

Banksia Bytes

Native Plants Sunshine Coast



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Native Plants Queensland

Newsletter

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From the Editor:

Well who would have believed at the end of February when we had seen a very hot and dry summer that by the end of March we would be dealing with a cyclone and its associated flood water! I hope none of you have suffered severe damage as a result. Fungi must love a deluge. I photographed these fungi less than 24 hours after the area had been inundated with nearly a metre of water, but 3 days later they were gone.



The plants must be confused as Joan points out in her article, and we gardeners even more confused. Our *Phaleria clerodendron* has burst into full bloom again as it does after rain, becoming a 'fairy lights tree'. Joan's swamp mazus must be very happy with the rain.



It is now officially autumn. Autumn doesn't obviously make its presence known on the Sunshine coast as it does in colder climes. I associate autumn with seed time and Nita has written about her propagation of special seeds. We have just been walking on the central plateau in Tasmania where there are plenty of colourful fruits on the native shrubs and the leaves of the deciduous beech, *Nothofagus gunnii*, are just starting to change colour. At home we have these lovely red fruits on the *Macrozamia lucida* and in recent wind events pods

of the black bean *Castanospermum australe* have been dropping with a thud. Seeds/ fruits are wonderful. They come in all shapes, colours, sizes, weights; some have appendages such as barbed or sticky hairs or wings to fly; and some come in pods that fling open when mature – all to ensure that the seeds will be distributed and have the best chance of germinating and continuing the species.

So, on with the cooler weather! Let's get out and gardening while the moisture is still in the soil.

Wendy



Ants can be very useful! – a reminder to those of us being invaded by ants associated with the rain.

Seed dispersal by ants from the Australian Museum website



Some plants have developed relationships with animals to help them spread their seeds. Ants are the most commonly involved insect in seed dispersal. Seeds that are dispersed and buried by ants have a number of advantages that make seedling growth more likely.

Ants are especially attracted to seeds that have food bodies known as elaiosomes. These food bodies are generally rich in fatty acids, amino acids and sugars. They can be easily removed and digested by the ants and are often laced with a chemical attractant that stimulates collecting behaviour.

The food body usually differs in shape and colour to the main body of the seed in such a way that it is easier for the ant to carry the entire seed. The ants grip the food body with their mouthparts and carry the seed back to the nest. The food body is then removed and fed to the larvae. The remainder of the seed due to its size, unwieldy shape or hard coating is usually left intact in the nest.

Five ways that seeds may be dispersed by ants:



1. Seeds collected directly from the plant may be dropped onto the ground.
2. During transport back to the nest seeds may be lost.
3. Ants, for a variety of reasons, may vacate their nests, abandoning stockpiles of unconsumed seeds.
4. Often when the food body has been removed, the remainder (i.e. the seed) is too unwieldy for the ant to move.
5. Many ants relocate seeds to abandoned galleries or refuse piles. Some ants use the seeds in the construction of their nests.



Meeting Dates for your Diary



Sunday 14th May 2017. We will be walking amongst the Banksias led by John Birbeck. Meet at 12.00 at Matthew Flinders Park, Steve Irwin Way, Beerburrum. This is a joint outing with Wallum Study Group



Sunday 11th June 2017. We will be going for a walk in the Maroochy Wetland Sanctuary at Bli Bli. More details will be provided closer to the date and on our website www.npgsuncoast.org.

Sunday 9th July 2017. No outing due to the Queensland Garden Expo



Sunday 13th August 2017. 9.00 am at the Bobbie Sattler Reserve, Caloundra. A walk in the wildflowers led by Conor Jenkins. Details will be sent closer to the event and will be on our website www.npgsuncoast.org



SATURDAY 9th September 2017. Join other Sunshine Coast native plant enthusiasts at the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens for Natives Naturally. Details about this will be sent closer to the event and will be on our web site www.npgsuncoast.org. It is all about bees.

Information about outings contact....

Chrissie 0408 792 227

Marie 0427 152 022

Anne 0417 733 991

My Seed Story

by Nita Lester

I was given some *Adansonia gregorii* seeds in January 2016. Not many – still in their soft brown fur. I kept them until I guessed the right time – hot and high humidity, as I thought this would be suitable as per their homeland. So, I planted them all at different depths in a small pot of potting mix in January 2017.

