



*Society for Growing Australian Plants  
Cairns Branch*

NEWSLETTER

*Newsletter No 246*

*November, 2024*

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*Excursion Sunday, 17 November, 2024.  
Peter Radke's Property  
at 1 Shaban Drive, Mareeba.  
On the corner of Ray Road and Shaban Drive*

Peter will repeat for us the presentation he made to the State Conference in September, 2023. The plan is for us to meet at 12 noon and, while we are having lunch, he will introduce his talk and then take us around his garden to see the plants.



*The report on last month's  
excursion: It was a beautiful drive  
to the Hartley Creek Walk.*

Provided by the only member prepared to accept the challenge and cope with the heat.

**Pandans**

Another genus, held in high esteem where it occurs, is *Pandanus*. Locally, you can find at least five species, *Pandanus brookei*, *Pandanus cookii* (Cook's Pandan), *Pandanus gemmifer*,

*Pandanus solmslaubachii* (Swamp Pandan) and *Pandanus tectorius* (Beach Pandan; Screw Pine).

The genus *Pandanus* belongs to the family Pandanaceae and comprises nearly 600 species. It is native to the Tropical and Subtropical Old World and Pacific. Australia is home to probably 11 species of which most are endemic.

The generic name *Pandanus* is derived from the Malay name for *Pandanus amaryllifolius*, pandan.



### Description <sup>(5)</sup>

“Dioecious, terrestrial, semi-aquatic or rarely epiphytic (not in Australia) trees or shrubs, sometimes stoloniferous, often with aerial or prop roots with well-developed root caps. Leaves crowded at top of branches, arranged in three spirals, amplexicaul at base (in Australia), linear-ensiform, M-shaped in Torres Strait. Male inflorescence branched (in Australia), with large bracts. Male flowers: stamens numerous, usually in umbel-like or racemose arrangements on stemonophores, sometimes inserted directly on rachis. Female inflorescences consisting of one or more globular, ellipsoid or cylindric heads (cephalia), nearly hidden within large bracts when flowering. Female flowers of one to several carpels, each usually uni-ovulate; styles absent or spiniform; stigmas variously shaped. Fruiting heads globular, ellipsoidal or cylindric, of numerous crowded but free drupes, or one or more polydrupes (phalanges). Endocarp woody. Seed coat thin, membranous. Seeds germinating within fruit.”



### *Pandanus cookie* <sup>(6)</sup>

Pandans are widely used throughout their distribution.

Historically, in Australia the seeds were eaten and the fibrous flesh of the fruits was chewed for its sweet pulp. The pulp of some species though, causes irritation to the mouth and throat. The indigenous consumers were aware of this and treated the fruit segments prior to eating, by roasting or mixing pounded fruit with water to create a sweet drink.

The fibrous leaves were used in northern Australia to weave dilly bags, sieves, mats and ornamentation.

Beyond our shores pandan leaves have been used for thatch, cordage, mats, baskets, paint brushes and clothing.





Woman weaving a traditional mat made from screw pines or *Pandanus amaryllifolius* in Semporna Sabah<sup>(7)</sup>

Probably the most highly regarded species of pandan, *Pandanus amaryllifolius*, is used to flavour and colour food. The leaves have a vanilla like fragrance which can be imparted to food during the cooking process. Blending leaves with a little water produces a dark green fragrant liquid that is used to colour and enhance the flavour of food and drinks (see photos of pandan cake, cendol and fragrant rice above).

*Pandanus tectorius* was one of the 72 Canoe Plants carried by the Lapita/proto Polynesians on their ocean voyages. This plant was regarded second in importance to the coconut. The intrepid travellers used every part of the plant and spread its distribution out across the Pacific. The leaves were used to make sails for their canoes, the trunk for building and the flowers for decoration.



Cassowaries like them too. Ed.



Crab claw sail woven from pandanus leaves on a tepukei, an ocean-going outrigger canoe from Temotu, Solomon Islands<sup>(8)</sup>

1. A.J.G. Wilson, P.G. Kodala. *Pandanus*, in P.G. Kodala (ed.), *Flora of Australia*. Australian Biological Resources Study, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water: Canberra.  
<https://profiles.ala.org.au/opus/foa/profile/Pandanus> [Date Accessed: 30 October 2024]
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5. Sara Khong New Malaysian Kitchen  
<https://www.newmalaysiankitchen.com/pandan-leaves/> [Accessed 05Nov24]
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## Excursion to Kewarra Beach 18 August, 2024

Stuart Worboys

August's excursion took us to the beach. A sunny Sunday found a few of us gathered at Kewarra's northern end. We knew better than to expect the barbecue shelters to be free on a fine weekend, so we all brought chairs, lunch and found a shady spot on the sand.

From the picnic area a well-made concrete path winds south parallel to the beach. From here we could appreciate the efforts made to rehabilitate the beachfront with native species, and peer into the back yards of the posh beachfront houses. There were a few remnant trees along the way – one was perhaps the biggest bushman's clothespeg (*Grevillea glauca*) Rob had ever seen.



