

Newsletter

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

2015 No 6

There have been lots of events during our beautiful winter months and people are experiencing the Gardens in many different ways. Enjoy the latest from 'The Botanic Gardens'...

Have you visited the Lagoons Gallery lately? World Ranger Day Exhibition 2015.

Walks on the wild side provided inspiration to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services' rangers as they painted, printed and photographed the amazing natural world, highlighting the diversity of the places they encounter.

Pictured is Jules Holland, (Park Ranger) creating two of her artworks.

The exhibition was 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.



An auction of all the artworks took place on 1st August at the Lagoons Gallery.

All the Artworks in the exhibition were sold with some very excited bidding going on and the Rangers were happy to see they raised over \$6,000.00 for the Thin Green Line. Maya was very happy to acquire 'Cedar Creek Falls' by Jo Staunton, an acrylic painting on canvas, pictured here.

Thanks go to Clifford Stocks from the Lagoons Café for opening up the venue and providing food for the occasion.

Make sure you see the next Exhibition...

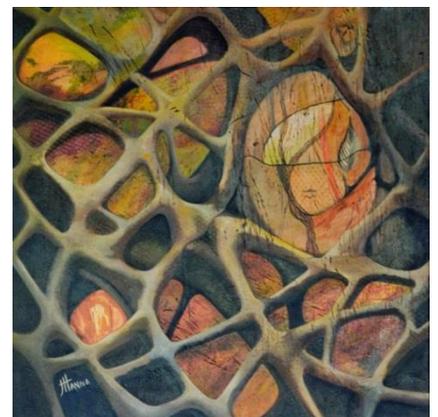
Cultivating Consciousness

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Lagoons Gallery
Wednesday 5th - 30th August 2015

Cultivating Consciousness: is an exhibition by Lesley Kane and Jenni Hanna: Lesley and Jenni collaborate in two and three dimensions to address issues relating to the fragile and transitory environment.

The Farmer and the Tree hugger will exhibit mixed media painting, traditional and digital prints and three dimensional works using objects from the local environment.

Image is 'Keeper of the Forest' by Jenni Hanna



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

It was fantastic to see the Meadowlands Amphi-theatre being used... Some of the events were...



Queensland Symphony Orchestra's Symphony > Under the Stars

The opening night of the 2015 Mackay Festival of Arts on July 10th was 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.

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.



Many, many people brought a picnic blanket or deck chair to settle in for the live classical music. Food was available on-site thanks to the Lions Club Mackay, as well as coffee and drink carts.



PASIFIKA

Held on Saturday 11th July, Pasifika was the first ever celebration recognising all cultures of the Pacific in Mackay. "A community that preserves nurtures and develops all cultures".

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

Rock Pop Mime



STUDENTS slammed the stage at Mackay's 2015 Rock Pop Mime Show.

Costumes were set, sass performed and bright lights shone on some of the most talent youngsters throughout the region.

Lions Mackay Host Club president Patricia Little said more than 4000 people attended Saturday night's event.

Mrs Little said MacKillop Catholic Primary School was in first place in the junior category, followed by Beaconsfield State School in second.

Pioneer State High School took home first place in the senior division, then Mercy College.

"This event allows us to see there is hidden talent in the area."



Also during the Festival of Arts ... Special Free Guided... 'Walks on the Wildside'

Maya, Friends of the Gardens and visitors explored the oldest and most established section of the Botanic Gardens...the Regional Forests on 15th and 17th July. Members of the Society of Growing Australian Plants (SGAP) Mackay branch planted this 'gallery style of rainforest' back in 1995.

We entered into the quiet forested paths and discovered some of our region's special plants and wildlife. The Regional Forests are a hidden gem of wildness within the heart of the City.



The Regional Forest features again as one of Mackay's Beautiful Walks to be held Sept 27th.

Even young children enjoyed the wild ... life.



Small Explorers took a 'walk on the wildside' too on 13th July. The youngsters shown in these images were enthralled with the Bungee Jumping Caterpillars and the iridescent Green jewel Bugs in their 'hands on' experiences with creatures found in the Botanic Gardens.



Family Day Care comes to the Gardens...



Six Family Day Care groups of children also viewed many wild animals both in the Gardens and some creatures in observation containers in the Meeting Room on Thursday 16th July

Seeing these creatures inspired their drawings at the end of the session.



Are you coming?



