

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS
HIBISCUS AND RELATED GENERA STUDY GROUP

APRIL 2004

NEWSLETTER NO 3

ISSN : 1488 – 1488

Our third Newsletter is finally underway.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our newest member, Dr. Steven R. Hill from Champaign, Illinois U.S.A. He is a botanist attached to the Center for Biodiversity of the Illinois Natural History Survey whose research interests include systematic studies on several Western Hemisphere genera in the Malvaceae (Mallow Family)

He visited us in March, 2004, working through Dr. Peter Bostock of the Queensland Herbarium and staying with myself, Colleen and Geoff Keena.

Steven named an interesting variety of **Malvastrum** in the late 1970's, with its type from Middle Percy Island and the holotype located in the Brisbane Herbarium at Mt. Coot-tha. Specimens of **Malvastrum americanum var. stellatum S.R. Hill**, were located at Imbil, inland from the Sunshine Coast during Steven's field trip.

As I was beginning to write this Newsletter and wishing that we had members from Tropical Australia, the phone rang with Mr. Walter Wilcox from Bowen on the other end of the line. He told me that he was fanatical about native Hibiscus and that he had **Hibiscus elsworthii** growing. He is coming to visit next week and is eager to join the S.G. I am pleased to hear about **H. elsworthii**, as the Qld. Herbarium do not appear to have a specimen and I was wondering if it still existed.

I would like to see more people growing Australian Hibiscus as I feel that this is the best way to ensure their long term survival. It is therefore an important aim of this S.G. to encourage members who are gardeners and to deal in depth with the many aspects of successful cultivation. Recently I saw very nice specimens of **H. Barambah Creek** being offered for sale at Fairhill Native Plant Nursery. I will try and fit in an image of this impressive species in this Newsletter.

SEED VIABILITY

Not so long ago, David Hockings cleaned out his desk drawers and discarded some old Hibiscus seed collected prior to 1974. His daughter, who works in their nursery, spotted them and thought that they were intended for planting. Guess what ? - a very good germination resulted. Nearly 30 years is good going, but Steven Hill told me that he had grown Malvaceae from 40 year old seed extracted from Herbarium specimens. Have any readers had similar experiences with stored seed? Could it be that species now extinct or containing valuable genetic material may be stored away in Herbariums still with viable seed attached. Also I wonder how long Malvaceae seed can last in the soil. Perhaps under the dry Central Aust. conditions, the period of time could be quite considerable.

Here on the Sunshine Coast, "Oldtimers" tell me about Hibiscus seedlings emerging after bushfires, where they had not grown in recent times. From observation it would appear that plants may not live longer than 2 or 3 years. This season, we have had a very good rainfall and (Furcaria section) Hibiscus have emerged in large numbers in bushland along the coast and hinterland. They will have reached their prime for blooming during the coming spring.

PROPOSED FIELD TRIP

Please contact me if you would be interested in a guided excursion through the Sunshine Coast next October – (See Newsletter No2, Page 1). My phone No is 0754451828, postal address P.O. Box 46 Buderim 4556, E-mail bannharvey@powerup.com.au

Abelmoschus moschatus subsp. tuberosis.

Refer previous Newsletter. Thanks to David Hockings, I have been able to grow the white form, which bloomed profusely and set plenty of seed. It is a handsome trailing plant from far north Queensland. Because of the large perennial 'carrotlike' tuberous root, I wonder what impact wild pigs may be having on this plant in its natural habitat? Whilst working in Papua New Guinea I observed large populations of tumeric eaten out by wild pigs virtually overnight.

Hibiscus divaricatus (Geographical Range)

An entry in a fine book titled "Going Bush with Chinchilla Nats". ISBN 0 646 29574 8, published January, 1977 caught my eye. The reference concerned was **Hibiscus heterophyllus** reported to grow on mountains in the Kragra area, south of Munduberra and westwards of Monogorilby school. After many phone calls, the Hibiscus were traced to a property known as Wonga Hills owned by Mrs. Janice Carlyle and her son. At the end of November, 2002, David Hockings and myself went on a long drive to meet up with Mrs. Carlyle, who guided us into the scrubby Kagra Hills approx. 26 degrees 30'S, 151 degrees 50'E. on the boundary between the Burnett and Darling Downs Pastoral Districts of Qld. The plants were first observed by Mrs. Carlyle's father Mr. Reg. Markwell in the 1920's.

