

# Society for Growing Australian Plants

◆  
May 2026



## April Highlights

Five participants turned out for the April excursion to Speewah Conservation Park, undeterred by recent wet weather in the lead-up to the day. After applying precautions against scrub itch, the group set off along the Djina-wu Track under perfectly sunny skies. While conditions were pleasant, the track itself proved boggy in places, a reminder of the recent rain.

The walk provided lots of interesting tropical rainforest plants to see. Among the notable species observed were *Agathis robusta* (Kauri Pine), including an impressive large specimen, and *Alpinia hylandii* (Hyland's Little Ginger). A standout was *Blepharocarya involucrigera* (Rose Butternut), also represented by a substantial tree. The group encountered a large *Elaeocarpus bancroftii* (Kuranda Quandong), with nuts scattered on the ground beneath it, and *Syzygium kuranda* (Kuranda Satinash).

Other interesting finds included a large specimen of *Glochidion sumatranum* (Swamp Buttonwood), *Pittosporum rubiginosum* (Hairy Red Pittosporum) in fruit, and *Cleistanthus discolor*, an uncommon understorey tree. Several large *Flindersia iffaiiana* (Cairns Hickory Ash) were also recorded, along with *Argyrodendron peralatum* (Red Tulip Oak), notable for its impressive buttress roots.

### Next Excursion

SGAP Cairns  
Sunday 17 May, 10am  
Babinda Boulders  
Meet outside the amenities block. Lunch (BYO) after our walk.  
rsvp:  
[secretary@sgapcairns.org.au](mailto:secretary@sgapcairns.org.au)

### Upcoming Excursions

June: Irvinebank / Stannery Hills  
July: Cooktown  
August: Harvey Creek  
September: Daintree  
October: Cattana Wetlands  
November: Mason St  
December: Christmas party, Edge Hill Bowls Club

### SGAP Library

Explore items available for loan [here](#).

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**Dr. Wannan pointing out a specimen of Kuranda Satinash *Syzygium kuranda***

Rob contributed significantly to the day's observations, adding ten species to the Barron Gorge National Park list. Despite spending a couple of hours on the trail, progress was deceptively slow, and the group covered less



**Hairy Red Pittosporum *Pittosporum rubiginosum* along the track**

than 765 metres—the distance to the first junction, which they did not reach. Had they continued and turned right at that point, Bruce noted that the trail leads to some impressive Kauri Pines, though this would make for a much longer walk to be saved for another day. The excursion concluded with lunch at the nearby home of Bruce, Jane, and Rosie in Speewah. This provided a welcome chance to relax, as well as an opportunity to view Bruce's collection of *Hibiscus* spp., rounding off an enjoyable and rewarding day in the field.

## Editors Note

I've introduced a plant profile segment (last page), with the aim to showcase native plants that make great additions to the garden.

The first edition is Dianella, I grouped the species together, but for future editions the focus will be on individual species.

If you have a native plant that is a garden favourite, I'd love to include it. Please send through the scientific name along with 3–4 images—ideally one showing the plant's typical habit, one of the flower, and one of the fruit (if applicable). I can take care of researching and preparing the accompanying text.

Submissions can be sent to: [sandywatts99@gmail.com](mailto:sandywatts99@gmail.com)

## *Dianella spp.*

*Diana* (Roman goddess of the hunt and moon) + *ella*  
Family: Hemerocallidaceae



### About

Dianella, commonly known as flax lilies, are hardy, clump-forming plants that occur widely across Australia. They feature strappy, grass-like leaves and produce small, star-shaped blue to purple flowers, followed by distinctive bright blue or purple berries. Dianella are an attractive addition to any garden known for their resilience, low maintenance, and ability to tolerate a wide range of conditions, from shade to sun.



©Jean, Flickr

### Occurrence

In Far North Queensland, there are seven *Dianella* species, ranging from those suited to rainforest conditions, such as *D. caerulea*, to others that prefer drier habitats, like *D. longifolia*.

### Propagation

Propagate by seed or by dividing established clumps. Seeds require no special pre-treatment before sowing. Some species readily self-seed, and young seedlings can be easily transplanted while small.

### In short

Herb  
small clump  
forming up to  
0.8 - 1.5m

Flowers: most  
months

Fruit: most  
months



Notes: Border or  
filler herb, well  
suited to  
gardens of any  
size, including  
smaller spaces.

Further reading:  
[ATRP](#)  
[ALA](#)  
[ANPSA](#)