



Society for Growing Australian Plants (Queensland Region) Inc.

Cairns Branch
PO Box 199
Earlville Qld 4870

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Society Office Bearers

Chairperson	Ann Mohun	40 310 551
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, 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 Warrington

Dates to remember

Cairns Branch Meetings and Excursions – third Saturday of each month, except for December & January, when we are enjoying our Christmas Break.

NEXT OUTING will be held on Saturday Feb 21st, meeting at Cairns Botanic Gardens, 1200.

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

Trip Report

Babinda Boulders

By Don Lawie

This was our last outing for the year, so we made it a Christmas break-up. Took along some extra tucker to share, and we all got together in the larger shelter shed near the parking area. Reminiscenced about the year past and looked forward with enthusiasm to next year's adventures.



Lunch over, we took a typical SGAP walk along the Devil's Pool Track, pausing to admire, evaluate, identify and occasionally argue about the vast variety of plants encountered. We've had a number of trips along this track over the years and it was rather sad to see that many Old Friends had been wiped out by Cyclone Larry in March '06. Now, 2 ½ years later, Cairns Regional Council have done a mighty job in clearing the damage and re-building the track and bridges. I reckon that this walk presents the best viewing of lowland tropical rain forest available in the Wet Tropics, and in a very accessible manner.

Combined Species List from SGAP visits to BABINDA BOULDERS. Thanks to Mary Gandini

Angiosperms

Aceratium megalospermum
Acmena sp.
Acronychia acidula
Alphitonia whitei
Alpinia arctiflora
Alpinia modesta
Alstonia scholaris

Since we had Mary and Pauline with us, we had to find some orchids. Pauline was much chuffed to find a small specimen of the Cinnamon Orchid, *Corymborkis veratrifolia*, near where there used to be a healthy colony pre-Larry. A small Golden Penda tree, *Xanthostemon chrysanthus*, growing at the edge of the fence that protects people from the "Washing Machine Pool", has always been a good orchid host. Today it boasted good specimens of *Bulbophyllum baileyi*, *Dendrobium baileyi*, *Dendrobium toressae*, and *Dendrobium prenticei*. On the other side of the lookout was another mass of *D. prenticei*, and there used to be a large *Eria kingii* on a precarious perch which must have eventually toppled into the torrent. A larger Golden Penda here used to be loaded with orchids but it was damaged pre-Larry and felled – right into the rapids.

At the bridge further along we were pleased to see two large clumps of Tassel Ferns, high up on trees and safe from collectors. An easy walk back, smoko in the shed while Ing and Andrew enjoyed a swim in the bracingly cool pool, and our outing was over.

(A footnote: I recently returned to the Washing Machine Pool, this time in my SES Uniform, as yet another unwise young man had gone for a swim there and drowned such a waste of youth and strength in such a place of beauty...).

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Aneilima sp.
Antirhea tenuifolia
Apodytes brachystylis
Archidendron whitei
Archontophoenix alexandrae
Ardisia pachyrrachis
Argophyllum sp.
Argyrodendron peralatum
Aristolochia tagala

Atractocarpus fitzalanii
Atractocarpus hirta
Austromyrtus floribunda
Austrosteenisia blackii
Balanophora fungosa
Barringtonia calyptrata
Beilschmiedia bancroftii
Boehmeria macrophylla
Breynia stipitata
Brombya platynema
Caesalpinia traceyi
Calamus australis
Calamus motii
Calamus radicalis
Callicarpa sp.
Callistemon sp.
Canthium kuranda
Cardwellia sublimis
Carnavonia araliifolia
Castanospermum australe
Centotheca lappacea
Ceratopetalum virchowii
Cerbera floribunda
Cissus sp.
Citronella smythii
Cordyline cannifolia
Cyperus pedunculatus
Cryptocarya mackinnoniana
Cryptocarya pleurosperma
Curculigo
Delarbrea michieana
Dendrochneide sp.
Dianella atraxis
Dinosperma stiptata
Dioscorea transversa
Diploglottis pedleyi
Diploglottis smithii
Dysoxylum klanderii
Dysoxylum parasiticum
Dysoxylum pettigrewianum
Elaeagnus triflora
Elaeocarpus grandis/angustifolius
Endiandra compressa
Endiandra palmerstonii
Epipremnum pinnatum
Eupomatia laurina
Eupomatia sp. Noah's Head
Eustrephus latifolius
Fagraea cambadgii
Faradaya splendida
Ficus benjamina
Ficus congesta
Ficus copiosa
Ficus pantoniana
Ficus variegata
Flagellaria indica
Freycinetia excelsa