The area at the time of our visit was severely drought stricken, however some of the Hibiscus had blooms, which were definitely **H. divaricatus**. As part of a National Park, it is known as Wonga Hills Preservation Area and is fenced off from the rest of the property thus excluding livestock. This population of **H. divaricatus** could well be the most southerly recorded and it is good to see that the site has been preserved. A big thanks to Janice Carlyle for allowing us to visit her domain and providing such interesting information.

NATURALISED MALVACEAE TAXON

As a Study Group we will probably have to differentiate from time to time between those taxa that are regarded as 'native', those that are accepted as 'naturalised' and those known to be introduced 'cultivars'. **Hibiscus sabdariffa L** and **H. mutabilis L** are considered to be naturalised species in parts of tropical Australia and possibly **H. radiatus**, which was collected from rocky gullies between Mary Kathleen and Mt. Isa by Keith Williams in the 1950's – ref.- Native Plants Queensland Vol. 1. For many years **H. pedunculatus** originating from South Africa has been grown as a native plant by enthusiasts as **H. geranoides** from northern Australia.

This subject needs a thorough treatment in due course and any information or opinions would be appreciated.

AUSTRALIAN HIBISCUS CHECKLIST

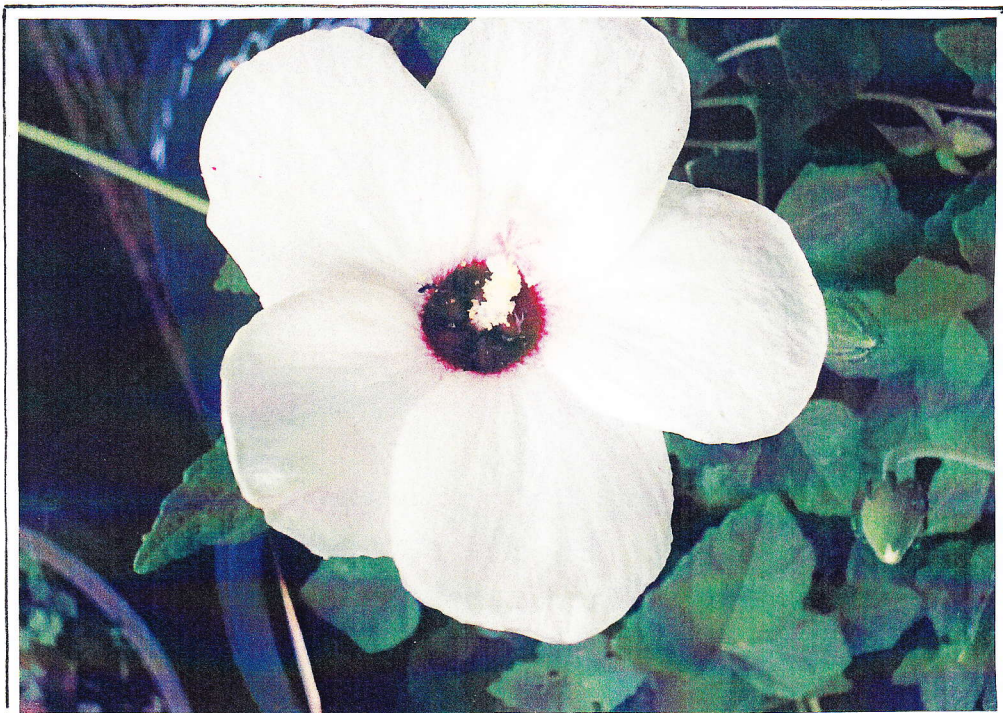
Lyn Craven kindly rearranged the following list into sections and added some additional species. Now that the list has been compiled let's have some feedback please. We want to

know their distribution, other species that may have become naturalised etc.

Thanks to D.&O Hockings for their interesting account of travels up north – see page 9, images below and page 12.



Hibiscus species photographed by David Hockings on 7th August 2003 near tip of Cape York Peninsular. Believed to be H. meraukensis.



