

Newsletter

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

Spring 2012 No. 1

Welcome... We hope you enjoy our first Newsletter.

Here is the latest from 'The Gardens' from Dale Arvidsson and Maya Harrison and a few sneak previews of some future events.

Exhibitions at the Gardens...

Exploring the Senses: Beyond the Visual Exhibition by ART WHITSUNDAY



The 'Exploring The Senses: Beyond The Visual Exhibition' gave the artists in the Art Whitsunday group the opportunity to explore their chosen medium to not only include visual elements but also incorporate the essence of our other senses, hearing, touch, taste and smell in their artworks. Art Whitsunday has a diverse range of artists including painters, sculptors, paper-making artists, photographers and mixed media artists. The exhibition was from 1- 26th August.

The Free Friday Guided walks... have proven to be very popular during August with participants attending every Friday. Margaret Lane has certainly been doing lots of walking and talking. The month started with a **Special Free Friday Guided Walk: Diversity in Nature...**



Maya and Margaret Lane took participants to see selected species of trees, shrubs and vines that are significant in the Mackay / Whitsunday area and the creatures that use these plants as habitats or food sources.

The species will include Whitsunday Lepiderema, Tree Omphalea, Koumala Range Actephila, Ornate-fruited Neisosperma, Orange Annona, Whitsunday Bottle Tree, Black Iron Box, Eungella Tamarind, Mt Blackwood Holly, Native Snapdragon, Yellow Wonga Vine, and the Native Hoya or Waxflower.

This selection of plants will be featured in an exhibition in the Botanic Gardens Lagoon's Gallery in August next year.

The same day, Moranbah Hinterland Community Care Group drove through lots of road works to also view special areas of the Gardens. They enjoyed it so much they said they would be back next month and make regular visits.



Matsuura students visited on Wednesday 15th August and they were quite amazed by different creatures and habitats that are present in our Botanic Gardens, of course quite different to creatures in their country... on their special guided walk.

The opportunity to see these creatures up close, especially aquatic macro-invertebrates was made possible by the display set up in the Meeting room...

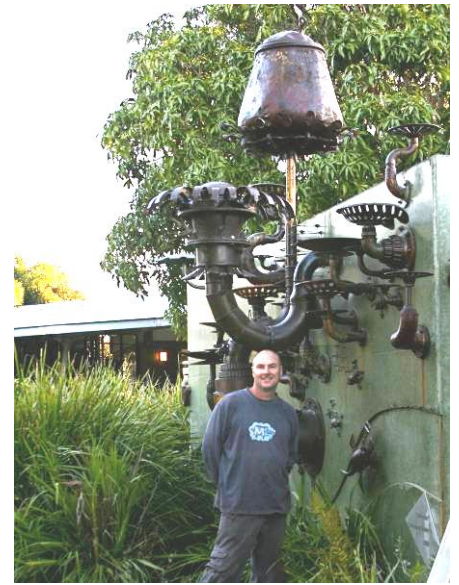


Damselfly nymph

Gardens involvement with Artists and Artspace.

Inspired by works by Danie Mellor and with the assistance of 5 different local artists, Artspace conducted a specific art project for out-lying schools within the Mackay region using the Gardens as a place of inspiration, just as Danie Mellor had done... 50 children attended each day between July 30th and August 3rd and 5 different schools participated.

Artist, Christopher Trotter, was excited to return to the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens during August, to revamp and add some new features to the Life Forms Sculpture at the front entrance of the Gardens. The changes that have been made include ...a completely new fungi form has been installed, as well as repairs to the platypus and some new mushrooms. It is really incredible how Christopher Trotter takes pieces of metal from farm machinery, vehicles, and industrial installations to create these life forms in such a unique and creative way. Who would have thought to use brakes, plough blades, cement mixers and shower heads to make Rainforest fungi? Take some time to have a closer look when you visit the Botanic Gardens at the front entrance.




Garden Friends activities...


Friends of the Gardens Guided Walk on Saturday 11th August... was an opportunity to view and celebrate the design of new Bird identification signs and include some bird watching opportunities. The signs will be quite sizable (1700w x 900h) and the Bush birds sign will be on display in the Kaliguil Shelter while the Eulamere Wetland Birds will be in the Eulamere shelter near the boardwalk.