Freycinetia scandens
Garcinia warrenii
Gardenia merekin
Gilbaea adenopetala
Geophila repens
Gornocormis saxifraxioides
Gymnostachys anceps
Harpullia frutescens
Helicia nortoniana
Hernandia albiflora
Hollandea sayeri
Hornstaedtia schottiana
Hoya australis
Hypolytrum nembrum
Hypoxis sp.
Hypserpa laurina
Hyptis sp.
Irvingbaileya australis
Ixora baileyi
Lassianthus strigosus
Leea indica
Leptospermum flavescens
Lethedon setosa
Linospadix microcarya
Livieria acuminata
Lomandra hystrix
Litsea bindoniana
Macaranga inermis
Mackinlaya sp.
Medinilla balls-headleyi
Melaleuca sp.
Melicope broadbentiana
Melicope xanthoxylloides
Melodinus australis
Merremia peltata
Musa banksii
Myristica globosa
Myristica insipida
Neolitsea dealbata
Neosepicaea jucunda
Neostrearia fleckeri
Niemeyera prunifera
Ophiorrhiza australiana
Oplismenus sp.
Pandanus monticola.
Pandorea pandorana
Pararistolochia sp.
Phyllanthus clamboides
Phyllanthus hypospodus
Phyllanthus riparia
Phyllanthus sp.
Piper caninum
Piper novae-hollandiae
Polyscias australiana
Polyscias elegans
Polyscias mollis
Polyscias purpurea
Pothos longipes

Rhaphidophora australasia
Rhaphidophora petriei
Ristantia pachysperma
Rhysotoechia robertsonii
Rubus alcifolius
Rubus molluccana
Salacia disepala
Samanea saman
Sauraria andreana
Schefflera actinophylla
Schistocarpea johnsonii
Solanum sp.
Storkiella australiense
Syzygium allilignium
Syzygium australe
Syzygium boonjee
Syzygium cormiflorum
Syzygium forte
Syzygium gustavoides
Syzygium kuranda
Tabernaemontana orientalis
Tetracera nordtiana
Toechima erythrocarpa
Urticaceae sp.
Waterhousia hedraiophylla
Wendlandia sp.
Wilkiea sp.
Xanthostemon chrysanthus

Gymnosperms

Bowenia spectabilis
Lepidozamia hopei

A Trip to the Windsor Tableland

by Andrew Picone

While the Windsor Tablelands have been protected under World Heritage legislation since 1988, Mount Windsor National Park was only recently declared. The park is not open to the public and you can only get in there with a research permit. I volunteered to help out PhD research student Jeremy Little who has a number of weather stations up there. Jeremy's research is centred on the climatic variation between rainforest, wet sclerophyll forest and savannah along the western boundary of the wet tropics and the implications of climate change.

Mount Windsor National Park is beyond three locked gates, one of which is guarded by a nest of wasps. The climb up to the tableland along the only access road from the south,

provides many grand vistas of dry boulder strewn valleys and steep, rocky escarpments. Vegetation becomes gradually greener and mesic. Savannah gives way to taller forest and eventually to rainforest.



The view

Reasonably dense stands of *Agathis robusta* occurred sporadically in dryer, lower altitude rainforest and often along the margins. At the higher altitudes, the main access road cut through some impressive stands of *Callitris macleayana* growing with *Banksia aquilonia* in a short, wind-swept community with many other rainforest species.