Abelmoschus moschatus subsp. tuberosus from Cape York.
See page 2.

A CHECKLIST OF AUSTRALIAN HIBISCUS, including naturalised species
Geoff Harvey

Hibiscus sect. Azanzae

H. tiliaceus L. Qld., N.S.W., W.A. and N.T. The coastal cottonwood tree. A common species with a wide distribution in tropical regions of the world.

Hibiscus sect. Bombicella

H. brachychlaenus F.Muell. Occurs in Queensland, W.A. and N.T. where it grows amongst spinifex in sandy soil and rocky country of the Kimberleys of W.A.

H. brachysiphonius F.Muell. Collected from the Barkly Tablelands, grassland environment and bloomed successfully at Buderim during summer 2003. Small bright pink blooms. Dies back to a permanent rootstock.

H. burtonii Bailey. Recorded from Northern Queensland, also Nthn Terr. and W.A. A dwarf shrub with little ornamental potential.

H. coatesii F.Muell. From W.A., Fortescue area, also tropical Queensland's Burke District. Blooms pink, mauve or purple. Could make a good container plant.

H. cravenii. Awaiting formal transfer from the genus *Alyogyne* in which it was described.

H. drummondii Turcz. Occurs in the Coolgardie District of W.A., which is 31 degrees south. The plant must be quite cold tolerant and would be interesting to grow in eastern Aust. if obtainable. NOT SURE ABOUT THIS I ONLY KNOW IT FROM COASTAL AREAS N OF GERALDTON

H. elsworthii F.Muell Comes from north-eastern Queensland and could be very interesting to try in cultivation. Possibly best placed in sect. Bombicella.

H. geranoides Cunn. Ex Benth. Common across northern tropical Australia. In Queensland often mis-called **H. pedunculatus** in cultivation, the latter species being from South Africa.

H. krichauffianus F. Muell. Widespread in inland areas of Qld., N.S.W., S.A., W.A. and N.T. Could be tried as a container plant in warm coastal areas.

H. leptocladus Benth. A common tropical plant from Qld., W.A. and the N.T., with quite large pink flowers and a very dark center.

H. normanii F. Muell. An uncommon species restricted to north-eastern Queensland. It has a long flowering season and is worth cultivating as a rockery or container plant. Both the writer and David Hockings have well established plants.

H. pentaphyllus F. Muell. Comes from northern areas of W.A. and N.T. Grew well in containers at Buderim during the past summer/autumn blooming daily. Several plants survived winter and are flowering again as of Novem. 2003. Seems to have good potential for growing as an annual.

H. peralbus Fryxell. North Kimberley. Subshrub with white flowers. rather similar to *H. hirtus* from Asia.

H. phyllochlaenus F. Muell. A dwarf shrub from north eastern Queensland with small white or sometimes yellow flowers.

H. setulosus F. Muell. From northern parts of Queensland, W.A. and N.T. Attractive pink blooms of a good size with a dark red central blotch. Has a good potential for propagation.

H. solanifolius F. Muell. W.A. and N.T. Comes from Central Australia where it is uncommon. The lilac flowers are vase shaped with a dark purple central blotch.

H. sturtii Hook. Qld., N.S.W. and N.T. Widely distributed with 5 recognized varieties. Nice bushy plants in bloom were seen for sale in an Alice Springs nursery during April, 2002. Due to the species variation, an interesting breeding programme could see their development as a container or rockery plant. The trumpet shaped flowers can be purple, lilac, pink or white

Hibiscus sect. Furcaria

H. acetosella Welw. ex Hiern. Reputedly established in central coastal areas of Queensland. Attractive red foliaged plants to 2 meters high blooming autumn-spring. Naturalised CHECK
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

H. aneutha Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Occurs Alligator Rivers region of the Northern Territory.

H. aphelus Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Occurs in the eastern Kimberley region of Western Australia.

H. arnhemensis F.D. Wilson. Widespread in Arnhem Land N.T. Large white, pale pink or bright pink blooms.

H. bacalusius Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Comes from the middle Daly River region.

H. byrnesii F.D. Wilson. Comes from the northern parts of the N.T. A strong candidate for growing as an ornamental with pale pink blooms of a good size.

