

Newsletter

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

Spring 2012 No. 2

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

Exhibitions at the Gardens...

**"Capturing Light"... A Photographic Exhibition by David Phillips.
29 August – 30 September 2012:**



The 'Capturing Light' Exhibition featured stunning photographs from Mackay, NSW and WA taken by local landscape photographer David Phillips during the past 12 months. David has the drive to continually face those early morning hours in his pursuit to capture idyllic light. David is a member of the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (AIPP) and also the local Creative Shots Photography Club. David has had a previous exhibition at the Lagoons Gallery and the images were magnificent. Some of the photographs in this exhibition will have you viewing Mackay as you may not have seen it before.

The current Exhibition at the Gardens...

**"Colours of Nature" Botanica VII 2012
Annual Exhibition of Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group (BAIG)
3rd October – 4th November 2012:**

"Colours of Nature", the seventh annual exhibition of the Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group (BAIG), celebrates the beauty, colour and form of Mackay's native and exotic plants, especially those growing in the Botanic Gardens. The watercolour and pencil artworks aim to convey the unique character of each plant with accuracy and artistry. In honour of Mackay's 150th year, the artists will give special attention to the colourful flowers in the Heritage Garden, representing local gardens of the 1800's. A new section is devoted to a "notable native", interpreted by the artists in a variety of ways. BAIG's own floral emblem, the showy pink-flowered Native Lasiandra gets the spotlight this year. In October it should be in full bloom right outside the Lagoon's Gallery's front door! Make sure you come in and see these delightful artworks.



The Free Friday Guided walks... have proven to be very popular during September with participants attending every Friday. This month saw John Atkinson stepping up to the challenge of leading a guided walk when staff was attending the BGANZQ Conference at the Maroochy Bushlands Botanic Gardens. Maya and Margaret have led the other walks with visitors from Tasmania and Port Macquarie stating the 'tour' was the best ever! (This was even written in the visitor's book and sales totalling \$63 for souvenirs made it a great day for us too.) Other visitors with their own personal guided walks have been U3A Group and the Slade Point Seniors ably led by Dale.

Garden Friends activities...



The Friends of the Gardens Guided Walk on Saturday 15th September was an opportunity to venture north to explore the beautiful Cape Hillsborough portion of the Central Queensland Coast Bioregion. Led by John Atkinson we discovered plants used by indigenous peoples and also learnt about the different ecosystems that are very varied and contrasting in the 'Hidden Valley' walk. This was followed by a BBQ lunch with many delicious salads and desserts to share.



From Dale...Guided walks and planning walks...

Thanks to John Atkinson for offering an excellent guided walk at Cape Hillsborough on September 15 and the help from everyone that makes each walk enjoyable – from collecting and cooking the food (thanks Maya, Bill and Robin) to all the Friends that bring along a meal to share. This was the last official walk that Garden Friends, Art and Christine from the United States attended, as they are soon to return to Colorado. Thanks for all your help at planting bees and on the weekend service desk roster.

Committee members Dale, Robin and Bill and Meryl set about updating the Friends handbook with a walk at the MRBG on Saturday September 22. This will add vital information about Stage 2 development of the MRBG to the handbook. Bill spent a further few hours setting up the Dragon©“NaturallySpeaking” computer software purchased by the Friends that converts speech to text – a massive saving in time with Dale’s ‘two-finger’ typing and the amount of information needing to be recorded now and in future.

Don't forget – the Friends Committee plans next year's activities in early December this year – so please let us know of any areas at the MRBG and further afield you would like to visit with a guided tour. Early suggestions for next year includes a 'Butterfly Plants' and 'Birdwatchers Breakfast' walk at the MRBG and to visit Eungella's Wishing Pool Circuit and Finlayson Point near Seaforth. Remember – a picnic area with toilet needs to be close by for walks away from the MRBG.

Did you see these flowering?

The Endangered Swamp Orchid *Phaius australis*, flowers for just a few weeks during September / October in the Tropical Shade Garden at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Dale has a prime position to view these gorgeous blooms right outside his office window, from the emerging flower spikes, to the showy flowers and then as they are pollinated and produced spikes of seed capsules.