Callitris macleayana

Up on the gently undulating tableland itself, tall rainforest is the dominant vegetation type. Although logging is meant to have been extensive prior to world heritage listing, a small area of forest beside the main access road and a creek was apparently left for study purposes. This is evident by a large Red Cedar with a '1' painted on the trunk. There were also many wooden pegs, slowly decomposing, scattered around this patch of forest.



Red Cedar

Heading west are Australia's northern most occurrences of wet sclerophyll forest. *Eucalyptus grandis*, *E. resinifera* and other open species. This is also the northern most occurrences of many species of fauna including the yellow-bellied glider which depend on wet sclerophyll forests. Then still further west are dryer forests, often with a heath component in the understorey, until still further west the ubiquitous savannah dominates. This all happens on the tableland at around 900 to 1000 metres altitude.

As you can only get into Mount Windsor National Park for research purposes, I reckon it would make a great extended field trip for SGAP one long weekend.

Christmas Plants around the World

(Extract from ARNOLDIA; V19, P59-60)

"THE practice of using decorated trees in religious celebrations extends into antiquity. The old Germanic priests hung lights on the sacred trees beneath which they offered sacrifices. Wherever they travelled, the Roman legions decorated pine trees with little masks of Bacchus in the festival of Saturnalia. European legend attributes the origin of Christmas trees to an eighth-century Englishman, St. Boniface, a missionary in Germany. Before a crowd of barbarians one Christmas Eve, he cut down a sacred oak beneath which they had made human sacrifices. A young fir tree which had remained undamaged by the fall was presented to the people with the explanation, "This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight." The holy tree it has remained. Legend also has it that Martin Luther was the first to use lights as part of the decorations for Christmas. The earliest authentic record of Christmas trees as we know them today is in a manuscript in which a Strassburg merchant wrote in 1605, "At Christmas, they set up fir trees in the parlours at Strassburg and hang thereon roses cut out of many coloured paper, apples, wafers, goldfoil, sweets, etc."

Most historians are in agreement with the St. Boniface legend that the first Christmas tree was a fir. The custom originated in the beech belt of central Europe where a single green fir in the defoliated brown beech forest becomes strikingly symbolic. It is from this area that the practice of using a tree as a part of the Christmas celebration spread throughout the Christian areas of the world. The trees of the new areas were usually conifers closely resembling the fir of central Europe. As the custom spread into areas where plants of this type were not available, often the substituted trees were neither closely related, nor similar in appearance to the fir. In many areas, shrubs or herbaceous plants were also used for making Christmas wreaths and other decorations."

(For the complete article visit <http://arnoldia.arboretum.harvard.edu/pdf/articles/1547.pdf>)

Historically, in Australia, a native *Araucaria* planted in a pot was recycled for many years as a living tree at Christmas while *Callitris* was often used as a cut tree. A novel substitute was *Exocarpos cupressiformis*, although an angiosperm had foliage similar to a pine tree. Coincidentally, *Exocarpos* is in the family **Santalaceae**.

The Australian states have each got their Christmas tree or shrub, whose spectacular floral display peaks around the 25th December.

Western Australia has the Western Australian Christmas Tree, *Nuytsia floribunda* which occurs in the Loranthaceae, the same family as the Mistletoe beneath which “I saw mamma kissing Santa Claus”.

New South Wales has a Christmas Bush, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* in the Cunoniaceae, and Christmas Bells, *Blandfordia grandiflora* in Blandfordiaceae.

Victorians also have a Christmas Bush, *Prostanthera lasianthos* in the mint family as do South Australians and Tasmanians who share *Bursaria spinosa* in the Pittosporaceae

To be different, we Queenslanders have a Christmas Orchid, *Calanthe triplicata*.

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 me: Tony Roberts – email travelling_botanist@yahoo.com.au

The Office Bearers of the Cairns Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants, (Queensland Region) wish their members and other readers of the newsletter a pleasant and safe festive season and hope to see you all next year.