H. divaricatus Graham. Occurs from Wide Bay District to eastern Cape York and inland to as far as the Dividing Range. There are synonyms such as **H. fitzgeraldii**, var **luteus** etc., which make up a polymorphic collection of forms. The prolonged flowering season, almost continuous in cultivation and the diversity of the genetic material, provide a valuable potential for breeding programmes.

H. diversifolius Jacq. Qld and N.S.W. When well grown, with regular tip pruning, this species makes an excellent ornamental with abundant flowering for much of the year. The purple variant from crater lakes in the Atherton Tablelands of far Nth Qld., is a very desirable semi-aquatic plant.

H. fitzgeraldii F. Muell. Considered to be synonymous with **H. divaricatus** or more correctly **H. heterophyllus**. Recognised as an entity in the Townsville area of Nth. Queensland by S.G.A.P.

H. fallax Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Occurs in the Victoria River area etc. of the Northern Territory.

H. forsterii F.D. Wilson. Described in as a new species in 1995.

H. fryxellii Mabberley var **fryxellii**. Occurs mainly in the southern Kimberley region of W.A. In Australia previously called **H. spinulosus** (W. Fitz.) F.D. Wilson but this name had been used already for a South American plant.

H. fryxellii var **mollis** Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003 Occurs in W.A. and the far west of the Northern Territory.

H. heterophyllus Vent. Qld. and N.S.W. A common species with a wide distribution and endless variability within the species. It has performed well in Melbourne under cultivation and is a very robust grower. The bloom presents well in an upright position and though the common colour is white, pinks and yellows are also encountered. The names **luteus** (hochr.) and "**Aureus**" are no longer valid.

H. inimicus Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Found in the central escarpment area of the Arnhem Land Plateau of the Northern Territory.

H. kenneallyi Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Found in coastal areas of the Kimberleys in Western Australia.

H. marenitensis Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. From the coastal areas of the Kimberleys in Western Australia.

H. menzeliae F.D. Wilson and Byrnes. Comes from sandstone country in Arnhem Land and Katherine Gorge area of the Northern Territory. Has large pink flowers and could be worth trying under cultivation.

H. meraukensis Hochr. A variable species occurring in tropical Qld., W.A., N.T. as well as the Moluccas and P.N.G. The name comes from Merauke in Irian Jaya – formerly West New Guinea. It crosses with some difficulty when tried with the east coast Furcarias and has produced Ian's Lemon which appears to be sterile. It may cross with some of the N.T. and W.A. Furcarias eg. **H. fryxellii**. A problem with crossing is to coordinate the flowering times.

H. minutibracteolus F.D. Wilson. Comes from sandstone escarpments in the northern Kimberley region of W.A. and is a little known species.

H. petherickii Craven F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Comes from a small area of the north-western part of the Top End of the Northern Territory.

H. reflexus Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Occurs in the northern Kimberleys of Western Australia.

H. riceae Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Found on the Mount Brockman and Nourlangie Rock outliers of the Arnhem Land plateau in the Nthn. Terr.

H. sabdariffa L. An introduced species (rosella), which has become established in tropical northern Australia. Seen growing wild on alluvial stream banks in the northern Kimberley region of the N.T.

H. saponarius Craven.. A sprawling sub-shrub only recently Described in. Blooms resemble *H. meraukensis*.

H. splendens C. Fraser ex Graham. This very showy species has an intriguing variability of plant and bloom. There is a huge scope for selection of superior clones and hybridizing with other *Furcarias*. *H. radiates* Cov. Naturalized in Australia e.g. Mt. Isa/Mary Kathleen area as reported by Keith Williams. Considered to be of Indian origin. Grows well at Buderim. Widely cultivated in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world.

H. squarrulosus Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell, Comes froth the south eastern region of the Kimberleys, Western Australia.

H. stewartii Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Comes from the north western Kimberley region of western Australia.

H. superbis C. Gardner. A highly ornamental species with. large rose pink blooms. Comes from the central and northern region of the Kimberleys in Western Australia.

H. symonii F.D. Wilson & Byrnes. Comes from the east Alligator River region of the N.T. The species has very attractive large light pink flowers with a maroon central blotch.