Swamp Orchid – profile
scientific name: *Phaius australis*

National conservation status: Endangered

Description... This orchid has flower stems up to 2 m tall and large broad leaves with a pleated appearance, both arising from a fleshy bulb near ground level. The large, showy flowers, with up to 20 per stem, have four petals which are white on the outside and brown with white or yellow veins on the inside. The central tongue of the flower is pink and yellow with lobes slightly curved inwards.

Habitat and ecology... Swampy grassland or swampy forest including rainforest, eucalypt or paper bark forest, mostly in coastal areas.

Threats to its continued growth in ‘the wild’ are ...

- * Illegal collection for horticulture or cut flowers. This showy species is highly sought after.
- * Clearing and fragmentation of habitat for development, agriculture and road works.
- * Drainage of swamps, or pollution from nutrient run-off.
- * Frequent fire
- * Grazing and trampling by domestic stock and feral pigs.
- * Invasion of habitat by introduced weeds.

Are you coming to this special event?

Please note the Date... the 20th October

RSVP is needed by Wednesday 17th October to the Botanic Gardens.

Friends of the Gardens... “SEED AND FEED FORUM” October 20th ... 10.00am – 3.00pm



Indulge in a triple treat... A talk or two, a tasting session and a guided walk...

Join us at this special Forum which provides an opportunity to learn about seeds; their propagation, dispersal and tastes.

Guest Speakers include Meryl Ritchie (Propagation), Maya Harrison (Seed dispersal), Irene Champion (Fruits and Seeds), Dale Arvidsson (Guided walk)

This informative and tasty session includes lunch.

Did you know?

Berries of the Quinine bush (pictured image), *Petalostigma pubescens*, is the only known plant in the world with three different dispersal mechanisms.

Despite being incredibly bitter to human taste, the juicy fruits are eaten by Emus by swallowing them whole. The fruit is then carried away by the Emus and passes through with the inner capsule intact to be excreted. As the inner capsule dries out, it explodes and the seeds are thrown about a metre.

Each of the seed has an elaisome (fat rich attachment to seeds) which is highly attractive to ants. Ants pick up the seeds and take them back to their nest thereby both dispersing them further and burying them for quick germination.

Lots more interesting things will most certainly be shared. Come along for this special ‘Seed filled’ session. Remember RSVP to the Botanic Gardens by Wednesday 17th October.

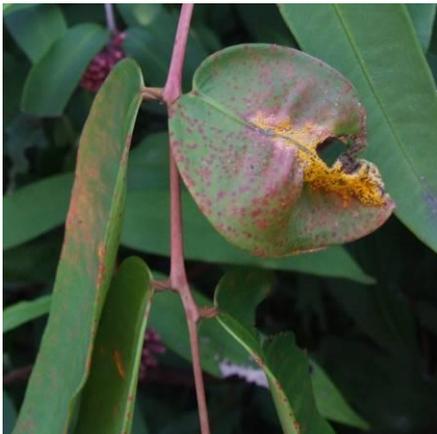
Horticultural works and Myrtle Rust

Staff have focused on standard horticultural works and a further 300+ plants were added to irrigated areas of the MRBG. Volunteers Shane and Matthew joined in with the crew to help plant and enjoy the MRBG.



With the spread of Myrtle Rust, the MRBG contacted other Queensland Councils to see what they were undertaking outside of their botanic gardens, to limit the spread of the disease. Cairns, Townsville, Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast city/regional Councils provided data that has assisted Mackay Regional Council's Myrtle Rust Action Group to maintain Council procedures.

**Myrtle Rust on Wallum Bottlebrush *Melaleuca pachyphylla*
in the Australian Regional Flora Terraces**



**Myrtle Rust on Powderpuff Lilly-pilly
Syzygium wilsonii subsp. *Wilsonii***

and

Golden Penda *Xanthostemon chrysanthus* in the Buffer Forest



On a brighter note... a new flower at the Gardens

Pandorea sp. from Eungella

SGAP ACTIVITIES ...Herbarium session – September 24

(provided by Clare Davis) There were 2 attendees, Ann & Clare.

