

# Newsletter

## Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

2015 No 5

*The year is running away with such speed. We have had our 12<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations and what a surprise the present was! Lots more events are happening so... Enjoy the latest from 'The Botanic Gardens'...*

**The Lagoons Gallery's exhibitions certainly celebrate Nature... It is the last week for "50 Shades of Green." Maya Harrison's exhibition will finish on Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup>.**

The '50 Shades of Green' exhibition includes one installation that is really 50 small artworks combined and yes, there are 50 shades of green within it. The installation includes acrylics, papermaking, photography, collage, weaving and textiles and found objects from nature and it has certainly been a talking point with visitors.



Another installation that certainly caught people's eyes was the very large palm Inflorescence that was woven into "Cascading leaves" with cane and raffia gumnuts added.

The colour green represents nature, growth and the plant world. Plants are not all the same green colour, nor are the small green creatures that inhabit them. Shades of green can be found throughout the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, in your backyard and out in the in bush, the landscape and the beautiful environments that surround Mackay.

## **World Ranger Day Exhibition 2015.**

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Lagoons Gallery  
Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July – Sunday 2 August

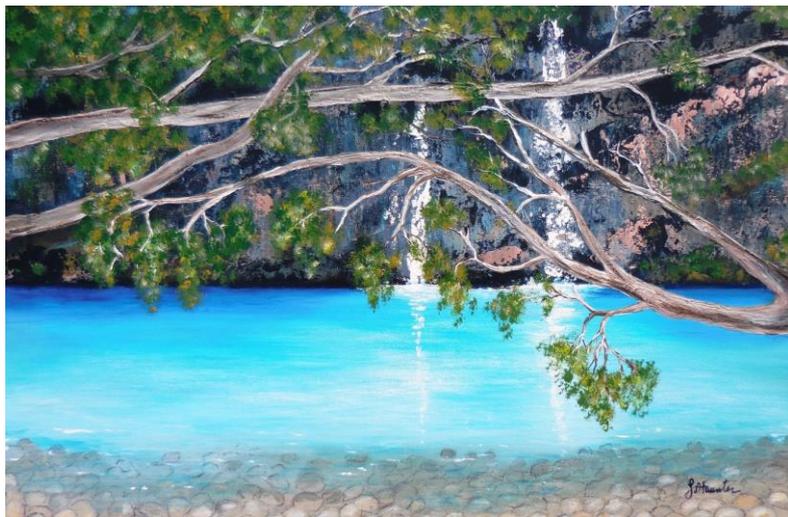
Walks on the wild side have provided inspiration to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services' rangers as they paint, print and photograph the amazing natural world, highlighting the diversity of the places they encounter.

The exhibition is an opportunity for the community to assist Rangers to help Rangers worldwide through the Thin Green Line Foundation. The Thin Green Line Foundation provides financial assistance to the families of Rangers who have lost their lives protecting the natural environment all over the world. Picture is Jules Holland, (Park Ranger) creating an artwork. →

**An auction of all the artworks will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> August at the Lagoons Gallery at 7pm.**



## World Ranger Day Exhibition 2015...



Come and take a walk on the wild side to view places and creatures depicted by those who are wild about protecting them.

Image: Cedar Creek Falls by Jo Staunton  
(Painting: acrylic on canvas)

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Lagoons Gallery is open Wednesday to Friday 10 am - 3pm and Weekends from 9am - 4pm

Cost: Free.

For more information, contact John Atkinson by email [John.Atkinson@qld.gov.au](mailto:John.Atkinson@qld.gov.au) Botanic Gardens on 49527300 or email [botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au) or visit the Botanic Gardens website [www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au](http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au)

## Festival of Arts events also take a... Walk on the Wildside...

Some of their events are at the Botanic Gardens



**Queensland Symphony Orchestra's  
Symphony > Under the Stars**

**Friday, July 10 > Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens' Amphitheatre  
Gates open at 5:30pm**



The opening night of the 2015 Mackay Festival of Arts brings you the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO) under the stars, presenting a program of wonderful music including Vivaldi's best known piece, the popular Four Seasons and other great works for string orchestra.

Held at Meadowlands Amphitheatre in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, this free twilight concert will be a must-see event for music lovers of all ages.

In Vivaldi's time, orchestras commonly performed with a violinist directing instead of a conductor. This performance will follow that tradition with former QSO, now Australian Chamber Orchestra violinist and Mackay local, Glenn Christensen returning home as soloist to lead the QSO musicians.

