grey ships did not dip their ensigns as we passed by at the regulation speed of 4 knots.



Admiralty Island hove into view, surrounded by a skirmish line of towering mangrove trees brandishing hoop skirts of rounded buttress roots that matched aerial roots that plunged from higher branches into the muddy water. These outliers serve to stabilise the trees in their grip on the muddy habitat. Yes, these were members of the Genus *Rhizophora*, of which four species have been reported from these waters.

Rhizophora are known as Stilted Mangroves. They grow to a height of 20 to 25 metres in a niche environment at water's edge where their "stilts" help to keep them upright in the often rough and windy conditions.

Unfortunately for our observers the tall Stilted Mangroves grew as a wall of the sea, obscuring any view of their shorter comrades who lurked behind them and took advantage of the protection that was given them.



Adding to our difficulties was the water depth and hidden snags which prevented us from venturing close enough to make positive species identifications.

We did compile a short list of mangroves to mark on our map, the weather was ideal, the company was good and we all had an enjoyable day on the water. Next mangrove hunting site will be the newly refurbished Jack Barnes Boardwalk on Airport Road. Watch our list grow!

*Don Lawie President and Proud Life Member,
Cairns Branch SGAP*

Last Words from Don

Our next meeting, at East Trinity, will also be our AGM. I will not be standing for re-election but I would like to leave a thought with you all: The Society for Growing Australian Plants was founded for exactly that purpose. We planted native plants, evaluated their needs and reported on their suitability for growing in our gardens or elsewhere. We were nearly all planters and propagators, but times change and not all members could have a home nursery. Our Society's name changed from SGAP to NPQ, and our principles have for some time stood on the statement "Cultivation, Conservation, Education".

I do not do as much propagation as I did 30 years ago when I joined SGAP and I feel a bit of a loss there. My thoughts were crystallised when Lisa

O'Mara came along on our boat trip. Lisa is Boss of a Tree planting group that plants many hundreds of native trees on public land with the help of volunteers.

I have asked Lisa to come along and address our next meeting. I propose that Cairns SGAP forms an informal alliance with Lisa's Group (whose official name I know not). We are not all physically capable of digging holes and planting trees but there are other jobs to be done on a plant-out e.g. organising refreshments etc.

If you cannot get to the next meeting, please send your comments to me and cc to secretary@cairnssgap.org.au I have had a good year as President of our Branch and this would be a satisfying activity for me to leave on. Don

Quiz

(What did we learn from our exploration?)

1. What do all mangrove species have in common?
 - a. Seeds dispersed by birds
 - b. Regular inundation by water
 - c. Crocodiles are in all mangrove areas.
2. By what means do mangroves reduce their salt intake?
 - a. By storing it in their leaves
 - b. By filtering it from their roots
 - c. By excreting it on the leaf surface
 - d. All of the above three.
3. Some non-plant species like to live in mangrove areas. Are they
 - a. Crocodiles
 - b. Mud skippers
 - c. Mangrove Heron
 - d. All the above.
4. A crab, of which the male has one small and one large nipper (the small one is for eating and the large one is for waving to girl crabs) is often seen among mangroves. What is his common name?
5. For an extra point, what is the 3 letter species name of the above crab? (Hint: it sounds like a card game).

6. A large terrestrial lily, *Crinum pedunculatum*, is often associated with mangroves. Where else in Cairns is it often seen, away from any body of water?
7. The soil in which mangroves live is often muddy and has no oxygen. How do some mangroves solve this problem?
 - a. By having special inflatable lung type leaves
 - b. By having specialised above ground roots that can breathe
 - c. By utilising the prevailing south east winds.
8. Wet muddy soil is an unstable platform for larger trees. How do, for example, *Rhizophora stylosa* solve this problem?
 - a. By having underground horizontal roots
 - b. By having flying buttress-type roots
 - c. By having a network of roots that trap crocodiles so that their large bodies prop up the trees.
9. What is a PNEUMATOPHORE?
 - a. A Hollywood actress
 - b. A tyre pump
 - c. An above ground root that can absorb oxygen.
10. Which mangrove tree is closely related to the well-known timber tree Red Cedar? (There are two species in this genus – either will earn a point).

Answers on last page

Quiz devised by Don Lawie 20 Feb 2022

What's Happening

Cairns Branch

Sunday March 20. Meet at 12 noon for lunch followed by the **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** and a walk. After the AGM we will briefly discuss the coming year's programme. Please bring your suggestions with you.

Meet at Rural Number 1928 Yarrabah Road, Bessie Point. Yarrabah-Pine Creek Road turns off Bruce Highway south of Cairns. The Rural Number indicates that our meeting place is 19.28 km from

the turnoff. We will be guests of the Mandingalbay people who have a facility that caters to people who wish to learn about the country. There is shelter, toilet, tea/coffee facilities and a short walk that explores the plants of the area. Our Dr. Rob helped identify these plants so we can expect them to be all correctly presented. We plan to have an exchange of information with the Mandingalbay both before and during the walk.

There is also the chance that we may be able to investigate a rainforest remnant that is closed to the public, where it is hoped that we can find and identify some ancient tree species.

Townsville Branch

Tablelands Branch Meetings on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm, Tolga CWA Hall; Excursions the following Sunday. Excursion officer: Peter Radke, 4091 4565.

State Branch

Sunday 20 March 2022. The State branch Annual General Meeting is to be held on at Nerang Country Paradise Parklands 9.30am for a 10am start. The business part of the event will be brief and our host the Gold Coast branch has organised an interesting program for the morning. Email membership@npq.org.au for more information.

Annual General Meeting

SGAP Cairns Branch Annual General Meeting will be held at Bessie Point during our March gathering.

Please consider standing for a position on the Committee. Committee Members' Responsibilities are not onerous:

Chairperson:

- Chair ordinary meetings.
- Cast the deciding vote in a tied vote.
- Prepare an Annual Report of Branch activities and submit it to the Regional Secretary before the Region Annual General Meeting.

Vice:

- Fulfil the roll of the Chair in their absence.

Treasurer:

- Table a Financial statement of the branch at ordinary meetings.
- Prepare an annual Statement of Receipts and Expenditure and forward it to the Regional Secretary for incorporation in the Society's Financial Statement by not later than 31st January each year. Then table it at the branch AGM.
- Maintain a register of financial members from year to year.

Secretary:

- Keep meeting Minutes and table said minutes at the following meeting.
- Collect correspondence and action as necessary.
- Compose and distribute correspondence as required by the committee.
- Advise the Regional Bulletin Editor of the times, places and, if possible, subject matter of meetings for publication in the "Bulletin".
- Upon election of the new committee notify Regional Secretary of the names and addresses of those elected by post, email or fax.
- Inform the Region Secretary of the financial branch members by not later than 31st January each year.

Newsletter editor:

- Liaise with Treasurer to keep membership up to date.
 - Timely publication of Newsletter.
 - Forward Newsletter to Qld branch.
 - Write articles for the Bulletin and forward them to the editor.
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**SGAP Cairns Branch 2021-2022
Committee**

President: Don Lawie

Vice-President: Patsy Penny

Secretary: Matt McIntosh
(secretary@sgapcairns.org.au)

Treasurer: Val Carnie

Webmaster: Tony Roberts

Acting Newsletter Editor: Tony Roberts
(secretary@sgapcairns.org.au)



Quiz Answers

1. b.
2. d.
3. d
4. Fiddler
5. Uca
6. Gardens in streets and road dividers
7. b
8. b
9. c
10. *Xylocarpus moluccensis* - Cedar Mangrove or *Xylocarpus granatum* - Cannonball Mangrove