



Society for Growing Australian Plants

Cairns Branch Inc.

Newsletter 219, April 2022

Annual General Meeting

The new Committee:

President: Patsy Penny

Vice Pres: Dr Rob Jago

Hon Sec: Helen Lawie

Treasurer: Val Carnie

CAIRNS SGAP ANNUAL REPORT 2021 – 2022

The 2021 AGM gave me a double whammy: Pauline and I were voted as Branch Life Members, a signal honour that was totally unexpected. Then, I was voted in as President. Life was looking good!

The SGAP/NPQ year that is drawing to a close included much disruption due to a rogue virus. We as a public group observed all the many restrictions, but they did not stop us from having a busy and instructional year.

We travelled widely throughout the Cairns Regional Council area fulfilling our mission of habitat and plant occurrence recording; members were kept up to date on the latest taxonomical changes by our alert Botanists (I shall have difficulty remembering that *Schefflera* is now *Heptapleuron* - or is it?).

We made history by recording the first Tree of Significance on the Cairns Regional Council register at Bramston Beach, with the help of our Guru Dr Rob Jago. On the same day a member tripped, fell, banged her head and was given instant attention by our members

who included three Registered Nurses and one retired pharmacist. All ended well but it gave us cause to look thoroughly at our insurance requirements.

A highlight of the year was a four hour boat trip around Trinity Inlet (aka Cairns Harbour). 28 members and friends in two boats set out to fill in a Mangrove Map of the Inlet but were frustrated by a high tide and the Rhizophoran habit of blocking the landscape with their massive, soaring buttress roots. We were honoured to include NPQ President Roger Kitchen on our boat trip. (We have also had very pleasant contacts with Region members Kathy Julian and Bethlea Bell – you have a top team beside you Roger).

November was declared as being too hot for walking so we gathered at the home of Helen & Mark and Stuart Worboys related his adventures above the cloud line on many of the Far North's inaccessible mountains. And yes – he does have the scars to show for it, being a botanist is no easy job.

We thank Helen & Mark for again hosting us for our Christmas Party. Featured was a Giant Plant and accessory Raffle and a Botanical Quiz with a flowering orchid for first prize.

During the break, members were privileged to attend Cairns Art Gallery to view The Botanical Art of William Cooper, a truly stunning blend of plant and birdlife by a man well known to some of our members.

We plan to end the year by road-testing a venture devised by the Mandingalbay Yidinji people at East Trinity. A rainforest walk will include traditional name and uses of local trees and it will be our contribution to add botanical names and first world utilisation of the botanical treasure trove amongst which we live.

Thank You, Cairns SGAP for giving me a memorable year.

Don Lawie President

March Excursion Report

Mandingalbay Walk

By Rob Jago

First stop after the AGM was a Welcome to Country by Victor Bulmer and an inspection of the 3D scale model of the traditional land of the Mandingalbay. Victor pointed out various features giving both their traditional Yidiny language names and English names. We were then kindly taken on a short guided walk of a few hundred metres up the hill behind the Ranger Station and back along a small creek through open forest growing on a granitic substrate.

Numerous interesting native plants were observed and our guide Victor pointed out numerous trees, shrubs, vines and herbs. Victor explained the various attributes and use of these plants by the Traditional Owners of this area along with the local Yidiny language name. The names rolled off Victor's tongue but tied ours in knots as we attempted to pronounce many of them. Some were easy and I managed to master *Jilara* and *Dukal Dukal*.

Victor's love of country, knowledge and his enthusiasm to share this knowledge along his quick wit, sense of humor, jokes and wise

cracks made for a most enjoyable and educational outing.



Victor pointing out various features such as Fitzroy Island, Cape Grafton, Grant Hill, Murray Prior Range, Mount Yarrabah, Nisbet & Malbon Thompson Ranges on the 3D scale model of country.

The forest through which the path passed was dominated by members of the Myrtaceae plant family such as *Eucalyptus tereticornis* (Forest Red Gum or Blue Gum), *Corymbia intermedia* (Pink Bloodwood), *Lophostemon suaveolens* (Swamp Mahogany) and *Syncarpia glomulifera subsp glomulifera* (Turpentine).

Due to the absence of Don and Pauline, I thought it only right that I keep an eye out for Orchids and we managed to find some flowering specimens of *Apostasia wallichii* (Yellow Grass Orchid) and a few specimens of *Geodorum densiflorum* (Pink Shepherd's Crook Orchid) without flowers. The interesting little ground orchid *Apostasia wallichii* is named in honour of the Danish surgeon and botanist Nathaniel Wolff Wallich (1786-1854).