Five days later three up, one coming, and one upside down – root popping out and upwards.

I decided to wash off all the mix and pot out the four 'right-way-up' seedlings into separate pots. I turned the other fellow round and repotted him.

I now have five very healthy *A. gregorii* seedlings – growing quickly.

How wonderful is that!

I now have a problem – please ask about and see if anyone would like a seedling. We will not plant at 'The Wilde Woode' but very glad to give away to good homes.

By the way, cannot pick which was the 'confused' seed – all five same size.

Editor's note: The baob tree, *Adansonia gregorii*, occurs mostly in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. It is outstanding for its huge bottle-shaped trunk that is filled with soft fibrous wood, enabling it to store water. A deciduous tree, it loses its leaves in the winter months in the tropics when it is dormant. The baob can live for hundreds of years and grows slowly to a height of 5–15 m and a trunk circumference of up to 20m. The fruits are large, brown and oval-shaped, up to 18 cm long with a woody and hairy exterior. They contain numerous seeds and a white pithy substance.

Mazus pumilio

Text and photo by Joan Dillon

A recent discovery was the delightful and incredibly dense ground cover, *Mazus pumilio*, available from both Barung and Forest Heart. According to 'Mangroves to Mountains', the Qld. distribution for this freshwater wetland plant is only in the Maroochy district. The Atlas of Living Australia shows records from around the east coast as far as South Australia and it is known in the nursery trade as Swamp Mazus.

With a name like that it is suited to moist areas and drainage lines. I was given a clump of plants which I divided up and planted to absorb run-off from some irrigated pots. It took off like the proverbial rocket. It has filled in between some stepping stones, taken root in adjacent gravel and about the only plant making any effort to compete is culinary mint, and we all know how aggressive that can be. The pretty little bluish flowers stand up above simple leaves with prominent veins. It grows in full sun and has had no attention since planting. My kind of ground cover!





Germinating *Syzygium australe*

Text and photos by Joan Dillon



The hot dry weather over summer confused all the trees, especially my long windbreak of *Syzygium australe*, which flowered and fruited at least four times. Its final effort (and fortunately no trees were lost from stress) resulted in a red, crunchy carpet of fallen fruit. I didn't notice the large numbers that fell into an old bath where assorted sedges and their relatives compete for space.

Suddenly, seemingly hundreds of small seedlings appeared around the edges – a monoculture of syzygiums rooted into the water and somewhat murky sludge. Who needs seedling trays when there's a bath nearby?



Handfuls of seedlings have been extracted and potted into tubes for the next planting project. Given the germination medium, the roots are long, white, and thin but I shall see how they survive and establish in the shadehouse. "Free" (excluding the potting mix) trees are always welcome.

On another species, I heard that the notoriously difficult to germinate seeds of Gahnia (saw sedge) can be germinated in coca cola, a weak organic acid. Now that's worth a try; I'll keep you posted on that one.





Coprosma nitida or native currant



Orites revoluta



Phyllocladus aspleniifolius
or celery-top pine

Plants currently fruiting in Tasmania

On a walk in March this year on the Central Plateau of Tasmania we saw lots of interesting fruits. These are just a few of them. By Wendy Johnston



Persoonia gunnii



Tasmannia lanceolata or mountain pepper

Dietes robinsoniana

I have a deep and abiding dislike for the genus *Dietes*. Those species commonly available come from South Africa and can spread along drainage lines. *Dietes* is regarded as an environmental weed in W.A. and is a new and emerging weed in Brisbane.

Lord Howe Is., however, has its own endemic *Dietes*, the Wedding Lily or Fairy Iris, and it is a beauty, clinging to cliff faces on this Australian island. It is the largest plant in the genus, has long greyish-green sword-shaped leaves and can grow up to 1.5 m tall. Clumps can probably be divided although I haven't tried, but it will grow from seed.

I have had my clump for several years and it shows no signs of spreading. It grows well in our climate and although it is an annual flowerer only, the flowers are worth waiting for. It is hoped that seedlings will be ready for Gardening on the Edge in Maleny over the June long weekend.