There were plenty of other trees typical of Cairns beachfronts: spoon tree (*Acacia crassicaarpa*), coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), fart bush (*Breynia stipitata*), tall elegant

weeping paperbarks (*Melaleuca leucadendra*) barely holding together the dune's edge, and the ubiquitous *Terminalias* - four species!

A pretty weed,  
*Asystasia gangetica*



*Schizaea dichotoma*



We came to the end of the path and continued through the bush a little.

The ground was littered with the beautiful yellow flowers of

*Deplanchea tetraphylla*, and

high above the noisy rainbow lorikeets were taking advantage of their abundant black nectar. Beneath the canopy of *Deplanchea* and *Acacia* was a scattering of rainforest trees, with plenty of vines to trip us up.



Rob and I left the ladies behind and continued along bush tracks towards Taylor Point. There was a patch of mangroves (*Rhizophora stylosa*, *Ceriops tagal*, *Excoecaria agallocha*, *Heritiera littoralis*, and the blood-red flowered *Lumnitzera littorea*,



just to name a few), diverse and well developed in the sheltered bay behind the Point. We were happy to see golden orchids and tea-tree orchids surviving in the trees so close to suburbia.

With the low hill of Taylor Point looming above us, the path came to an end in a tangle of mangroves and a sinister dark creek that was sure to shelter a crocodile. We retreated back along the path, and headed back to our cars, well exercised and with a very full species list.



A well deserved rest

## ***Ferns and Allies***

### POLYPODIACEAE

*Drynaria rigidula*

*Platynerium hillii*

*Pyrrosia longifolia*

### PTERIDACEAE

*Acrostichum speciosum*

### SCHIZAEACEAE

*Schizaea dichotoma*

## ***Gymnosperms***

### PINACEAE

*Pinus caribaea*

## ***Monocots***

### ARACEAE

\**Syngonium podophyllum*

### ARECACEAE

\**Carpentaria acuminata*

*Cocos nucifera*

*Livistona muelleri*

### ASPARAGACEAE

\**Sansevieria trifasciata*

### FLAGELLARIACEAE

*Flagellaria indica*

### HEMEROCALLIDACEAE

*Dianella caerulea*

### ORCHIDACEAE

*Dendrobium canaliculatum*

*Dendrobium bicolor*

### PANDANACEAE

*Pandanus cookii*

*Pandanus gemmifer* (cv)

### POACEAE

\**Eleusine indica*

*Eriache pallescens*

\**Melinis repens*

\**Megathyrsus maximus*

\**Sporobolus jacquemontii*

*Sporobolus virginicus*

*Thuarea involucrata*

## ***Eudicots***

### ACANTHACEAE

*Avicennia marina* var. *eucalyptifolia*

\**Asystasia gangetica*

\**Barleria repens*

### AMARANTHACEAE

*Alternanthera brasiliensis*

### ANACARDIACEAE

*Anacardium occidentale*

*Euroschinus falcata*

### ANNONACEAE

*Huberantha nitidissima*

### APOCYNACEAE

*Alstonia muelleriana*

*Alyxia spicata*

*Dischidia nummularia*

*Gymnanthera oblonga*

*Tabernaemontana pandacacui*

### ARALIACEAE

*Heptapleurum actinophyllum*

### ASTERACEAE

*Cyanthium cinereum*

\**Praxelis clematidea*

### BIGNONIACEAE

*Deplanchea tetraphylla*

### BURSERACEAE

*Canarium australianum*

### CALOPHYLLACEAE

*Calophyllum inophyllum*

## CASUARINACEAE

*Allocasuarina littoralis**Casuarina equisetifolia*

## CELASTRACEAE

*Denhamia fasciculiflora*

## COMBRETACEAE

*Lumnitzera littorea**Lumnitzera racemosa**Terminalia arenicola**Terminalia catappa**Terminalia microcarpa**Terminalia muelleri*

## CONVOLVULACEAE

*Ipomoea pes-caprae* subsp. *brasiliensis*

## DILLENACEAE

*Dillenia alata*

## EBENACEAE

*Diospyros compacta*

## EUPHORBIACEAE

*Codiaeum variegatum* (cv)*Excoecaria agallocha*

## FABACEAE

*Acacia crassicarpa**Acacia leptocarpa**Acacia oraria**Acacia polystachya**Cynometra lenticellata* (cultivated)*Dalbergia candenatensis**\*Macroptilium atropurpureum**\*Stylosanthes hamata**\*Tamarindus indica*

## GOODENIACEAE

*Scaevola taccada*

## LAMIACEAE

*Clerodendrum floribundum**Clerodendrum inerme*

## LAURACEAE

*Cryptocarya hypospodia*

## LORANTHACEAE

*Amyema congener*

## MALVACEAE

*Heritiera littoralis**Hibiscus tiliaceus**Thespesia populnea**\*Triumfetta rhomboidea*