Bush Birds of the Botanic Gardens


Follow the paths, look and listen for these 'bush birds'. Dense shrubs and trees create habitat and safety from predators for these well-camouflaged birds.




Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
Lophura castaneothorax
12cm in size (5")
Peak feathers and a long tail are characteristic of a male.




Yellow Honeyeater
Lichenostomus flavus
17 to 18cm in size (7")
The honeyeaters are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Bar-shouldered Dove
Geopelia striata
27 to 30cm in size (11" to 12")
They are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Coccyzus erythrophthalmus
30 to 35cm in size (12" to 14")
This species is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Yellow Honeyeater
Lichenostomus flavus
17 to 18cm in size (7")
The honeyeaters are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Helmeted Friarbird
Phalacrocorax melanoleucus
32 to 37cm in size (13" to 15")
The helmeted friarbird is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.



Peaceful Dove
Geopelia striata
29 to 32cm in size (11" to 13")
They are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.



Magpie-lark
Gallinula cyanoptera
26 to 30cm in size (10" to 12")
They are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Australasian Figbird
Sphecopterus obsoletus
28 to 29cm in size (11")
They are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.


Please Note: Bird images are not to scale.

Eulamere Wetland Birds of the Botanic Gardens


Step out onto the boardwalk and discover a different world between land and lagoon. Birds that have adapted to the Eulamere Wetlands thrive here – can you see how they live in this floating world of water weeds and sedges?




Red-backed Fairy-wren
Malurus melanocephalus
10 to 11cm in size (4" to 5")
The male in breeding plumage has a black head and back with white underparts and a red back. The female has a brown head and back with white underparts and a red back. The male has a black head and back with white underparts and a red back. The female has a brown head and back with white underparts and a red back.




Brown Honeyeater
Lichenostomus flavus
17 to 18cm in size (7")
The honeyeaters are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Blue-faced Honeyeater
Entomyia cyanoptera
25 to 30cm in size (10" to 12")
They are the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Comb-crested Jacana
Nedwige gallicana
20 to 27 cm in size (8" to 11")
The comb-crested jacana is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.




Forest Kingfisher
Todiramphus maculipennis
17 to 20 cm in size (7" to 9")
The forest kingfisher is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.



White-faced Heron
Egretta novaehollandiae
66 to 69cm in size (22" to 23")
The white-faced heron is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.



Royal Spoonbill
Plectropterus alpestris
75 to 80cm in size (24" to 26")
The royal spoonbill is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.



Australian Pelican
Pelecanus conspicillatus
1.6 to 1.8m in size (5'2" to 5'9")
The Australian pelican is the most common and most abundant birds in the bush. They are also the most common and most abundant birds in the bush.

Please Note: Bird images are not to scale.

Who are these people?

The committee members of the M.R.B.G. Friends... Their faces, names and positions on the committee will be included in a new friends publication being created by John Atkinson called the "Gardens in a Nutshell" as a brief introduction to the Gardens for new and renewing Friends ...a bit of a membership pack we are putting together.



Schools, Kindergartens and Educators discover the Gardens:

Kid teaching Kids Conference.



This is the second year this event has been held at Beaconsfield school and the opportunity for a large display for both teachers from different schools and the children attending the conference is invaluable.

Learning opportunities abound at the Gardens as a real life resource... including plants; creatures; habitats; life-cycles; water... including catchments, pollution, aquatic macro-invertebrates, water plants and water weeds; history of the Gardens and early Mackay settlement, Bush tucker and so much more.

The **ECTA GROUP... Early Childhood Teachers Association...** also found out similar information at a meeting at the Gardens on 8th Aug. 20+ teachers attended and were introduced to the Gardens via a walk pointing out the features of the gardens, plants and creatures as well as a display of resources and teaching / learning that can be organised either as a guided tour or a self guided activity. Booking from teachers certainly increased in the following weeks.

Some of the School visitation...

95 children from Moranbah East State school, 10th Aug.
52 year 2 children Mackay Christian College 14th Aug.
Good Grandmas Kindy from Sarina had 20 young children involved on Aug 16th...
Steiner Kindy came on two separate days with 12 children each and they were enthralled with the creatures in the gardens especially the Tawny Frogmouth Owl sitting in the Pine trees near the Gymnosperm Deck.
55 MacKillop Primary school children had a self guided walk on Aug 28th

12 Homeschooled children ranging in ages from 4 – 12 were enthralled for hours with the plants and wildlife found in the Gardens in such a wide range of habitats, from damselfly nymphs in the lagoon's watery environments, millipedes scurrying in the leaf litter to the caterpillar's bungee jumping action from the *Omphalea celata* trees.