Bring a picnic blanket or deck chair to settle in for live classical music on the grandest scale. Food is available on-site thanks to the Lions Club Mackay, as well as coffee and drink carts.

To find out more about this event visit: [www.mackaytix.com.au](http://www.mackaytix.com.au)

This project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland

**And there is more the next day...**



## **PASIFIKA**

**Saturday, July 11 from Noon - 8pm**  
**Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Amphitheatre**

"A community that preserves, nurtures and develops all cultures".  
First ever celebration recognising all cultures of the Pacific in Mackay.

Introducing renowned local and international artists, traditional foods, arts and crafts, community-based organisations promoting health and wellbeing.

## **The following week...**

### **Take a 'Walk on the Wildside'... Special Free Guided Walks**

**Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> > 10.00am – 11.30am.**

**Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup> > 10.00am – 11.30am.**

Meet at the Mackay Australian South Seas Islanders Hut in the southern section of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens by 10am.  
(Near the Mackay Information Centre)



Join Maya and Friends of the Gardens to explore the oldest and most established section of the Botanic Gardens, the Regional Forests. The members of the Society of Growing Australian Plants (SGAP) Mackay branch planted this 'gallery style of rainforest' back in 1995. Enter into the quiet forested paths and discover some of our region's special plants and wildlife. The Regional Forests are a hidden gem of wildness within the heart of the City.

**Collect some of its fallen natural materials and make a bush sculpture at the completion of your Walk on the Wildside.**

Let us know if you wish to come along to either of the walks by contacting the Botanic Gardens and booking the date with us. Cost Free: For more information... Contact the Botanic Gardens on 49527300 or email [botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au)

## **Even young children can enjoy the wild...life.**

**Small Explorers: "Wildlife in the Gardens" Tuesday July 14<sup>th</sup>:  
9.30 am – 11.00am**

Fun and educational opportunities for toddlers and kindergarten aged children 18 months to 5 years held monthly or by appointment. Let the Botanic Gardens Visitors Services Officer, Maya Harrison, take you and your small children to special areas of the Botanic Gardens to explore 'Wildlife in the Gardens'.



Meet at the Meeting Room (opposite the Café on the Lagoon, closed Tuesdays) and get fascinated by the creatures that help our Botanic Gardens thrive. The session includes story reading, information books, displays of creatures, artistic activities and a small walk in the Gardens.

Let us know if you wish to come along by contacting the Botanic Gardens on 4952 7300 and booking the date with us or email [botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au) . Tell a friend so they can join in too.

## What have the Friends of the Gardens been up to?

We were there...and promoted the Botanic Gardens in rain, hail and shine...

(sorry a bit of an exaggeration, there has been no hail!)



**Palm Fair:** It was well supported by Friends and the public and despite rainy, windy weather we managed to raise \$278.00 in sales.



We also promoted the Botanic Gardens, raising people's awareness of preserving threatened species like those in the Bungee Jumping Caterpillars book. The real creatures and plants certainly engaged children and adults alike.

## Festival of Arts Launch



The Botanic Gardens will have satellite events during the Festival of Arts... World Ranger Day Exhibition in the Lagoons Gallery and Walks on the wild side in the Regional Forest section of the Botanic Gardens.

Our exhibit stall highlighted some of the wild creatures to be found in the Botanic Gardens and information available to the public on plants, weeds, birds and bush tucker.



Even one of the Parks and Wildlife Rangers / Artist painting... were spotlighted and promoted to many people attending the Festival of Arts launch at the Blue water Quay.

## Greenmount Heritage Fair:

We had displays of old fashioned plants (thanks to Meryl, Robin and Kevin) to entice people to read our information about the Heritage Gardens and the historical links the Botanic Gardens has with Mackay's early settlers



Families, especially children, spent time playing Classis Games (hula hoops, elastics badminton, hopscotch, and skipping). What a brilliant day.

## And then there was the Botanic Gardens' 12<sup>th</sup> birthday...



The Botanic Gardens was twelve years old on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May, but we couldn't wait and celebrated on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> instead. The Friends of the Gardens presented a huge birthday present to the Botanic Gardens and the Mackay Regional Councillors un-wrapped the surprise. And what a big present it was.

A Golf Buggy to be used exclusively in the Botanic Gardens by the Visitors Services officer, the Curator (at times) but also the Friends and our other garden friends...members of SGAP too. The celebration cake was enjoyed by all (some had 2 pieces).

