

SGAP Cairns

Society for Growing Australian Plants Inc., Cairns Branch
Celebrating our 40th year

NEWSLETTER 197 FEBRUARY 2020



August excursion

Don Lawie

SGAP Cairns has a farewell at Cattana Wetlands

For our August 2020 excursion we headed to Cattana Wetlands, located in the midst of caneland on Cairns' northern suburbs. This area is now a Cairns City Council-managed beauty spot and a must-do for people interested in birds, plants and nature in general.

Before the arrival of Europeans, it was once a diverse sea level wet tropical rainforest. As happened to so much of the rainforest in the Wet Tropics, it was cleared for the production of sugar cane. Cane growing gave way to an extraction industry which saw vast amounts of soil and gravel removed to feed Cairns' growing suburbs. A puddled wasteland was saved by farsighted people in the then Mulgrave Shire Council and now, thanks to countless hours of dedicated work, we have a rehabilitated wetland destination of which

to be proud.

Two of those dedicated workers are Sharren and Rick Wong; they became a part of the Wetlands team and helped bring the dream to reality. Alas, we are losing Rick and Sharren to the environs of Brisbane, so we gathered for a walk with Sharren to say Farewell to her. We lunched together lakeside and Chairman Tony made a heartfelt address to Sharren and made a presentation to her.

We then set off for a circuit of one of the lakes, joined by new members David and Mason, and enjoying, as we went along, the erudite commentary by Rob & Stuart. Unfortunately, on this occasion I tried making electronic notes but techxpertise was lacking and I had a blank tape. Suffice to say there were many interesting plants as well as side discussions. Sharren's book "*A Walking Guide to Trees of the Cattana Wetlands*" is invaluable for a day out.

We wish all the best to Sharren and Rick, who came like a comet and left like a whirlwind, leaving only happy memories behind.



SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS INC., CAIRNS BRANCH

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Unfortunately, the weedy Cape York species, *Harpullia ramiflora*, is widely used in the rehabilitation plantings.



Cattana Wetlands is home to the rare sedge, *Cyperus ohwii*



Fruits of the Pink Shepherd's Crook Orchid, *Geodorum*

Wait-a-while Nature Refuge

Rob Jago and Alex Cameron

Alex Cameron's Wait-a-While Nature Refuge is a 46.3 ha property located on Woopen Creek Road in the Russell River Valley, about 70 km by road south of Cairns. Since taking it over he has begun some rehabilitation work, removing vines and planting native trees. Happily the reserve has a number of cassowaries that visit the property, and their droppings apparently assist with the regeneration.

In August last year, Alex invited SGAP Cairns to visit the property, partly as an interesting excursion, and partly to help him with tree and weed identification that might help with the rehabilitation program. After many delays, our branch scheduled a visit for 20th September 2020. Unfortunately, due to family commitments, this date did not suit the Camerons.

Rob Jago was able to pay a visit to Wait-a-While on 1 September. During his short visit, he recorded a remarkable 137 species of ferns and flowering plants, including the near-threatened *Endiandra globosa*, and plenty of wait-a-while! The species list is presented below.