H. thegaleus Craven, F.D. Wilson & Fryxell. Described in 2003. Comes from the northern part of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

H. zonatus F. Muell. An attractive ornamental from the N.T. also recently found in Qld. Pale pink blooms with a red basal blotch. **H. mustiae** belongs in this species.

H. species (Barambah Creek P. Grimshaw + PG 2484). A recently discovered species with large impressive pink blooms. The total lack of prickles is a great characteristic to incorporate into a breeding programme. Crosses readily with other east coast *Furcarias*.

Hibiscus sect. Pterocarpus

H. vitifolius L. Qld. W.A. and Africa and Asia, naturalised in parts of the Americas. A fast growing herb with pale yellow blooms and a dark red central blotch. Sometimes classified in the genus *Fioria*.

Hibiscus sect. Solandra

H. lobatus (J.A. Murray) Kuntze. Top End of the NT, also Africa and SE Asia. Annual herb with small white flowers.

Hibiscus sect. Trichospermum

H. brennanii Craven & Fryxell. From the Top End of the NT. An attractive pink-flowered species, superficially similar to the pink-flowered *Furcaria* species that are so common in the sandstone country of the NT.

H. panduriformis Burm. f. This is a variable species from northern and central Australia as well as Asia. A very showy plant when in bloom, which should lend itself to hybridizing and selection of superior clones. Grew well and bloomed at Buderim during 2002/03 summer, dying back at the end of Autumn. Current research suggests that there are several distinct species in the **panduriformis** complex.

Hibiscus sect. Trionum

H. trionum L. var. **trionum**. Qld. N.S.W., W.A. and N.T. Widely spread in warm regions of the world. Improved varieties are used as summer annuals e.g. "Sunnyday"

H. trionum var. **versicarius** Hochr. A variant from central northern Australia. observed in the Barkly Tablelands of the N.T. with small creamy/white flowers and no central blotch are quite unlike the common cultivated variety.

Hibiscus sect. Venusti

H. mutabilis L. Seed collected from north of the Barkley Roadhouse has produced vigorous plant at Buderim and will probably bloom late summer. GEOFF, WAS THIS SEED FROM A NATURALISED PLANT?????.

Species from other places:

Hibiscus insularis. A dense bushy shrub 4m endemic to Philip Island, which is 6.4 km from Norfolk Island. It was reported to be close to extinction 25 to 30 years ago in its natural habitat, but is preserved in Sydney and Melbourne Botanical Gardens. Occasionally available through the nursery trade being sold as **H. insularis** or Philip Is. Hibiscus. When mature it blooms freely in late summer and autumn, the petals being pale lemon with a purplish/crimson centre.

HIBISCUS HYBRIDS AND FORMS - FURCARIA SECTION

"Sunset Glow" - a yellow **H. divaricatus**, cross.

"Glen Geddes Sorrel" - considered to be **H. splendens** x **H. heterophyllus**. It is a sprawling plant with reddish/brown bark which blooms for most of the year. Flowers vary from white to pale pink and dark pink.

"Wirruna" - An attractive yellow **H. heterophyllus** x **H. splendens** raised some years ago by Lyn Craven. Has an extended flowering period.

"Pink Ice" - A hybrid from white flowered **H. heterophyllus** and **H. splendens**. There are many natural hybrids similar to "Pink Ice" growing in the northern half of the Sunshine Coast and reputedly the Wide Bay Region.

"Gold Haze" - **Hibiscus divaricatus** selection from near Marlborough Qld. made by Chris Noble, Geoff and Colleen Keena.

"Pink Haze" - Collected from Warrell, N.S.W. A **H. heterophyllus** selection.

"Rosie" A pink **H. heterophyllus** selection collected from near Rockhampton by Jan Glazebrook and Denis Cox.

"Apricot Mist"

"Ian's Selection" - lemon - **H. meraukensis** x **H. divaricatus**

"Ian's Selection" - pink - seedling from "Apricot Mist"

"Ian's Selection" - cream - **H. heterophyllus** x **H. divaricatus**

The Qld. Herbarium records natural hybrids as follows:-

- (1) **H. divaricatus** x **H. heterophyllus** from the North Kennedy District.
- (2) **H. heterophyllus** x **H. meraukensis** from the North Kennedy District.
- (3) **H. heterophyllus** x **H. splendens** from the Wide Bay District.