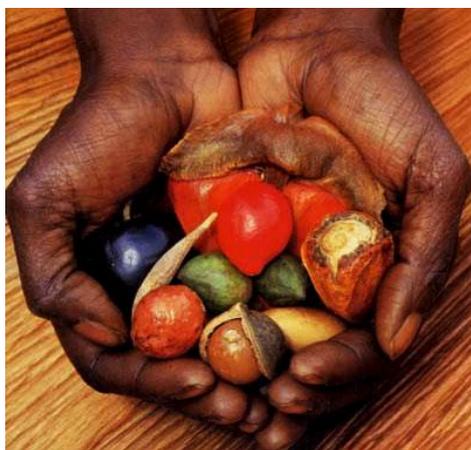


**The Golf Buggy** has been put to good use already by Maya and Kevin. They were able to go through the Botanic Gardens and remove and replace to other positions the aluminium signs in readiness for the School Holidays. Not content with one quiz these school holidays... there are two of them. **Why not try one yourself. Adults can join in too.**

**School Holiday Activities...** Get the kids out of the house and discover a fun holiday activity which involves exploring the plant world and its bush secrets.

**"Bush Foods" School Holiday Quizzes at the Botanic Gardens.**

**Win  
"Some Tasty Tucker"  
(Products made from bush  
foods)**



Could you survive in the Australian Bush?

Bring the whole family to the Botanic Gardens and pick up (or download) ... the "Bush Foods Quizzes" and find out what might be edible from plants. Watch out, some are NOT! There are two quizzes so twice the chance to win!

Quizzes are available at the Botanic Gardens Administration or online on the Botanic Gardens website.

[www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au](http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au)

Completed quizzes can be returned to Botanic Gardens Administration.

**Bush Foods Quiz winner drawn on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July >10.00am**

# Why not try some of the quiz now?



In the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens you will discover a wide variety of plant species that have been used as food, shelter, tools, cooking and gathering implements as well as traditional medicines by Indigenous people.

**Pick up a 'Gardens Guide' with a map inside. The numbers on the quiz match the numbers on the map. Walk to the numbered places (they match the question numbers) to discover the answers to the quiz. Wear a hat and take some water. Have fun.**

**Start at the Front Entrance... Here stands an ancient tree.**

How old is this tree?

Can you eat the seeds of this tree?



**Walk a couple of steps to the Cluster Fig tree...**

Which creature pollinates the flowers?  
Would you eat a fig?



**Walk to the Lagoons outlook deck...**

Indigenous people ate these sweet red berries →  
Did they eat the berries raw or cooked?



**Walk down the stairs and stop at the bottom...**

The leaf fibre was used for making...?



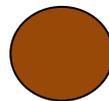
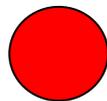
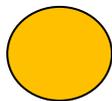
**Look to the other side of the path ... *Lomandra sp.***

The raw leaf bases of this plant tastes like...?



**23. Just past the waterfall.**

The bark of this tree yields a dye...Which colour? Circle the correct one.



**A little further on the same side of the path is the next one...**

The seeds of this tree taste like...



**And the next sign is a step or two more...**

Which part of the body did this plant help as a medicine?

Teeth or Toes? Circle the right answer

**A long walk to the next sign along this path. Check out the birds in the lagoon.**

**Finding the quiz too hard? Come to the Botanic Gardens to find out the answers!**

# Plant profile

## Native mulberry *Pipturus argenteus*

The native Mulberry is a straggly shrub or small tree to 6m and grows in subtropical, dry and riverine rainforest north from Lismore to North Queensland, mostly in coastal areas.

It is a good fast growing plant where it has access to water. It is often used as a pioneer species. It has very soft stems, which are easy to break and this tree will suffer in very dry periods.

The bark (which yields a brown dye) is used by aborigines to make fibre for fishing nets.

Some other common names include white nettle, koomeroo-koomeroo, kongangn, false stinger, Queensland grass-cloth plant, thil-la-wo. Several aboriginal names usually mean it is important in Aboriginal culture. Native mulberry was used in making cloth.