Small Explorers: "Plant a seed and grow a mind" Monday August 17th: 9.30 am – 11.00am

Just like these two girls did...Children and adults will get fascinated by all sorts of seeds, big, small, spiny and smooth that become plants like the ones growing in our Botanic Gardens. The session includes story reading, making a recycled pot, planting a seed or two to take home and a small walk in the Gardens.

Did you know?

We now have a **Red Cross Rose** growing in the Heritage Gardens.

Thanks to the Australian Red Cross, Mackay Branch for their kind Donation to our Living Collection. We are grateful Mackay has such an active branch of Australian Red Cross and we say Thankyou for your service to our wonderful community.



Ray Hansen donating the Red Cross Rose to Rhondda Laverack
(Team Leader, Botanic Gardens)



Kelli-Ann Woodford (Gardener) planting the Red Cross Rose within our Heritage Collection

We have been in the news...

EYE ON MACKAY | A snapshot of life in our fair part of the world

Keeping tabs on botanical labels

A photograph showing two people, a woman and a man, standing in a garden. The woman is on the left, wearing a blue shirt and glasses, and the man is on the right, wearing an orange shirt and a wide-brimmed hat. They are both looking at a large book or map that the man is holding. The background is filled with various plants and trees. There are red numbers '1' and '2' overlaid on the image near the two people.

1. Maya Harrison: I'm the Visitor Services- Education officer at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Currently we are checking the planting maps to make sure we have the correct labels with the corresponding plants. We are constantly updating the labels and maps so members of the public can identify the plants. It is also great for school and horticultural students when they come for an educational excursion to learn about our regional plants.

2. Jeremy Youse: I'm one of the newest gardeners here at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. I'm helping place out the new plant labels, I also do the hedging, arboring and curate the meadowlands section of the gardens. We have bit of a competition between the gardeners to see who can get their particular areas looking the best. We also help each other out.

PHOTO: TONY MARTIN

It is not just Maya and Jeremy doing the plant labels...

We have a "Tag Team" (Friends of the Gardens volunteers) carrying out this mammoth job on an ongoing basis. Would you like to join the "Tag Team"? Just ring Maya on 0409750453 and she will make sure you 'get planted' in this great group.



Grit, determination gives Lagoons Cafe new lease on life.

WHEN it comes to surviving the tough times, one cafe owner reckons he has the recipe to ride it out.

"Pure and simple: just hard work," Cliff Stocks firmly answers.

"It's all about determination and not giving up."

The owner of Lagoons Cafe in Mackay's Botanic Gardens jumped at the chance to take over the business just over a year ago and hasn't looked back.

Mr Stocks has just signed a two-year lease with a further two-year option and has big plans for the cafe's future - including a name change.

"Businesses have to look at their ways of doing things; we're constantly reviewing ourselves and if things don't work, we change it," he said.

As well as hosting high teas, weddings and functions, Mr Stocks also prides himself on trying new things to serve up. "I smoke my own hams, meat, sausages, mussels and other things over ironbark," he said.

The cafe employs eight core staff that now includes Mr Stocks' mum Cavil, who is chuffed at her son's path to cafe owner-manager. Cavil Stocks is also one of the Friends of the Gardens.

"Cliff took home economics at school, much to his mechanic father's disgust," Mrs Stocks laughed. "That's not what boys were meant to do... but he was very good at it. He also wasn't bad at sewing a few nice shirts either!"



Pride comes through in her voice as she talks about her son's passion taking him places like Hayman and Hamilton Islands and the busy food scene of Sydney. "He did his apprenticeship with MRAEL and then went to the islands and the big smoke," Mrs Stocks said. "But then he came back to what he preferred closer to home. It's a quieter pace - some days maybe not so much."



From the hustle and bustle of Sydney, moving back to run his own catering business out of the Buffalo Club and now running the Lagoons Cafe, Mr Stocks is happy to be home closer to family. "It can be a bit of a challenge (working with his mum); sometimes I have to remember she's an employee as well," he said. "Then I think 'she's my mum, so I better not be too much of a bugger'."

When asked if she was proud of everything her son has done, Mrs Stocks smiled.

"I am proud. Even within his own personal development as he's overcome a few challenges," she said. "But this is his biggest adventure. He's certainly going to make the most of it."

Win a free lunch!

Lagoons Cafe is on the hunt for a new business name - and they're offering a lunch for two for whoever picks the winning name! Send your ideas to lagoonscafe@optusnet.com.au

Would you like Pepper with that?