## MELIACEAE

*\*Azadirachta indica**Xylocarpus moluccana*

## MORACEAE

*Ficus benjamina**Ficus racemosa**Ficus virens*

## MYRTACEAE

*Corymbia clarksoniana**Corymbia tessellaris**Eucalyptus platyphylla**Lithomyrtus obtusa**Lophostemon suaveolens**Melaleuca dealbata**Melaleuca leucadendra**Melaleuca viridiflora**Osbornia octodonta*

## OLACACEAE

*Ximenia americana*

## OLEACEAE

*Chionanthus ramiflorus**Jasminum elongatum*

## OPILIACEAE

*Cansjera leptostachya*

## PASSIFLORACEAE



*Passiflora pallida*

PHYLLANTACEAE

*Breynia stipitata*

PRIMULACEAE

*Aegiceras corniculatum*

\**Ardisia elliptica*

PROTEACEAE

*Grevillea glauca*

*Persoonia falcata*

RHAMNACEAE

*Alphitonia excelsa*

*Colubrina asiatica*

*Rhamnella vitiensis*

RHIZOPHORACEAE

*Bruguiera gymnorhiza*

*Ceriops tagal*

*Rhizophora stylosa*

RUBIACEAE

*Atractocarpus fitzalanii* var. *fitzalanii*

*Myrmecodia beccarii*

\**Spermacoce verticillata*

SALICACEAE

*Scolopia braunii*

SAPINDACEAE

*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*

*Dodonaea polyandra*

*Ganophyllum falcatum*

*Guioa acutifolia*

*Jagera pseudorhus*

*Toeckima daemelianum*

SANTALACEAE

*Exocarpos latifolius*

SAPOTACEAE

*Mimusops elengi*

*Planchonella chartacea*

VERBENACEAE

\**Stachytarpheta cayennensis*

## *St Lucia Community Garden*

Helen Lawie

St Lucia Community Garden in Brisbane is nestled beside a golf course on a forgotten piece of parkland known as Lex Ord Park South. The lush vegetable gardens and fruit trees are well tended by the team of volunteers who reap quality fresh produce alongside the joy of contributing to a truly community endeavour. The Captain of this project happens to be my brother-in-law, Ian Nicolson. He saw the potential of the site and has skippered the many funding proposals and working bees that have brought the garden into its current mature incarnation.

Raised garden beds are wheelchair accessible, and they are shielded from scrub turkey incursion by netting that rolls up and down. The roster for watering is well staffed, and folk utilise the compost system that enriches the soil. In the nearby cafe those who have more time to share after a rewarding stint in the garden play card games and practise conversational English. A bee hive provided by Brisbane City Council and stocked by my beekeeping sister, Allison, provides bees for pollination and honey.

In addition to all that could be expected - herbs, complementary planting, heirloom varieties, propagation, and group effort - part of the original vision for the garden was to embed it within the Indigenous Cultural landscape. An historic map from early European contact times shows nearby Sandy Creek and encourages us to start peeling back the layers of the built environment.

The native plant collection includes many bush tucker plants and those that can be used for medicinal purposes.



One that I'd love to see in the wild is *Pipturus argenteus*, Native Mulberry. Also known as False Stinger, this small tree was flowering in early October and flourishing with the attention of dedicated gardeners.



I was a few days too early to see flower on *Hibiscus splendens*, one of the native hibiscus. Its multitude of large pink buds showed a lot of promise, while the prickly stems discouraged flower picking.

The *Backhousia myrtifolia*, Cinnamon Myrtle, tree is growing well in a raised garden bed and providing lovely aromatic leaves. I tried eating a leaf from the *Eucalyptus olida* Strawberry Gum, and experienced an incredible sensation as my mouth responded to the sour cotton wool effect.

Along the fringe of the garden a line of natives have been planted, including *Castanospermum australe*, and *Nauclea orientalis*, that lead us down the hill to Sandy Creek. The creek looks inviting in the Spring sunshine, and it is hard to imagine it several metres deep at the height of floods which caused so much heartache and damage in 2011. It is more enjoyable to focus on a family of kookaburras feeding young ones secluded in a tree hollow. They are sharing the nourishing results of their labours, much like their neighbours up at the community garden.

The species list "New Shoots from Old Roots" from St Lucia Community Garden is a terrific resource:

<https://stluciacommunitygarden.org/new-shoots/>

## *Medinilla balls-headlyi*

(named after obstetrician, Walter Balls- Headley)

Patsy Penny

This is another flowering native that could feature in any home garden. Commonly called Daintree Medinilla, this lovely vine grows naturally in our rainforest along the Russell River. It climbs to the tree tops with the aid of its roots in search of the sun. I have also kept it in a hanging basket and it grows and flowers within sight.

The pretty pale pink flowers are waxy, the petals about a centimetre in length. These change to a darker pink orb and remain as an attractive attachment for months. The seeds are contained in this vaselike structure. I have found it easier to reproduce using cuttings as there are already roots up the stem.

I have watched cassowaries devour these delicate containers.