Baby delights are in store...

Many of you have met Simone Minnican / Mellor in the Administration building over the many years she has been helping the Gardens and the Friends in all their activities...

We wish her farewell...for a while... as she prepares to have her second child in September. The staff recently presented her with a gift ... from the photo it looks like a baby already born... but it's just a creative package of goodies (including French champagne and chocolates) to celebrate her growing family. Congratulations Simone. We will keep you posted regarding the birth of her baby.

What's flowering now...



Colourful Grevilleas, Zig Zag Wattle and Golden Penda are some of the floral beauties that put on a show during August and there are more spring flowers soon to come.

Make sure you see the Swamp Orchid outside Dale's office window in the Tropical Shade Garden. It is flowering now and will only do so for 3 – 4 weeks, so get in to see it NOW.



The *Tecomanthe* sp. (Roaring Meg) is also in full bloom around the Lagoon Outlook Deck.

The warmer weather has also stimulated the growth and movement of many creatures, including butterflies, moths and their caterpillars, Green jewel bugs, Harlequin bugs and some snake activity. Keep your eyes open.



Meadowlands...

No further works to date: The doors and concession pillar posts are to be repainted in the correct blue, and turfing of the seating terraces will complete phase 1. Phase 2 includes planning for toilets, creating a concrete pad at rear of building, access pathway, and completion of the car park.



Horticultural works and Myrtle Rust

Staff has focused on standard horticultural works and over 200 plants were added to irrigated areas of the MRBG.

Since May 8, Myrtle Rust has now been recorded by Mackay Regional Council staff at 23 sites in several suburbs and natural environment areas around Mackay including Andergrove, Beaconsfield, Bucasia, Marian, North Mackay, Sarina, Slade Point, South Mackay and West Mackay.



BGANZQ Conference

51 delegates from around Australia met at the Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens September 6-8.

Conference presentations included:

Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens -
Harnessing the passion of our community

Green Art Strategy – *opportunities to link with the wider community and then link our gardens to Council-wide outcomes – not competing with them.*

Sculpture Gardens – Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens

Volunteer Guides host guided walks



Guides Workshop – *sharing ideas and common ground, encouraging and providing direction, supporting smaller gardens with training and ideas*

Tree databases – *an essential tool we all need to manage our assets*

Collection records databases – *at the heart of our gardens – survey forthcoming*

Herbariums – *processes and linking opportunities*

Visual tree assessments – *not every tree is a risk!*
Maintaining habitats

Volunteer opportunities – *wider opportunities for volunteer assistance*

Plant Collections Toolkit workshop – *vital to all our gardens for essential community and staff education. A Working group to be formed with HRG.*

Smart Gardener – *how, to who and when can we deliver this program?*

Role of signage – *sharing freely our experiences, Maroochy tabled their strategy*

Biomimicry – *opportunities to rethink our processes and our community linkages/importance*

Richmond Birdwing Butterfly project – *flagship projects can help focus interest*

Ecology of stingless bees – *it's not just our plants that are important*

Fungi in the Ecosystem – *understanding what's happening below the surface and positive educational opportunities.*

The **BGANZ Council** held its AGM, highlighting recent achievements with the website (in progress), business plan, new funding opportunities, communication and marketing all discussed. Queensland membership on BGANZ has grown from 7 at the Gladstone conference to 19.

The BGANZQ AGM covered the following topics:

- BGANZQ Newsletter - Frequency & viability
- BGANZQ Brochure – update of progress
- Promotion Marketing of the BG of Q
- International Horticultural Congress 2014 – opportunities
- Cook & Banks 250th Anniversary in 2020
- BGANZQ & DEEDI, DPI&F relationships
- Myrtle Rust: coordinated research opportunity through BG's of Queensland to Biosecurity Qld
- Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture – continuing role and relationship;
- BGANZQ Chair – Kate Heffernan re-elected
- BGANZQ Secretary – Lawrie Smith re-elected
- BGANZQ BGANZ Council Representative – Dale Arvidsson re-elected

Helen Paulsen from Gladstone Regional Council, Tony Roberts from Cairns Botanic Gardens and Peter Nagel from Sunshine Coast Regional Council also have joined the executive to help broaden discussion and ideas.