NAME CHANGES

Old Name	New/Current Name
H. heterophyllus ssp. Luteus	H. divaricatus
H. sp. "Glen Garland"	H. saponarius
H. sp. "Hope Vale"	H. forsterii

REFERENCES

- Wildflowers and Plants of Inland Australia – Anne Urban
 Encyclopedia of Australian Plants – (Suitable for Cultivation) W. Rodger Elliot and David C. Jones Volume 2
 Personal Communication F.D. Wilson through Geoff and Colleen Keena.
 Hibiscus Section Furcaria (Malvaceae in Australia) Aust. J. Bot., 1974,22,157-82 F.D. Wilson.
 Two new species of Hibiscus Section Furcaria D C. (Malvaceae) from northern Queensland. F.D. Wilson and L.A. Craven Austrobaileya 4 (3) : 439-447 (1995)
 A taxonomic review of Hibiscus sect. Furcaria (Malvaceae) in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. – L.A. Craven, F.D. Wilson and P. A. Fryxell
 Names and Distribution of Queensland Plants, Algae and Lichens. Edited by R.J.F. Henderson, Queensland Herbarium.



H. Species (Barambah Creek + PG 2484) See page 1 and page 6, Newsletter No. 3

Northern Travels

David & Olive Hockings

After several years worrying that we would never get away on a bush trip again, we finally departed on 20th July for Cape York. Naturally we had hibiscus firmly in mind and we were able to pinpoint localities for some previous recordings of hibiscus as well as other interesting plants we had seen previously along the highway north.

Hibiscus divaricatus was first noticed north of the Calliope River just past the Gladstone turnoff. It occurred intermittently to north of Marlborough

Hibiscus sp Glen Geddes was next over quite a short range starting some distance north of Yaamba just after crossing the railway line and continuing for only a few kilometres.

Starting some 4 k north of Carmilla we saw the yellow *H. heterophyllus* that I have been growing for many years from seed collected near the Nebo turnoff just south of Mackay. It has attractive bright yellow flowers and does not have as many prickles as other *H. heterophyllus*.

After a couple of days stop over near Mareeba, we took off again for the real adventure, stopping at the Hann River Roadhouse for the first night where we were joined by the two other vehicles of the party. An interesting feature of this road is that when the road signs warn "Dip" the dip may actually be 30 or 40 feet deep - quite a surprise on the first I or 2.

We stopped near the Port Stewart turnoff for a cuppa in dry open eucalypt country with long dry grass. There were several interesting plants there including the dried remains of a hibiscus - possibly it may be *H. saponarius*.

We left the very corrugated "highway" just north of the Weipa turnoff and headed off on a track for the coast (normally I would have called it a rough track). After camping the night in a river bed, early next morning we located another dried hibiscus plant. At about 64 k from the highway we began seeing a hibiscus to about 3 metres and with large white flowers, *H. forsteri*. It was growing in patches for the next 20 kilometres,

At another river crossing the bridge was only 2 logs and some loose pieces of saplings. During the delay of moving 3 vehicles across I found a patch of small hibiscus seedlings but no sign of the parent and several kilometres further on there were more seedlings - were they different?

We spent a few days near the mouth of the Pascoe River - 2 days fishing and with some bush walks - one in the dense rainforest along the river bank and another up a stony hill to a boulder filled gorge. There were very interesting plants in both. One was a pink hibiscus little more than a metre in height and with some similarities to *H. normanii*.

The 18 foot croc we shared a section of the river with, must have been getting annoyed with our activities because on the third night it chomped the buoy to which the boats were moored. It took a while to sort out the tangle the next morning -with one eye over the shoulder.

After these few days, we headed off again into really wild country for Temple Bay and Bolt Head. The road deteriorated as we progressed to where in places there were tall regrowth and fallen trees on the road. We were glad to be third in the convoy as the other vehicles pushed through ahead of us. We camped a short distance from a beautiful beach, a lagoon with fresh croc tracks, coconut groves and many exciting plants such as *Grevillea peritridifolia* only 10 cm high and 3 to 4 metres across.