Species observed at Wait-a-While Nature Refuge

	Family	Species	Common Name
Ferns and Fern Allies	Blechnaceae	<i>Blechnum cartilagineum</i>	Gristle Fern
	Cyatheaceae	<i>Cyathea cooperi</i>	Scaly Tree Fern
	Cyatheaceae	<i>Cyathea rebecca</i>	Black Tree Fern
	Cyatheaceae	<i>Cyathea woollsiana</i>	
	Gleicheniaceae	<i>Dicranopteris linearis</i>	Scrambling Fern
	Lindsaeaceae	<i>Lindsaea brachypoda</i>	
	Lindsaeaceae	<i>Lindsaea ensifolia subsp. ensifolia</i>	
	Lycopodiaceae	<i>Palhinhaea cernua</i>	Queensland Coral Fern
	Lygodiaceae	<i>Lygodium reticulatum</i>	
	Marattiaceae	<i>Angiopteris evecta</i>	King Fern
	Marattiaceae	<i>Ptisana oreades</i>	Potato Fern
	Pteridaceae	<i>Adiantum diaphanum</i>	Filmy Maidenhair Fern
	Selaginellaceae	<i>Selaginella longipinna</i>	Spike Moss
	Thelypteridaceae	<i>Christella dentata</i>	Creek Fern
	Thelypteridaceae	<i>Pronephrium triphyllum</i>	
	Woodsiaceae	<i>Diplazium dilatatum</i>	
	Gymnosperms	Zamiaceae	<i>Bowenia spectabilis</i>
Flowering plants – basal	Annonaceae	<i>Cananga odorata</i>	Woolly Pine
	Annonaceae	<i>Polyalthia hispida</i>	
	Annonaceae	<i>Polyalthia johnsonii</i>	
		<i>Polyalthia submontanus subsp sessiliflorus</i>	
	Annonaceae		
	Atherospermataceae	<i>Doryphora aromatica</i>	Northern Sassafras
	Lauraceae	<i>Beilschmiedia tooram</i>	Tooram Walnut
	Lauraceae	<i>Cryptocarya grandis</i>	Cinnamon Walnut
	Lauraceae	<i>Cryptocarya mackinnoniana</i>	Rusty Laurel
	Lauraceae	<i>Cryptocarya murrayi</i>	Murray's Laurel
	Lauraceae	<i>Cryptocarya oblata</i>	Tarzali Silkwood
	Lauraceae	<i>Cryptocarya pleurosperma</i>	Poison Laurel
	Lauraceae	<i>Cryptocarya vulgaris</i>	Northern Laurel

	Family	Species	Common Name
Flowering plants – eudicots	Lauraceae	<i>Endiandra globosa</i>	Ball-fruited Walnut
	Lauraceae	<i>Endiandra hypotephra</i>	Rose Walnut
	Lauraceae	<i>Endiandra impressicosta</i>	Steelbutt
	Lauraceae	<i>Endiandra leptodendron</i>	
	Lauraceae	<i>Endiandra sankeyana</i>	Sankey's Walnut
	Lauraceae	<i>Litsea leefeana</i>	Bollywood
	Lauraceae	<i>Neolitsea dealbata</i>	Grey Bollywood
	Monimiaceae	<i>Hedycarya loxocarya</i>	Yellow Beech
	Monimiaceae	<i>Palmeria scandens</i>	Anchor Vine
	Monimiaceae	<i>Steganthera laxiflora subsp laxiflora</i>	Tetra Beech
	Myristicaceae	<i>Myristica globosa subsp muelleri</i>	Nutmeg
	Piperaceae	<i>Piper hederaceum var. hederaceum</i>	
	Apocynaceae	<i>Alstonia muelleriana</i>	Hard Milkwood
	Apocynaceae	<i>Alstonia scholaris</i>	
	Apocynaceae	<i>Cerbera inflata</i>	Grey Milkwood
	Apocynaceae	<i>Melodinus australis</i>	Bellbird Vine
	Apocynaceae	<i>Tabernaemontana pandacaqui</i>	Banana Bush
	Araliaceae	<i>Polyscias australiana</i>	Ivory Basswood
	Asteraceae	* <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	Blue Top
	Asteraceae	* <i>Praxelis clematidea</i>	Praxelis
Asteraceae	* <i>Sphagneticola trilobata</i>	Singapore Daisy	
Clusiaceae	<i>Garcinia warrenii</i>	Native Mangosteen	
Connaraceae	<i>Connarus conchocarpus</i>	Shell Vine	
Connaraceae	<i>Rourea brachyandra</i>	Water Vine	
Convolvulaceae	<i>Decalobanthus peltatus</i>	Cook's Glory Vine	
Cunoniaceae	<i>Davidsonia pruriens</i>	Davidson's Plum	
Cunoniaceae	<i>Spiraeanthemum davidsonii</i>	Davidson's Alder	
Dilleniaceae	<i>Tetracera nordtiana var. nordtiana</i>	Fire Vine	
Elaeocarpaceae	<i>Aceratium megalospermum</i>	Bolly Carabeen	
Elaeocarpaceae	<i>Elaeocarpus grandis</i>		
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Macaranga inamoena</i>		
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Macaranga involucrata var. mallotoides</i>	Brown Macaranga	
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Macaranga polyadenia</i>	Swamp Macaranga	
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Macaranga subdentata</i>	Needlebark	
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Omphalea queenslandiae</i>	Russell River Nut	
Fabaceae	<i>Acacia celsa</i>	Black Wattle	
Fabaceae	<i>Archidendron lucyi</i>	Scarlet Bean	
Lamiaceae	* <i>Hyptis capitata</i>	Knobweed	
Lamiaceae	<i>Oxera splendida</i>	October Glory	
Malvaceae	<i>Commersonia macrostipulata</i>	Kuranda Kurrajong	
Malvaceae	<i>Trichospermum pleiostigma</i>	Whitfield Ash	
Melastomataceae	<i>Melastoma malabathricum var. malabathricum</i>	Melastoma	
Melastomataceae	* <i>Tristemma mauritianum</i>	Juicy Fruits	
Menispermaceae	<i>Carronia protensa</i>		
Menispermaceae	<i>Hypserpa laurina</i>	Laurel Leaf Hypserpa	
Moraceae	<i>Ficus congesta var. congesta</i>	Red Leaf Fig	
Moraceae	<i>Ficus leptoclada</i>	Atherton Fig	
Moraceae	<i>Ficus pantoniana var. pantoniana</i>	Climbing Fig	
Moraceae	<i>Ficus septica</i>		
Moraceae	<i>Ficus variegata var. variegata</i>	Variegated Cluster Fig	