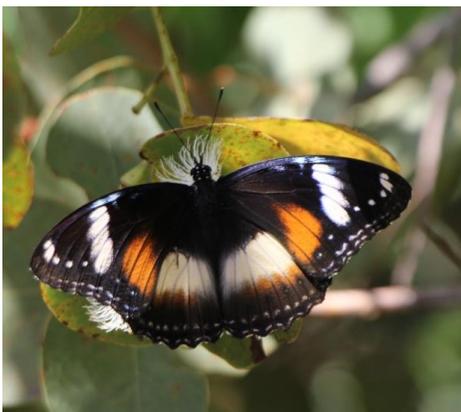
The small, soft mulberry like fruit up to 6mm in diameter is eaten as bush tucker. It is sweet, but variable in taste, and you have to work hard to get a good meal. It contains many small seeds, ripe from May-July.



This photo shows pronounced speckles of the developing fruit. These are the seeds, which develop on the outside like the seeds of strawberries.

The Urticaceae family of flowering plants that the native Mulberry belongs to, include stinging nettles and the stinging trees (*Dendrocnide* spp.) Native Mulberry is a non-stinging member of the family, and a good plant for butterfly-friendly gardens.

*Pipturus* from Greek "pipto" to fall and "oura", of the tail – in reference to the hairy tail-like stigma. Another reference suggests the tail might refer to the long petiole, acting like a tail for the leaf. *Argenteus* is Latin for silvery, for the undersurface of the leaves.



Native mulberry is the host plant for several butterflies and other insects including the Jezebel Nymph, Yellow Admiral, Speckled Line-blue, Blue Banded Eggfly and the Varied Eggfly. (shown here)

The flowers are used by adult butterflies for nectar.

Reference: <http://www.saveourwaterwaysnow.com.au>  
Images Robert Whyte

## Wasn't the Guided Walk to Finlaysons Point great?

This was the view from Findlaysons Point towards Seaforth on a beautiful morning when we went to explore three different habitats and the plants and creatures therein.

The first stop was at a small protected hollow when there was amazing soil considering it was right behind a beach dune. Here with a high water table and some protection, we found a completely different ecosystem from the open woodlands and a surprise!



Amongst the tongue ferns *Microsorium punctatum*, Peanut trees, *Sterculia quadrifida*, Beach Cherry bushes *Eugenia reinwardtiana*, Scaly Ash *Ganophyllum falcatum*, Native Cherry *Exocarpos latifolius*, Canary Beech *Polyalthia nitidissima*, Hairy lolly bush *Clerodendrum tomentosum* and even the Pink Nodding orchid in seed, *Geodorum densiflorum*...

We were surprised with this tiny creature ... a tube nosed bat. What a special sight.



Along the road we also saw Cocky Apples *Planchonia careya* with their leaves turning orange / red, Bumpy Ash *Flindersia schottiana*, Pandanus *Pandanus brookei* and in bloom the Melaleuca... *Melaleuca viridiflora* with their green flowers.



At Finlaysons Point was a re-vegetation site and a wonderful specimen of Nicker Nut, *Caesalpinia bonduc*, met us along with young Leptocarpa Wattle, *Acacia leptocarpa*, Grass trees, *Xanthorrhoea* sp., Beach Casuarina, *Casuarina equisetifolia* and a hardy *Ficus rubiginosa* Rusty Fig, in the centre of the roundabout.

Arriving at Seaforth creek, we were greeted with fruiting trees. There was abundant fruit on the *Pleiogynium timorense* Burdekin Plum, and the *Mimusops elengi* Red Condo. Flowers were on show on *Thespesia populnea* Pacific Rosewood, *Clerodendrum inerme* Seaside Clerodendrum, and a huge *Hibiscus tiliaceus* Cotton Tree showing its great ability to make barriers against the sand and wind. There were delicate lilac flowers on *Vitex trifolia* Coastal Vitex and a sole *Morinda citrifolia* Cheese Fruit in the sand. After such a grand flora overload we enjoyed the social BBQ lunch.

Thanks go to Meryl Ritchie for sharing her vast plant knowledge, Maya for backing up the guided walk with laminated fact sheets for all the plants seen and Kevin for organising/ carrying all the support tables, chairs and BBQ gear and for all the others who shared their experiences and knowledge of this interesting area of our Bioregion.



What was that tree with the “stretch marks” at Finlaysons Point?  
It was... *Erythrina variegata* Coral tree.

Its bark is thin and easily damaged. It looks furrowed or like stretch-marked skin. It has quite a showy trunk and considered to have outstanding ornamental features.

The coral tree puts on a spectacular show with bright crimson flowers 5-7 cm long in dense terminal clusters. It occurs in Northern Territory, Cape York Peninsula and North East Queensland. It grows in beach forest on both sand dunes and rocky shorelines. Also occurring in Africa, Indian Ocean islands, Asia, Malesia and the Pacific islands.