Flowering specimens of the *Pandorea* sp. from Eungella (growing on the Lagoon Lookout Deck railings – see right) were collected and pressed Ann took these home to dry. MRBG labels (typed by Irene and emailed to Dale prior to the session for bed locations and printing) were affixed to mounted reference specimens. Photo copies were made and filed in the MRBG admin binder and the originals were filed. Native Crepe Ginger *Costus potierae* plants that have been lifted and relocated; were wrapped in wet paper and plastic to take to the SGAP propagation workshop.



BGANZQ, BGANZ and BGCI

Following the successful conference at the Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens this year, Cairns Botanic Gardens has confirmed hosting the 2014 conference, date to be confirmed. **The Queensland Botanic Trail** brochure is undergoing final layout changes and it's hoped to be printed and distributed later this year.

And for anyone travelling to NZ in late 2013 – Dunedin is hosting both the BGANZ biennial Congress and BGCI (Botanic Gardens Conservation International) Conference in October, along with the Walking Guides of Botanic Gardens Conference in Christchurch.

Plant- ed... Schools discover the Gardens:



2 St John's School Prep class totally 31 children came on Thursday 13th to discover Life cycles, plant connections and Plant parts i.e. leaves, seeds, flowers, roots, that animals and people use. During the following week, Wednesday 19th, Maya visited the school to do 'Drawing in Nature' sessions... where the children closely observe leaves and create drawing using pencils and adding colour to their creations with watercolour pencils.

Monday 17th ... 2 prep groups from Walkerston State School (27 and then later 25 children) visited the Gardens to explore Water catchments including evaporation, plant adaptations, water creatures and water pollution.

Tuesday 18th ... Whitsunday Anglican school year 1... 50 children came to the Gardens as a Camp week activity. These children learnt about Bush tucker, indigenous info, water creatures and also participated in paper bark painting as a creative activity...

Thursday 20th ... Whitsunday Anglican School kindergarten 20 + children and accompanying adults viewed creatures(pinned and captured) set up under the mango tree, had a story telling session, read other books, and went on a walk through the Gardens with clipboards to complete a Creature bingo.

The rest of September has been busy with School Holiday Activities...

“Spring into the Gardens”:

The children have been making 'spring' flowers after an energetic exploration of new things Spring has brought into the Gardens. The 2 hour session includes lots of physical activity e.g. playing Bocce and indulging in Spring Rolls races, Hula hoops, skipping, and frog jumps as well following clues to find “Spring” elements hidden in the Gardens.





Simone's Baby delight has arrived...

Nick William Mellor, born 6 pound 6oz, 48 cm on Thursday 20th September...

Both are doing well...



Dates to highlight in your Diary...

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

Learn about seeds...propagation, dispersal and tastes. This informative and tasty session includes lunch. RSVP by Wednesday 17th October.

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**. Hosted by renowned local historian Mrs Berenice Wright, the walk will take in the several themed gardens of the Heritage Gardens - incorporating the stories and plants used at Summerlands, The Hollow, Cremorne and the early farms and sugar mills of the area on display in the Acclimatisation and Kitchen Gardens.

On display in the Lagoons Gallery from the Mackay Regional Council Local History Collection is the 'Moments in Time Exhibition'... a variety of historic photographic images and stories of Mackay's past on display.



The **High Tea and Heritage Walk** will commence at 3pm sharp with a high tea in the Lagoons Gallery, and then enjoy a pleasant stroll from 3:30pm until 5:00pm. Get into the spirit of the day by wearing a heritage themed hat or bring along a special family item that may have a story to tell. **RSVP essential ...** Contact Gardens on 49527300 if you are planning to attend.

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

RSVP essential. Contact Gardens on 49527300. Please note - this is a '*Friends Only*' event.

Saturday Dec 15: Christmas in the Gardens: 5.30 – 8.30pm



Come along and bring all the family to this very popular Christmas event on Saturday December 15 from 5.30 to 8.30pm.

Featuring well known local entertainers, for an evening of enjoyment for all the family. **HULLABALOO, KAREN BONHAM** and **HOT HOT HOT** are already booked in as the entertainers. The 'Friends of the Gardens' will have their ever-popular raffles, glow candles, bracelets, and Christmas songbooks for sale. Any assistance from Friends to sell...

would be greatly appreciated. The Café and Restaurant on the Lagoon will be open until late.

PLEASE RSVP TO ALL EVENTS on 4952 7300 or email botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au.