Joan Dillon





50 Years of Wildflower Festivals

Taken from the Wallum and Heathland Study Group Newsletter No. 41

By Barbara Henderson

Most of you would know that I have more than a passing interest in the work of that indomitable artist, writer and Wallum conservationist Kathleen McArthur, who lived in Caloundra for most of her life, and created a strong interest in the Wallum wildflowers which were everywhere. To encourage more of the community to learn more about these flowers, and to grow some, Kathleen decided to hold a small show and plant sale at her home “Midyim” Caloundra. It was the year 1967, four years since she and 3 friends had started the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, to share their concerns over the increasing loss of our wildflower areas to developments. Her show was a success which outgrew her home, and several years later, it moved to Coolum Beach Community Hall. This annual Coolum Wildflower Show happened every year until, for various reasons, it closed down at this venue in 2001. In the 2 years following, a smaller Show was successfully organised by the Coolum District Coastcare Group at the Coolum Beach Primary School. At those 2 shows we didn’t have to worry about organising bus trips to look at the wildflowers - they were in the adjoining bushland. It was a sad year for us in 2004 with no Show anywhere, but there was a revival in 2005, albeit a little different in format. Festival organisers used the natural areas and various venues, for walks and presentations, etc. This was to become the Sunshine Coast Spring Wildflower Festival, and now, in 2017, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this festival which grew from the small beginning in Kathleen McArthur’s garden back in 1967.



Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve Rainforest Discovery Centre

The new centre was opened on the 27th February 2017 by the Governor of Qld, His Excellency the Honourable Paul De Jersey AC, as the rain thundered down. The Governor told the packed auditorium



“Not only does the Centre take maximum advantage of the magnificent views across the Glasshouse Mountains, but it ensures that future visitors will leave the Reserve with a better understanding of its immense environmental and conservation value, in line with the intention and legacy of the Thynne sisters.

And what an impressive, modern, edifying precinct this is – one of which the entire community can be immensely proud!”

The sunshine returned as we walked around the new Centre, trying out the interactive displays and enjoying the vistas of the rainforest through the soaring glass walls. The care taken during construction to ensure there was minimal impact on the tree roots has ensured that the trees and building sit comfortably side by side, with each enhancing the other.

Amongst the invited guests I spotted quite a few members of Native Plants Sunshine Coast which is testimony to how many of our members contribute in many different ways to the local environment and community. John and Joan Dillon, Eric Anderson and Diana O’Connor, Olive and David Hocking, Karen and Spencer Shaw, Ann Moran and Joan Horgan were all enjoying the opportunity to celebrate the opening of this stunning new addition to the Sunshine Coast’s educational attractions.

Text and photos by Marie Livingstone



Meetings and Outings reports

February 2017 – was the AGM

Preliminary remarks by the Chairman

Before we begin our AGM elections, I'd like to say a few words.



The branch could not exist without those people who volunteer their time to be our elected officers and appointees. They are the reason we all get to enjoy our monthly outings and learn from visiting speakers, participate in important events, and pass on our knowledge and passion for native plants to the general public. So on behalf of all of you I would like to thank them.



First, our Secretary Cat and Treasurer Joan. Cat will not be standing for re-election, but I thank her for taking on the job this past year. And I thank Joan for her continuing management of our finances.

Next I would like to thank our appointees, in no particular order, John D. our web guru and Joan his better half, Gretchen our Excursions Officer, and Wendy our Banksia Bytes creator. And of course the engine of our little train, Marie, who gets us organised when otherwise there would be chaos.

As a token of our appreciation for all the time and work they put into the branch, we have given branch shirts to John and Joan Dillon and Wendy Johnston, and now I would also like to present one to our Excursions Officer Gretchen.

I hope you are all inspired by the job these members have done and consider putting your hand up for a position in the upcoming election.

Before we get to that, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank a few more people.

Next on my list are the guests we have had speak to us this past year, and those members who have hosted us at their homes.

And from that list of people, I would like to give a special extra mention to

- Ian and Chrissie for also allowing us to use their big shed for storage, their land for our propagation area, and their water for the watering of hopefully numerous plants.