The next conference has been tentatively booked to be held in either Cairns or Brisbane – looking at opportunities to tie in, or at least not clash with, with the International Horticultural Congress in Brisbane in 2014 at which BGANZQ – or the entire BGANZ – will have a display.

SGAP ACTIVITIES (from Irene Champion)

Working Bee 25 August

Five members, Clare, Isobel, Margaret, Sonia and Irene were present for varying periods between 7.30 and 10.30am. Dale and Sonia did the major part of digging planting holes for the five advanced *Dissiliaria baloghioides*. Five *Beilschmiedia obtusifolia* were also planted along the lower 'creek' bank. The soil was nicely moist, but roots made digging a bit more difficult. The back-fill had the usual additions of slow release fertiliser, water-holding crystals and gypsum and the plants were watered in with a *Seasol* solution. Once again, earlier plantings were given a good watering by some of the team while others located the plants that needed the new labels. Dale followed up with the digging spike to

install them all. The Regional Forest was well-used by walkers during the morning and one told us how pleased she and her friend were to see more plant names being installed. Next SGAP working bee is Saturday 6 October.

Herbarium session – 27 August

Only 2 of the usual team, Clare and Irene, were available. The duplicate specimens of the latest 10 identifications from the Qld Herbarium had their MRBG label pasted on, they were colour copied, or in the case of a fruiting specimen of *Acacia cincinnata* that was photographed as it was too bulky to photocopy, the duplicates are now in the filing cabinet and the photo-copies are filed in the ring-binder for general use. Next Session 24 September.

Did you know...

***Wild Flavours of Australia feature at “The Restaurant on the Lagoon”

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens... Thursday – Saturday from 6.30pm... (Bookings Essential) 49524966



Wild flavours, incorporated into an exciting and different menu, are available at the newly opened Restaurant at the Botanic Gardens. Just reading through these Entrée descriptions make your mouth begin to water... Why not try them sometime soon?

Served on a bed of vegetable relish, and accompanied with horseradish cream, billberry and beetroot chutney are the...

Seared Emu Fillets (featured in the image)

Queensland Scallop Dumplings are roasted with native sweet corn, red onion and cherry chutney, finished with a crystallized fennel and sweet corn couli.

Salt and Pepper Crocodile... Tender crocodile is served on a bed of Citrus Salad and finished with a lemon myrtle hollandaise sauce.

And then there are the fantastic Mains and let's not forget those delicious desserts...Mmmmmmm.

Dates to highlight in your Diary...

Friday September 21st 9.30am – 11.00am

'Spring Time' Special Free Friday Guided Walk: Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens...

Spring is here...

Join Maya and visit the Lagoons Gallery to view the current “Capturing Light Exhibition” and then be lead down the Garden's path in the Spring sunlight to see the vast array of foliage, flowers, and seeds during your informative stroll through the picturesque Botanic Gardens.



School Holiday Activities “Spring into the Gardens”:

Meeting Room; 10am -12noon. Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

September: 25th, 26th, 27th, and October: 3rd, 4th

Make creative 'spring' flowers after an energetic exploration of new things Spring has brought into the Gardens. The 2 hour session will include lots of physical activity eg. playing Bocce and Spring Rolls, as well following clues to find “Spring” elements hidden in the Gardens.

Date change... to Saturday October 20 ...Seed and Feed Forum... 10am - 3pm

Learn about seeds...propagation, dispersal and tastes. This informative and tasty session includes lunch.

Saturday 10th November: Friends Guided 'Heritage and High Tea' Walk... 3.00pm - 5.00pm.

As part of Mackay's 150th celebrations, the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens will be hosting a heritage themed walk and high tea **exclusively for the Gardens Friends**. The walk will take in the current exhibition in the Lagoons Gallery and a stroll through to the Heritage Gardens. **RSVP essential**.

Saturday Nov 24: Friends Christmas Party: 6.30 pm Lagoons Café at MRBG. **RSVP essential**.

Contact Gardens on 49527300 if you are planning to attend.