



Society for Growing Australian Plants (Queensland Region) Inc.

Cairns Branch
PO Box 199
Earlville Qld 4870

Newsletter No. 79
July 2008

Society Office Bearers

Chairperson	Ann Mohun	40 394 942
Vice Chairperson	Mary Gandini	40 542 190
Secretary	Greg Keith	40 981 130
Treasurer	Robert Jago	40 552 266

Membership Subscriptions- Qld Region- Renewal \$39.00 (\$29.00 concession), New Members \$44, each additional member of household \$1.00

Cairns Branch Fees -\$10.00 Full Year

To access our Library for loan of books, please contact David Warmington

Dates to Remember

Cairns Branch Meetings and Excursions – third Saturday of each month.

NEXT OUTING:

Thala Beach Lodge. Meet at 11:00 for meeting and 12 onwards for lunch and walks. Located between Cairns and Port Douglas at Oak Beach: <http://www.thalabeach.com.au/port-douglas-map.htm>

Tablelands Branch – Sunday following the meeting on the 4th Wednesday of the month.
Any queries please contact Chris Jaminon on 4095 2882 or hjaminon@bigpond.com.

Car Pooling reduces our carbon footprint, shares the costs of fuel and helps people get about. If anyone else is looking for a seat or has seats to offer please email me, I'll see what I can do.
Cheers, Andrew. andrew.picone@jcu.edu.au

Brief Cooktown Reports:

From Andrew

Cooktown Amateur Turf Club

Thanks to the negotiating efforts of Pauline and Don Lawie, the SGAP crew were able to stay at the Cooktown Amateur Turf Club. A little out of town, and with no one else present, this was a quite and pleasant place to stay.

Situated to the west of town and bordering the vast mangrove communities south of the Endeavour River, the Turf Club provided us with basic facilities and plenty of interesting vegetation to explore. Mozzies and midges? Well, a steady breeze kept them away (but also blew over a tent or two).

Adjacent to some old rusty racing stalls, slowly corroding into the saline mud, are some interesting patches of saltmarsh. Rushes, sedges, glassworts and salt tolerant grasses grew amongst an open scattering of short, shrubby mangroves.



Looking west along the old railway with mangrove communities on either side.

An early morning random wonder led me to what I later found out was the old railway line. Built around 1884 the line serviced the Palmer River gold fields. From Cooktown, it headed west passing through mangrove and saltmarsh communities before heading into dryer woodlands and savannah. What's left of the rail line would make a great walking trail complementing the existing network of trails in and around Cooktown.

Cooktown Botanic Gardens Working-bee

The SGAP Cooktown Botanic Gardens Project has been going for a number of years. From what I understand, this is a joint effort between the Tablelands and Cairns branches and the Cook Shire Council who support the work.

Daniel Collins, who is the council's Vegetation Manager and Botanic Gardens Curator, met us on the Saturday morning to give us a run down of recent news and happenings within the council and gardens. On the cards, apparently, are plans for a horticultural facility that will include office and workshop space, nursery and service area for the council's gardens crew.

The idea behind the SGAP garden beds is to have a representative sample of plants collected by Joseph Banks around the Cooktown area while the Endeavour was being repaired.

Previous years of work on the SGAP beds has resulted in them becoming fairly low maintenance. After a quick weed bails of straw were spread out over each bed.



The SGAP beds are well maintained and occupy a prominent position near the main entrance .

While maintenance on the garden beds was underway, another team was identifying suitable host trees for a batch of Cooktown orchids *Dendrobium bigibbum* (this is the name on the ASGAP website, I don't know if

its had a recent name change... *probably*). Following identification of the host trees, the orchid team, armed with liquid nails, string and ladder proceeded to secure the orchids to trees.



No not there, there...

Unfortunately, there is a risk that the Cooktown orchids could get stolen so the general idea is not to publicise this too widely.

In addition to garden bed maintenance and gluing orchids to trees there was also a team who cleaned out the nursery. We found some interesting plants and a few weeds.



A curious batch of *Podocarpus elatus*, according to the label, its distribution in the wet tropics is not fully recognised.

After a hard days work in the gardens we were graced with the honour of a first class slide show from Garry Sankowsky on the many and varied habitats along the northern rocky shores of the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Cedar Bay



The scheduled trip to Trevethen Falls was dropped for a trip to Cedar Bay. Daniel (Gardens Curator) was keen to show us some particularly good areas of lowland rainforest.



After a short while and clamouring down and up some deep creek beds we eventually found ourselves in well developed rainforest with tall *Licuala ramsayi* and many large buttressed trees.

As I'd had too much wine the night before and was nursing a splitting headache on Sunday, I didn't take any notes on any of the botanically notable plants we encountered. So, if anyone else wants to provide their perspective from this walk, or anything else from this fun-filled weekend, please do.

Other News



The Queensland Government has released its environmental offsets policy which can be found at the address below:

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/planning_and_guidelines/policies_and_strategies/environmental_offsets/

I'll read it over and provide a comment next newsletter.

No one sent anything to the newsletter this month hence its light content. If you do have something, or ideas, even small news items or an interesting plant in your garden please send something in...

While Tony is away, if you have any book reviews, pictures, notes on growing tropical Australian plants or trip reports you'd like published in this newsletter, please send them to Andrew Picone: andrew.picone@jcu.edu.au with SGAP marked in the subject.