## Garden Friends have been planting again... It was Daisy Day.



We wanted to have a sea of Golden Everlasting Daises *Xerochrysum bracteatum* to view from the Lagoons Outlook Deck, so our Volunteer Garden Friends assisted the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens staff to give the area (where the pink *Cassia javanica* tree was) a bright and sunny new look. This was a fantastic opportunity for those who wished to volunteer their time during the week and who liked to get up as early as the birds!

8am... Setting out the pots. Yes, all those pots contain daisies that are to be planted...all 900 of them!



11.30am... Nearly all the plants are in. Watering has started at the far end of the area. An amazing job was done by all.

Now... for that sea of yellow. At time of printing, there are buds appearing, not long to wait.



## Another plant profile:

### Red Condo, *Mimusops*, *Mimusops elengi*



This is a large, spreading evergreen tree that can reach a height of up to 16 m, with an umbrella-shaped canopy. It grows in the tropical forests of northern Australia and south and south-east Asia. It is often found on dunes, sandy banks and near mangroves. It can tolerate large amounts of salt, sand and sun.

The bark of the trunk is thick and dark brownish black or greyish black in colour, with striations and a few cracks on the surface. The trunk can grow up to about 30 cm in circumference. Dead bark is layered and there are white, granular stripes in the outer blaze.



Its leaves are glossy, dark green, oval-shaped, 5–14 cm long and 2.5–6 cm wide. They have a pale underside, with a prominent midrib.

The petioles and twigs produce a watery milky exudate (sap). Terminal buds and younger leafy twigs are clothed in brown hairs. Lateral veins form loops just inside the blade margin. Stipules narrow, about 3-5 mm long, tapering to a point.

The small flowers are star-shaped, cream, hairy, and scented. They have a central cone formed from the petals and stamens.



The fruit is orange-red, with a sweet yellow pulp, and usually contains only a single seed.

The fruits are attractive to birds especially fruit pigeons.

The timber of this tree is extremely hard, strong and tough, with the heart wood strongly defined from the sap. The heart wood works easily, and takes a beautiful polish.

The tree's chief claim to fame, however, is in its medicinal uses. The flowers contain volatile oils, and the oil from the seeds is non-volatile. The bark, flowers, fruit and seeds are all used medically, and are used externally as well as internally. Being astringent and styptic, it is used extensively (especially in India) for treating dental problems like bleeding gums and loose teeth.

In such conditions, the tender stems are used as toothbrushes, or the powder of bark skin is used as a tooth powder.

The unripe fruit is chewed, and is said to help fix loose teeth.



The flowers are used for preparing a lotion for wounds and ulcers. The bark skin and flowers are useful in preparing medicines to treat menstruation and urinary tract problems. The ripe fruits are used to make a general tonic.

**This species may have medicinal properties and it may also be poisonous!**

This is a food plant for larvae of the moth *Netria viridescens*

Reference:

<http://keys.trin.org.au>

<http://www.somemagneticislandplants.com.au>

(<http://squid2.laughingsquid.net/hosts/herbweb.com/herbage/A17302.htm>)



## Are you a Garden Friend or a member of SGAP? You are invited to our next Excursion



View from Mt. Blackwood

### MT BLACKWOOD NATIONAL PARK... MRBG Friends / SGAP Excursion Saturday 18 July 2015... 8.30am – 12.00noon

**Join:** John Atkinson, Meryl Ritchie, Irene Champion, Grant Paterson and Maya Harrison as we ventured upwards to the top of Mt. Blackwood. Discover some of the plants growing at high altitude, notice vegetation changes and what influences those changes... rainfall, geology and soils, human and natural disturbances, introduction of weeds etc.

**Numbers are limited: The excursion is strictly for current Friends and SGAP Members only.** Firm bookings by Friday 10 July are essential. Friends are to RSVP to Maya and SGAP members to RSVP to Irene.

**Meet:** By 8.30am at latest at allocated parking area on North side of the Kuttabul / Mt Jukes Road just to the East of the turn-off to Mt Blackwood. We will park on the footpath between No 645 and No 679. Only the very minimum number of vehicles will be driven through the gate and the rest of the way up to the top of Mt. Blackwood and back. The gate will be locked after entry and won't be re-opened until the end of the excursion at around 11.30am.