Family	Species	Common Name
Moraceae	<i>Ficus virgata</i> var. <i>virgata</i>	Figwood
Moraceae	<i>Trophis scandens</i> subsp. <i>scandens</i>	Crow Ash Vine
Myrtaceae	<i>Archirhodomyrtus beckleri</i>	Rose Myrtle
Myrtaceae	<i>Pilidostigma tetramerum</i>	Russell River Ironwood
Myrtaceae	<i>Pilidostigma tropicum</i>	Apricot Myrtle
Myrtaceae	<i>Rhodamnia sessiliflora</i>	Iron Malletwood
Myrtaceae	<i>Ristantia pachysperma</i>	
Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium cormiflorum</i>	Bumpy Satinash
Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium divaricatum</i>	Cassowary Satinash
Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium gustavioides</i>	
Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium kuranda</i>	Kuranda Satinash
Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium luehmannii</i>	Cherry Satinash
Myrtaceae	<i>Xanthostemon whitei</i>	Red Penda
Phyllanthaceae	<i>Glochidion sumatranum</i>	Buttonwood
Polygalaceae	* <i>Polygala paniculata</i>	
Primulaceae	<i>Embelia caulialata</i>	
Proteaceae	<i>Darlingia darlingiana</i>	Brown Silky Oak
Proteaceae	<i>Grevillea baileyana</i>	Findlay's Silky Oak
Proteaceae	<i>Helicia nortoniana</i>	Norton's Silky Oak
Proteaceae	<i>Lasjia whelanii</i>	Whelan's Silky Oak
Rhizophoraceae	<i>Carallia brachiata</i>	Corky Bark
Rosaceae	* <i>Rubus alceifolius</i>	Giant Bramble
Rousseaceae	<i>Abrophyllum ornans</i> var. <i>ornans</i>	Native Hydrangea
Rubiaceae	<i>Antirhea tenuiflora</i>	Crimson Berry
Rubiaceae	<i>Atractocarpus fitzalanii</i> subsp. <i>fitzalanii</i>	Brown Gardenia
Rubiaceae	<i>Hedyotis radicans</i>	
Rubiaceae	<i>Ixora baileyana</i>	Bailey's Ixora
Rubiaceae	<i>Uncaria lanosa</i> var. <i>appendiculata</i>	
Rutaceae	<i>Acronychia vestita</i>	Hairy Aspen
Rutaceae	<i>Brombya platynema</i>	
Rutaceae	<i>Flindersia bourjotiana</i>	Queensland Silver Ash
Rutaceae	<i>Melicope elleryana</i>	Evodia
Sapindaceae	<i>Diploglottis smithii</i>	Smith's Tamarind
Sapindaceae	<i>Guioa lasioneura</i>	Silky Tamarind
Sapindaceae	<i>Mischocarpus exangulatus</i>	
Sapindaceae	<i>Rhysotoechia robertsonii</i>	
Sapindaceae	<i>Toechima erythrocarpum</i>	Pink Tamarind
Sapotaceae	<i>Planchonella chartacea</i>	Dugulla
Symplocaceae	<i>Symplocos paucistaminea</i>	White Hazelwood
Symplocaceae	<i>Symplocos puberula</i>	White Hazelwood
Vitaceae	<i>Cissus penninervis</i>	Native Grape
Flowering plants – monocots		
Arecaceae	<i>Archontophoenix alexandrae</i>	Alexandra Palm
Arecaceae	<i>Calamus australis</i>	Hairy Mary Lawyer Cane
Arecaceae	<i>Linospadix minor</i>	Walking Stick Palm
Cyperaceae	<i>Hypolytrum nemorum</i>	
Flagellariaceae	<i>Flagellaria indica</i>	Supplejack
Laxmanniaceae	<i>Cordyline cannifolia</i>	
Orchidaceae	<i>Bulbophyllum baileyi</i>	Fruit Fly Orchid
Pandanaceae	<i>Benstonea monticola</i>	Scrub Breadfruit
Pandanaceae	<i>Freycinetia scandens</i>	
Poaceae	<i>Megathyrsus maximus</i> var. <i>maximus</i>	Guinea Grass
Poaceae	<i>Centotheca lappacea</i>	