We spent several days beach combing, plant exploring and taking photographs. The red penda (*Xanthostemon youngii*) was in flower also a white ixora and many others including the red flowered *macrostelia* - a hibiscus relative. There were several beautiful species of palm, wonderful specimens of anthouse plants in both genera (*Hydnophytum* and *Myrmecodia*) and pitcher plants which may be small and compact out in the open or tall climbers 20 or 30 feet high in the gallery forests.

On one hard stony headland and only 4 or 5 metres above high tide mark we found a pale yellow form of *Abelmoschus moschatus* ssp *tuberosus*. It probably survived there because the site was too hard for pigs to dig.

Finally our time was up and reluctantly we had to move on.

I have not said much about the tracks. The 166 k of very wild country was all in four wheel drive - quite a lot of it in low range. Much of it was straddling or creeping along beside washouts or between trees on bypass of impossible sections. The river and creek crossings were mostly very steep and severely washed out and sometimes we were creeping over rocks as well. It was not the sort of track you would tackle on your own.

We had returned about 29 k when calamity struck - the sturdy trailer one of the party was towing broke an axle. After checking out all possibilities of rescue via satellite phone and finding they were non-existent - we felled a sturdy sapling, jacked up the trailer and fitted the log underneath to act as a skid to replace the wheel. Then we were off again with us behind watching the skid and reporting by two- way radio. On a long very steep washed out and stony climb up an escarpment the lead vehicle had to attach a tow- rope to assist the trailer vehicle which was over-heating.

The first log wore away in 9 k, the second in 12 k, the third in 28 k and the fourth lasted the final 11 k to Moreton. We were getting more expert at choosing hard timber.

Where the axle broke I found a pretty white hibiscus which grew up to 1 m it may be the same as one I found about 15 years ago some 60 to 80 kilometres away. In another place I stopped for a very quick look at another, which was possibly *H. saponarius*.

Moreton camping ground was full of travellers, most with a stubby in hand, and it was amusing to see how conversation stopped as our wounded trailer skidded past. It was

left there while our companions returned home and back with a larger trailer to get the damaged one home.

Olive and I had never considered going further north on our own but after our experiences thus far, Olive said why don't we go to the top – its less than 300 k. So off we went with a petrol gauge showing almost empty (Moreton has no fuel) and after an anxious 42 k reached Bramwell Junction with 8 litres to spare. We spent the night at Bramwell Homestead and then headed up the incredibly corrugated Bypass Road reaching the shortest and most expensive ferry in the world (\$88.00) after 174 k and then another 55 k through Bamaga to Siesa Tourist Camp.

We made the boat trip to my “home”, Thursday Island for the day and I now have the lob of rewriting some of the family history that is so very wrongly recorded there.

The second day we drove to the tip – some 38 k each way. There is much to see for the naturalist ; the Lockerby Scrub is wonderful, the old Somerset Homestead site is overgrown and there is now no view of Albany Passage. The last few hundred metres to the tip is by foot over a rough stony headland. A small white flowered meraukensis type of hibiscus extends to within 50 m of the tip. This is the most northerly hibiscus in Australia. It was to about 20 to 30 cm in height near the tip but to about 1.5 m in more shelter. The beach on the western side of the tip, (a defunct resort) had Hibiscus tiliaceus and a Thespesia.

Our return trip (illadvisedly) down the telegraph track was another saga but the Twin, Elliot and Flying Fox falls are beautiful and the plants outstanding.

We spent 4 days at Cooktown visiting museums, Grassy Hill, up the Laura road and out to Quarantine Beach where, besides H. tiliaceus and Thespesia there was a sterile plant that may have been a small hibiscus.

We reached home on 18/ 8/03 – 29 days and 6576 k after we had left.



H. radiatus grown at Buderim May 2002

See page 2



Above :- Hibiscus species photographed by D. Hockings East of Moreton Telegraph Station, Cape York Peninsular. Plant 70 cm tall, 100pm early August, 2003.

Below :- Hibiscus species believed to be H. fosteri photographed by D. Hockings early August, 2003 - Pascoe River, Bolthead Road.

Refer. - "Northern Travels" D. and O. Hockings pages 9-11 of Newsletter No 3.