-and Spencer and Karen, who have spoken to us, hosted us at their home, allowed us to use their potting area and potting mix for our propagation efforts, and on top of all that, looked after the plants we propagated there!

Thank you Spencer and Karen, and Ian and Chrissie. And finally, again, a huge thanks to everyone I've mentioned.



Annual Report 2016-17 by Anne Windsor

In surely one of the driest, and hottest years on record at the Sunshine Coast, we visited a diverse range of ecosystems and gardens this past year, from the hinterland to the ocean. Our walk along the foreshore at Dicky Beach in April was fascinating. The vegetation grows on sand, and is pummelled by wind and salt. The plants have their growth habit shaped by the wind, but they thrive in what seems to be an incredibly unfriendly environment.

We hosted the NPQ Regional Gathering this past year in partnership with Maroochy Bushland Botanical Gardens. It was a great day, with an interesting range of speakers, and an opportunity to meet and chat with those members from out of town.

We had a successful participation at the Nambour Garden Expo. Our theme was Plants for Containers, and we had an interesting range of plants in our display, including water plants, and we even had a small pond which attracted a lot of attention.

Our website <http://www.npgsuncoast.org/> continues to grow. It now has increased coverage of garden styles and information about the many plants suitable for the gardeners of the Sunshine Coast. It is a great achievement for our webmaster, and all those who have contributed.

Despite the heat, it was a great year for the Branch.



Annual Plants

by Wendy Johnston and Joan Dillon

In our garden the daisies, *Rhodanthe anthemoides*, are just looking past their best and I'll cut them off and wait for the seedlings to sprout in spring. I didn't get so many seedlings last spring but the year before conditions must have been just right as there were

daisy seedlings in the lawn, the garden and between the pavers – so many that I transplanted a lot of them into an old

wheelbarrow and used it as a feature. There are other native plants that are often treated as annuals in the sense that they only look good for a year and are replaced by cutting-grown plants annually. These include the larger flowered Scaevolas and the paper daisies, *Xerochrysum bracteatum*.



March, 2017 – Spring Falls Circuit at Flaxton

by Wendy Johnston

At 7:30am on the 7th March 27 members met at the home of Diana O'Connor and Eric Anderson at Flaxton. Diana and Eric led us on their Spring Falls Walk – a circuit along road and footpath, across a causeway between ponds and back home. A sheet of birds and plants to be seen along the way had been prepared by Diana and Eric and we all enjoyed seeing so many native trees and shrubs that the local people have planted on what was for a long time a dairy farm. Tree ID was made a little easier by the presence of some experts to inform us.



Brachychiton bidwillii

Photo: E.Anderson

Despite the dry summer most plants were looking very healthy and quite lush. A large tallowwood in the middle of the road caught attention and there was a stately bombax on a property showing off its flowers even though it was a long way from home. We saw many of



Dicranopteris linearis

the plants on the list and, I hear, added another 24. And then there were the birds – 30 species spotted, as well as an active native beehive.

After morning tea a few of us went on a guided tour of Diana and Eric's rainforest and garden.



In case you didn't get the plant and bird list, I am attaching them to the mailout of the newsletter.



White-headed pigeon -
keeping an eye on things

April 2017 – Mooloolah NP

We were ably led on this excursion by Stella Wiggins and her family. The area we walked in goes behind the Mooloolah Cemetery, through eucalypt woodland then down through rainforest gullies and around to the Steve Irwin Way and back to the cemetery. The trees are tall and straight. There is plenty of light and this supports an understorey of grasses, ferns and shrubs. The dominant feature of this area is the presence of several very large old blackbutts. These trees have never burned, due it is believed, to they're being landmark trees to the indigenous people who crossed in this area from the coast to the hinterland. The people would have cleared around these special trees to protect them from fires.

The trees were largely blackbutts and grey gums with brush box and turpentines (*Syncarpia* sp.) scattered through. The understorey plants included

Zieria minutiflora, hop bush *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Pittosporum undulatum*, ferns, wattles, saw sedge *Gahnia* sp. *Platylobium formosum* and grasses. The recent rain had all the plants looking at their best. The rasp fern, *Doodia aspera*, was putting on a beautiful show with bright red new fronds. There were trees with hollows and trees with scratch marks suggestive



Photo: A.Windsor



of koalas. We saw several fungi which Gretchen is following up on.