Family
Poaceae
Poaceae
Poaceae
Smilacaceae
Zingiberaceae

Species
Cyrtococcum oxyphyllum
Muellerochloa moreheadiana
Oplismenus mollis
Smilax glyciophylla
Hornstedtia scottiana

Common Name

Climbing Bamboo

Sweet Sarsaparilla
Native Cardamon

Virtual Flower Show



**Native Plants
Queensland**

After some initial hiccups, Native Plants Queensland have created a Virtual Flower Show page on Facebook (search Native Plants Queensland and scroll down).

You may now upload your images. Remember to include plant name and general location.

IN FLOWER THIS MONTH



Hoya macgillivrayi



Dendrobium discolor



The dry season colours of Terminalia microcarpa

Plants in the garden – Australia's Rubiaceous myrmecophytes

Matt McIntosh

The floral diversity in Australia has an unmitigated mind-blowing effect, not just on anyone interested in botany, but also on what native species may be useful or practical for propagation. Unfortunately, many native species that might have valuable contributions for wildlife connectivity and resource availability in modified urban environments, are often overlooked. Additionally, propagated individuals or populations of conservation-significant species can be important for providing decentralised conservation values to wild populations. Therefore, over time, I would like to present brief articles on native flora species that have the potential to contribute to ecological resilience and/or diversity within modified urban landscapes, while still providing aesthetic and/or practical values to home growers. In this article, I will be discussing Australia's five rubiaceous myrmecophytes (*i.e.* ant plants in the family Rubiaceae), which include *Hydnophytum moseleyanum*, *Hydnophytum ferrugineum*, *Myrmecodia tuberosa subsp. papuana*, *Myrmecodia platytyrea subsp. antoinii*, and the endemic *Myrmecodia beccarii* (including smooth and spiny forms).



Myrmecodia tuberosa subsp. papuana

General description



Hydnophytum moseleyanum

Australia's rubiaceous myrmecophytes include members within the Rubiaceae family and are commonly called 'ant plants'. These slow growing species occur epiphytically on rough barked supports including *Eucalyptus* and *Melaleuca*, along with other plants such as mangroves. Within Australia, these species can be found within the monsoonal tropics of Queensland, primarily along the east coast from north of Townsville to the tip of Cape York. These species have a distinct and 'interesting' appearance, which features a smooth (*Hydnophytum*) or spiny (*Myrmecodia*) swollen caudex.

The swollen caudex gives rise to the colloquial name of 'ant plants' given to these species. This is due to the swollen caudex containing varied chambers (smooth and bumpy) and openings. These features function as domatia, which ants colonise, subsequently facilitating a mutualistic relationship. However, the mutualistic relationship is not obligate, therefore each can survive independently

on one another. Ant plants also boast a variety of relationships with various inbiota, which is outside the scope of this article and increases the intrigue associated with these plants.