**Wear:** appropriate clothing including hat and shoes. It can be cool on top of the mountain. Carry water and snacks if you need something to eat.

**TOILETS:** available at Kuttabul shops.

**Warning:** Both Shiny-leaved Stinger and Moonlighter are present on top of the mountain.

#### **Afterwards:**

**SGAP** members will continue on to Cape Hillsborough for their SGAP birthday lunch.



**Friends** are invited to bring a picnic lunch to Kevin and Maya's Mt Blackwood acreage.

Tea, coffee and tables are available. Bring own chairs.

Camping Toilet is available too.

**Then... Walks to 2 creeks optional...**one short and easy, one more difficult (hilly through bush and creek rock walking).

The more difficult walk has Mt Blackwood Holly in the wild.

## Who is on the new 'Friends of the Gardens Committee?'

**President:** Bill McWhinney

**Vice-president:** John Atkinson

**Secretary:** Robin McWhinney

**Treasurer:** Maya Harrison

**Committee:** Meryl Ritchie, Helen Paulsen, Kevin Jackson, and Nikki McWhinney.

Thank you to all those that will volunteer their time over the next year to keep our Friends group strong. Much appreciated.

## Remember our... Looking for Friends with special talents...

Friends who can work independently and have an urge to help.

We would like to say **THANK YOU...** to **Moyea Maclean** who has computer skills and is able to do data entry. **YIPPEE!!** Moyea has been working with Ross to finalise our etched label making project and then will focus on the Botanic Gardens Data base. Moyea has even devised an easy follow guide in how to print labels from the data base...

## Now... who would like to join a new team of volunteers...? ... The 'BOTANIC TAG TEAM'

This team needs people with multiple skills. It involves slow walking, occasionally spiking in a label in the ground, jumping on a pogo stick (well actually a heavy metal spike), often scratching one's head in confusion, matching images and names, ability to use google in the field on a phone (optional), follow a map, decipher someone's else code for plant species, use magical powers to read old labels with invisible ink... →

Can you do that?

And... peel and stick new labels on cleaned label spikes (cleaning the old labels is another skill) and bundle them up in garden bed numbers. This team will have an awesome job to start with to replace old labels in the Botanic Gardens, but a plan for ongoing replacement on a regular 6 month/ 12 month routine will be formed and then the task will be much easier.



We hope that lots of people join our TAG TEAM and eventually that team may have individuals, couples or small groups that can place out these labels (tags) on a garden bed by garden bed basis either on our Wednesday "Meeting Place" days or other days that suit them. On some days we may be able to call in some plant experts to help us learn / identify specific species (egg. palms... thinking of Grant Paterson here)

Anne and Joe Clutterbuck have already shown their skills with Maya and we suspect there are many more of you that could make up the TAG TEAM! Will you take up the Challenge?

## Thanks... to all those who have helped in any way this year...

The Sunday roster volunteers, the midweek front desk volunteers, the regular Wednesday group volunteers who do whatever is needed, the laminated picture cleaners (who I suspect got a little high on the orange cleaner), the guided walks trainees, the sorters of tubs, the scrub-ers of labels, the peelers, the sticker-ers and the cutters and the pencil sharpen-ers too. Every little job is really appreciated and helps the Botanic Gardens immensely. **THANK YOU.**

## Special Flowers in September:

"Orchids in Paradise" is a combined 20th Australian Orchid Council and 50th Tropical Queensland Orchid Council Conference and Show. It will provide an opportunity for orchid and plants lovers from all parts of Australia to meet and enjoy spectacular orchid and foliage displays and learn from world-leaders in orchid breeding and culture.

The Orchid Conference will be held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) on Friday the 18th September to Tuesday 22nd September 2015. The AOC Orchid Show is open to the public from Saturday 19th September to Tuesday 22nd September.



More details on the website. <http://orchidsinparadise.com.au/index.html> Please Like our Facebook page for updates and more information <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Orchids-in-Paradise-20th-AOC-Conference-and-Show-Mackay-2015/682457278534230>

## More special flowers...Orchids...



On show, during the "Orchids in Paradise" conference, at the Lagoons Gallery will be our Botanical Art Interest Group (BAIG) annual Exhibition "Botanica". This exhibition will be featuring orchids. Many of the artworks are native orchids.

Cooktown orchid *Dendrobium bigibbum* by Julie Inkson.



These two orchids are by Madge Barnett. The second artwork is *Miltonia spectabilis* var. *moreliana*