***Apostasia wallichii* (Yellow Grass Orchid) photographed along the track.**

Ferns observed were; *Adiantum hispidulum* (Rough Maidenhair Fern), *Davallia denticulata* and *Drynaria sparsisora*. Cycads there were but one, *Cycas media subsp. banksii* represented by numerous small specimens.

Basal Angiosperms were represented by *Melodorum leichhardtii* (Acid Drop Vine or Zig Zag Vine) and *Huberantha nitidissima* (Little Canary Beech) formerly known as *Polyalthia nitidissima*. *Melodorum leichhardtii* which is named in honour of the German naturalist and explorer Ludwig Leichhardt (1813-1848) produces fruit with a tangy acidic refreshing flavor that are well worth collecting and eating, but alas there were no fruit. Other Basal Angiosperms present were *Litsea breviumbellata* collected by Banks and Solander from nearby Cape Grafton in 1770, *Cryptocarya cunninghamii* (Coconut Laurel), *Endiandra hypotephra* (Rose Walnut) which was in flower and *Neolitsea brassii* (Brass' Bollywood) which was collected by Banks and Solander at Lizard Island.

Grasses and sedges were numerous but only two, *Cyperus multispiceus* and *Scleria sphacelata* contained fertile material which enabled identification, all others remain a mystery.



***Endiandra hypotephra* (Rose Walnut) flowers**

Other monocots observed were; *Alpinia caerulea* (Native Ginger), *Meistera dallachyi* (Green, Prickly or Pineapple Ginger) formerly *Amonum dallachyi*, *Tacca leontopetaloides* (Native Arrowroot), and *Schelhammera multiflora*.

Eudicots as can be expected were in abundance and apart from those already mentioned there were; *Calophyllum sil* (Blush Touriga), *Heptapleurum actinophylla* (Umbrella Tree) formerly *Schefflera actinophylla*, *Ficus opposita* (Sandpaper Fig), *Dillenia alata* (Red Beech or **Ngarrabray**), *Tabernaemontana orientalis* (Eastern Gondola Bush), *Parsonsia velutina* (Velvet Silkpod), *Macaranga tanarius* (Blush Macaranga or **Dukal Dukal**), *Allocasuarina torulosa* (Rose or Forest She Oak), *Bursaria tenuifolia* (Sweet Blackthorn) the leaves of which have a distinctive aromatic smell when crushed, *Acacia flavescens* (Red Watle), *Acacia polystachya* (Ellis Beach Wattle), *Buckinghamia celsissima* (Ivory Curl Tree or Spotted Silky Oak) which was in flower along the creek, *Blepharocarya involucrigera* (Rose Butternut), *Buchanania arborescens* (Satinwood, Jalarra or **Jilara**) the fruits of which are sweet and nice to eat, *Canarium australianum* (Scrub Turpentine or Mangobark), *Chionanthus ramiflora* (Native Olive), *Deplanchea tetraphylla* (Golden Bouquet Tree), *Clerodendrum longiflorum var.*

glabrum, *Pseuderanthemum variable* (Pastel Flower) and *Eucalyptus pellita* (Daintree Stringybark, Red or Pink Mahogany) along with the vines *Alyxia spicata* and *Rhamnella vitiensis*.



Heading up the hill



Victor & group near turn off to midden

Post Script

By Helen Lawie

As we hiked around the track Rob Jago carefully checked the creek banks for an undescribed Native Olive (*Chionanthus* sp.) as this rare endemic prefers to keep its feet wet all year round. He also noted some inconsistencies in botanical names on the signs and will endeavour to remedy that with the Rangers. It would be a rekindling of his previous work with Victor and the Djunbunji Land and Sea Rangers some many years ago. A suggestion on the day was made that between Rob's botanical knowledge and

library of photographs, and Mark's signage connections, Cairns Branch would be well placed to assist in correcting the signs. Furthermore, we might like to make a donation towards the cost.

Feedback from members is requested.



What's Happening

Townsville Branch

NPQ Townsville normally meets at 7pm on the second Wednesday of the month, February to November at the Oonoonba Community Hall, Shannon Street, Oonoonba. Please be aware some meetings may be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Tablelands 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.

Cairns Branch

Sunday April 24 12.00. Mulgrave Landcare Group will host a tour of the Figtree Wetlands. Please meet Lisa at the rest area opposite the Fishery Falls hotel at 11.45 because it is a bit tricky to find. Contact number **0435 016 906**

For those who would prefer not to take little cars on a farm road, some car pooling options will be available.



SGAP Cairns Branch 2022-2023 Committee

President: Patsy Penny

Vice-President: Dr Rob Jago

Secretary: Helen Lawie

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Treasurer: Val Carnie

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