Other features of these plants include the succulent stems of *Myrmecodia*, which are often adorned with thin spines and sunken alveoli, and the smooth, thin stems typical of *Hydnophytum*. Stems may be short and stumpy (e.g., *M. beccarii*) or up to 1 m long (e.g., *M. platytyrea*) and bear white, orange, or red fruit, depending on the species. Fruit are often dispersed by Mistletoebirds (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*).

The intriguing nature of these plants can result in them being regarded as collectors items and are therefore occasionally subject to poaching. Due to this, and a variety of other contributing factors such as distribution, *M. beccarii* and *H. ferrugineum* are considered to be threatened under State and/or Commonwealth legislation.

Growing conditions

General growing conditions for these plants are similar to those of most epiphytic orchids, however with several slight differences to the circumstances of the individual grower. Below is a description of how I grow these plants in Cairns.

I grow these plants outdoors under 50% shade cloth in squat pots or similar, that do not dwarf the plant. Growing media that I use includes an equal parts mix of perlite, quincan, charcoal and orchid bark (a commercial orchid-growing substrate), however most premix orchid media will likely be suitable. The grade of the mix I use depends on the size of the plants. For smaller plants and seedlings, I use media of a 5mm grade and then progressively increase in media grade for plants of increasing size. My plants get a heavy mist daily in addition to any rain that may fall. The media that the plants are potted in is very free draining but allows for water to be retained for a short period, which suits the epiphytic nature of these species. Underwatering results in shrivelling of the caudex, which may result in its structural collapse and promote rot, which these plants are susceptible to. To manage this, rotting sections can be carefully excised and coated in mancozeb, which inadvertently reveals inner chambers of the caudex. I sprinkle slow release fertiliser (Osmocote citrus slow release fertiliser has not proved to be detrimental for me) on the surface of the media. I also mist plants with orchid fertiliser on an intermittent basis.

Uses in the garden



All five native Australian Rubiaceae ant plants in cultivation

These plants generally afford more of an aesthetic point of interest rather than a practical function within the home garden. However, due to their compact size and minimal requirements they are suitable for most gardens, large or small. If a more natural look is preferred, these plants can be grown mounted on a tree or board. As the relationship between these plants and ants is not an obligate mutualism then the presence of ants can be managed as preferred. An *ex-situ* cultivated presence of these species aids in reducing poaching pressures and also assists in preserving species considered as threatened.

Upcoming events

Meetings of Native Plants Queensland - Townsville Branch on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm, Annandale Community Centre. Excursions the following Sunday.

Website: www.npqtownsville.org.au

Meetings on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm, Tolga CWA Hall. Excursions the following Sunday.

Wednesday 23 September, 7.30 p.m. Margit Ciavelli of Lumholtz Lodge will talk about tree kangaroos.

Sunday 27 September, 9:30 a.m. Excursion to Mount Baldy Road. Contact Chris Jaminon for more details: 4091 4565.

Cairns Branch

Sunday 20th September, 12 noon. Nandroya Falls/Henrietta Creek. A little more further afield than our usual field trip, Henrietta Creek is however easy to find. Starting in Cairns, travel south along the Bruce Highway towards Innisfail. About a kilometre past the Johnstone River bridge, turn right onto the Palmerston Highway at the Fred Drew Rest Area. Continue up the Palmerston Highway, passing the turnoff to Ma:Mu Canopy Walkway on your right. Five kilometres past the Ma:Mu turnoff is the Henrietta Creek Campground: we meet here.

Bring lunch, water, a comfortable chair, and good walking shoes. Check the weather and prepare for rain if needed. Don Lawie writes: "*We did the Nandroya walk just on a year ago. I would recommend it as a walk that should be on a lot of bucket lists. I think that I have walked it at least four times. The fall is spectacular – a column of descending water that leaps away from the cliff face and plunges into a wide, placid pool. The 5 km return track from Henrietta Campground was well maintained a year ago, there is a top and a longer bottom track. The bottom track is notable for a profusion of Corymborkis orchids and both tracks are botanically rewarding. There is some stair climbing but the track would not be classed as difficult. However one needs to be capable of a fair walk and I was absolutely worn out by the time that we got back. Henrietta Campground has the usual National Park minimum facilities but is a beautiful place with a good short walk along Douglas Creek and a few of the once-many orchids surviving. It would make a superb meeting place (it was once a Bora ground) for the three local SGAP branches.*"



Elaeocarpus bancroftii