



Society for Growing Australian Plants

Cairns Branch Inc.

Newsletter 227, February 2023

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Christmas breakup meeting, 11

December 2022

Don Lawie

Cairns SGAP finished the year in style. Instead of trudging through the rainforest on a 35° C summer day we revelled in the cool air conditioning of Mark and Helen's home in Mt Sheridan.

Our hosts adopted an *Elaeocarpus* theme for the day. They were up early and collected Quandong leaves fruits and flowers and strewed the tables with the dark red or green leaves, the startling blue of the fruits and bunches of the beautiful bell-shaped creamy white flowers. A discussion naturally arose of the best way to germinate *Elaeocarpus angustifolius/grandis* seed and Lois (who operates the Mulgrave Landcare Nursery), does it the easy way. "I just go the right area of the riverbank and there are always plenty of seedlings to transplant" she said.

President Patsy tabled a rare gem: a 58 year old, much used, publication from the Queensland Government "*Queensland building timbers and specifications for their use*" This little book details timber species used for building, their botanical and common names and the types of building for which they can be used. Fascinating reading, and I note that at least 15 species of Silky Oak are listed .

There is entry for Hickory Ash, botanical name *Flindersia ifflaiana* which our diligent botanists told us some years ago had been altered to *ifflana* for reasons abstruse; perhaps our erudite editor will tell us?

A shared lunch was enjoyed, during the course of which we attempted Don's Botanical Quiz for this year. Don made all questions multiple choice and Helen won this year with an impressive score which earned her a flowering orchid for prize.

The annual raffle was as usual well supplied, with some oddities and my favourites, Val's superb confectionery. Some desirable plants such as *Alpinia modesta* were snapped up.

Another calendar year has gone by and we look forward to our adventures together in the year 2023.

Don's end of year botanical quiz

(1) The botanical family *Orchidaceae* has more genera than any others. Name the orchid genus with more species than any other.

(a) *Dendrobium* (b) *Bulbophyllum* (c) *Coelogyne*

(2) The rainforest cycad *Lepidozamia hopei* has male and female plants. The female is pollinated

by the movement of male pollen facilitated by:

(a) beetles (b) wind (c) a rat named *Uromys caudimaculatus*

(3) Next year we hope to learn more about a plant group known as Bryophytes. This group includes:

(a) mosses (b) hornworts (c) liverworts (d) all of the preceding

(4) What is The Wallace Line?

(a) a shipping company (b) Mel Gibson's version of Scottish history (c) a geographic line on the map which divides plants of the Indo-Malaysian species of plants from those of Australo-Pacific.

(5) The popular plants known as lillypillies belong mostly to the genus *SYZYGium*. What is the derivation of this word?

(a) Named by a Swedish botanist with a speech impairment (b) yoked together (c) edible, but only when consumed as a side dish with froglegs.



Syzygium oleosum

(6) Cycad plants have different types of roots. Coralloid roots grow upwards and have been known to bring to the surface:

(a) truffles (b) gold (c) kookaburra nests

(7) *Cardwellia sublimis* is a rainforest tree that provides good construction and cabinet timber. It is now called Northern Silky Oak; what was the previous name?

(a) bull oak (b) dog oak (c) horse oak.

(8) *Grammatophyllum speciosum* is the world's largest orchid, with pseudobulbs up to eight metres in length.

What is *Grammatophyllum's* country of origin?

Flindersia ifflana or *Flindersia ifflaiana*- what's the difference?

Ferdinand von Mueller, that prolific contributor to early Australian botany, published his description of Hickory Ash in volume 10 of "*Fragmenta phytographiæ Australiæ*" dated 1877. He named the species *Flindersia ifflaiana*, in honour of a prominent Melbourne physician. In the description, Mueller wrote: *Speciem grate dicavi pricclaro S. Iffla, M.D., scientiarum progressum apud nos avide sustinenti*, which Doctor Google kindly translated as: *I spoke gratefully of the distinguished S. Iffla, M.D., who eagerly supports the progress of science among us.*

The suffix form published in 1877, *Flindersia ifflaiana*, was later deemed BAD LATIN by the taxonomic pedants in charge of the International Code for Nomenclature, and was corrected to *Flindersia ifflana* in 2009. The form *iana* is only to be used where a person's surname ends in a consonant e.g. *webbiana* or *worboysiana*. Dr Iffla's name clearly doesn't fit that rule, so should be



Seed capsules of *Flindersia ifflana*. Image by Cassy Nancarrow, source inaturalist.org

Orchid hunting in Cardwell

Stuart Worboys

When it comes to orchids, tropical north Queensland has an embarrassment of riches. With stunners like *Phalaenopsis*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Sarcophilus* and of course *Dendrobium*, who could argue. However, often overlooked are the ground orchids. Matt McIntosh has set himself a mission of photographing all of the north's terrestrial orchids.