This is where the Caloundra interchange is to be built. Initially 70ha of the then state forest was to be cleared for the interchange but public pressure has reduced the area to be cleared to 6ha using a different interchange design. Stella and her family were instrumental in the protection of this forest, campaigning relentlessly for nearly 4 years. They are members of the group 'Save our Iconic Forest', whose goal is to keep development out of the forest and protect the wildlife within. The remaining area of state forest (about 700ha) was declared a NP last November. Congratulations Stella and co.



Austroboletus sp.

Photo: N.Wiggins



Hygrocybe sp.



Photo: E.Anderson



Photo:E.Anderson

I am attaching a copy of the flora survey done by Ann Moran to this newsletter.

NPSC Events



June 10-11: 9.00 - 4.00 Gardening on the Edge, Maleny Show Grounds.

Display and Plant Sale. See next page for details.



July 7-9 Queensland Garden Expo,

Nambour Show Grounds. **Display**



August 25-27 Noosa Wallum Festival

Bicentennial Hall Annexe, Sunshine.

Beach. **Display with Wallum Study Group**



September 9: 10.00 – 3.00 Natives Naturally, Maroochy

Botanic Gardens. **Display**



September 16-17 Native Flower Show & Plants sale –

Brisbane Botanic Gardens. **Display with Wallum Study Group**



November date unknown - Mapleton Library Fair - to be confirmed.

Plant sale

This year is the 10th anniversary of our Sunshine Coast Branch as well as the 60th anniversary of the founding of our parent society. If there is there a party-minded member who would like to organise a celebration of these events in our branch, please contact Marie.

Gardening on the Edge: 10- 11 June 2017.

The Maleny Garden Club has been organizing this event for many years, with all profits donated to local charities. There is a plant sale and displays in the Maleny Showgrounds from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm on both Saturday and Sunday. 6 local gardens are open and bus tours are organized to visit these.



In 2017 – after a break of some years – Native Plants Sunshine Coast has been invited to attend, so this is a wonderful opportunity to introduce native plants to a wide range of gardeners. Our display will focus on Native Plants for Native Bees and we will have a range of plants for sale.

As well, one of our members, Deb Wagner has her garden open for visitors. This is another chance to showcase some of the native plants that can be grown on the Range.



Forest Heart nursery will be selling local native plants at Gardening on the Edge, so visitors will have an opportunity to think beyond the exotics for their gardens.

As always, **helpers are needed**, so if you can spare a few hours to man our display and enthuse people about native plants, please let Marie know on 5494 9187 or npscevents@gmail.com

QUEENSLAND GARDEN EXPO IS INVITING EVERYONE TO TAKE PART IN ITS INAUGURAL DECORATE YOUR SHOVEL COMPETITION

Join in the fun and enter a shovel in either the Group Category or Individual Category and be in the running to win \$300 First Prize or \$150 Runner-up Prize in each category.

Make sure you read the [Entry Conditions](#) and get your entry form in as soon as possible as numbers will be limited.



Native Plants Queensland



Our members organise regular Plants Markets where you can buy many well-known as well as other less common native plants not generally available in commercial nurseries.

So add some botanic variety and interest to your garden by selecting native plants from one or more of these events!

PLANTS MARKETS - 2017

May 6 Autumn Plants Market

Grovely TAFE College
Carpark off Woking Street

May 28 Logan Eco Action Festival - LEAF

Griffith University Logan Campus
University Drive, Meadowbrook

June 10, 11 Gardening on the Edge

Maleny Show Grounds

July 30 Einbunpin Festival,

Einbunpin Lagoon Parklands,
Brighton Road or Lagoon Street, Sandgate

Sept 2, 3 What's Cooking in the Gardens

Redcliffe Botanic Gardens,
George Street or Henzell Street

Sept 2 Enviro Day - Plant Sale

Rosewood Show Grounds
Railway Street

Sept 16, 17 Spring Wildflower Show & Plants Market

Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha
Mt Coot-tha Road, Toowong

Native Plants Queensland

Society for Growing Australian Plants

Contact the Secretary for more details:
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The end of Banksia Bytes 11