With that goal in mind, a small group set out for a weekend exploring the steam wet open *Melaleuca viridiflora* low woodlands around Cardwell, hunting for some of the more obscure, short lived species that occur only in that area. Here's some of what we found.



Dienia ophrydis



Arthrostylis stenophyllus (VULNERABLE)



Habenaria propinqua

What's Happening?

Cairns

19 February 2023. Our first event for the year will be a talk at the home of Helen Lawie, 18 Manilla Close, Mt Sheridan. Guest speaker is Dr David Tng, Director of the School for Field Studies, ecologist, botanist, enthusiastic photographer of all things in the natural world and all-round great guy. He'll be speaking to us about the world of tiny plants at our feet - bryophytes.

Join us at 12 noon. Bring lunch, and maybe pop in a folding chair just in case. F

Thursday 14th to Tuesday 19th September 2023 Native Plants Queensland State Conference. To be held at the Seville Mercy Conference Centre, Earlville. See proposed program on final page.

Townsville

NPQ Townsville normally meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month, February to November. The meeting venue is the Oonoonba Community Hall, Shannon Street, Oonoonba.

Tablelands

SGAP Tablelands Branch holds its meetings on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the C.W.A. Hall, Tolga, commencing 7.30. Excursions occur on the following Sunday. Contact: Peter Radke pandaradke@gmail.com

Native Plants Queensland - 2023 State Conference Preliminary Program

NPQ State Conference 2023 Preliminary Timetable

Day 1 Thursday 14th September

Afternoon arrival

Check-in

Departure 2.00pm

Cattana Wetlands Walk. This 80 hectare nature conservation park, home to a wealth of bird and plant life, includes toilets and a boardwalk through fern palm forest. Led by Sharren Wong

Return Depart time 4.30pm

Dinner 6pm

After dinner interpretive talk by Bob Jago and Stuart Worboys. "What to expect in the area."

Day 2 Friday 15th September

Breakfast

Departure 8.30am Sharp

Don Lawie will travel on the bus and give local commentary on the way south.

Stop 1 10.00 - 12am

Josephine Falls is a tiered cascade waterfall on the Josephine Creek under Mt Bartle Frere, Qld's highest

mountain. Unfortunately, we will not have the time to climb the mountain.

Toilets

Stop 2 12.30-2.30pm

Lunch & Walk WARRINA Lake

Toilets

Stop 3 2.45-3.30pm

"Backyard Blitz" revegetation area. It has come under control of the Russell River Landcare Group, who are moving to rejuvenate it. The trees and understorey have developed well (the path was strewn with quandong fruit) and there were virtually no weeds.

Latest Return Depart time 3.45pm

Dinner 6pm

Talk by Peter Radke on the introduction on many north Qld plants into horticulture.

Day 3 Saturday 16th September

Breakfast

Departure 8.30am

Stop 1 9-10.30am

Private Garden in Bayview Heights

No Toilets

Stop 2 11 - 1pm

Walk and Lunch Crystal Cascades

Toilets

Stop 3 1.30- 4.30 pm

Cairns Botanic Gardens

Toilets, Café, Shop

1.30-2.30pm Guided Walks

2.30 - 4.30

Guided or free walk

Return Depart time 4.30pm

Dinner 6pm

7.30pm After Dinner Bill Tulloch Lecture

Day 4 Sunday 17th September

Breakfast

Departure 7.30am

Cairns Skyrail

Peter Radke to join the coach at Kuranda to give a background talk on the Tablelands and his garden on the way.

Stop 1 11.30 am Rocky Creek War Memorial Lunch & Toilets

Stop 2 12.20 pm Garden visit (note no toilets)

2.15pm Tolga Park for toilets

2.45pm Curtain Fig National Park

4.15pm Garden visit

5.00pm Depart Mareeba

Dinner 6pm After Dinner Free

Day 5 Monday 18th September

Breakfast

Departure 8.30am

Stop 1 9.30-10.30am

Mossman town Free Walk

Coffee, Toilets, historic Rain trees, river

Stop 2 11am

Mossman Gorge shuttle bus to Gorge

Toilets, Lunch

1pm-3pm Interpretive Walk Bob Jago & Stuart Worboys

Return Shuttlebus to Interpretive Centre

Return Depart time 3.30-4pm

Dinner 6pm

Finish

SGAP Cairns Branch 2022-2023 Committee

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