Plant profile...

Tasmannia insipida

Pepper Bush, Brush Pepper Bush

Tasmannia insipida (previously *Drimys insipida*) is a shrub up to 2.5 to 3 metres high (sometimes taller) with reddish stems.



It is found in cool, wet forests of eastern Australia from the south coast of New South Wales to northern Queensland. In the understorey the branches are open and the foliage sparse. In stronger light, growth is denser and new shoots and stems have a reddish tinge. It grows in upland and mountain rainforest.



The glossy pleasantly scented leaves cluster in whorls or tight spirals at the ends of the twigs and are lance-shaped from 80 to 200 mm long with a peppery flavour when crushed. The flavour is insipid when compared with other *Tasmannia* species.

Small but obvious lobes at the base of the leaf help distinguish this species from the others. The petioles (leaf stalks) are 0.2-0.4cm long and are channelled on the upper surface. Oil dots are visible with a lens if not visible with the naked eye.

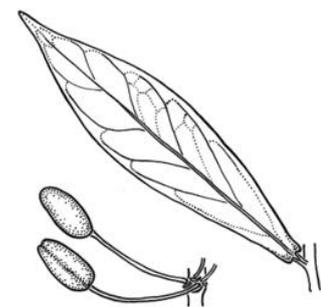
The lateral veins form loops well inside the blade margin and are more conspicuous on the upper surface of the leaf blade.



The small white flowers occur in umbels from the leaf axils in spring through to summer. Separate male and female flowers are borne on the one plant. Male flowers are distinguished by a number of stamens extending from the base of the flower.



The flowers are followed by oval-shaped pale purple pink or whitish berries about 15-20 mm long which darken to deep purple when ripe. The fruit have a line (suture) down one side and there are about 20 seeds per fruit



The seeds are edible and have a peppery flavour. They can be used as bush-food condiment/spice but unlike *Tasmannia lanceolata* (Mountain Pepper) and *Tasmannia stipitata* (Dorrigo Pepper) are not sold commercially for culinary purposes.



The fresh whole leaves can be used to give a peppery flavour to cooking or dried and used as a spice.

References:

<http://anpsa.org.au/t-ins.html>

Lim T K (2013): *Edible Medicinal and Non-medicinal Plants, Volume 6 Fruits*, Springer, Netherlands

Nicholson, Nan & Hugh (2007): *Australian Rainforest Plants II: In the forest & in the garden*, Terania Rainforest Publishing, The Channon

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

Images: Maya Harrison, Jill Dark (ANSPA Org), William T. Cooper

What have the Friends of the Gardens been up to?

MT BLACKWOOD EXCURSION

Friends of the Gardens and SGAP members combined to observe a variety of plants and ecosystems on Mt Blackwood.

Thanks to John Atkinson from QPWS for allowing access to this special part of our bioregion.

The top of the mountain had some special plants that like to live in high altitudes...

Pepper Bush, Brush Pepper Bush *Tasmannia insipida*; (Plant profile on previous page); White Carabeen *Sloanea langii*; Ivory Basswood

Polyscias australiana; Turn-in-the-wind *Mallotus paniculatus* or White Hazelwood *Symplocos stawellii*:



There was also...Silky Tamarind *Guioa lasioneura*; Broad-leaved Lilly-pilly, Blush Satinash *Acmena hemilampra* subsp. *Hemilampra* and Northern Muttonwood *Myrsine porosa*. We also noted *Alstonia*, *Commersonia* and *Alphitonia* on the skyline, many different species of vines/climbers and then made sure we looked up to see lots of ferns and also orchids.

← There is a King orchid in this very large Acacia.



At our second location we were to talk about three feature plants... (see 2nd location above)

Black Sheoak *Allocasuarina littoralis*; Coast Banksia *Banksia integrifolia* Grass Tree *Xanthorrhoea latifolia* subsp. *latifolia*; and the change in the ecosystem.

The plants didn't have our attention all the time, when we had this to look at...the view of our bioregion from a lofty height on a beautiful clear day.





Our third location...

John talked about fires and how fires of different intensity and frequency effect vegetation

Young Hoop Pines were amongst Eucalypt on upper slopes close to road. Why are only young pines here while large much older Hoop Pines can be seen lower down?

Feature species Hoop Pine, *Araucaria cunninghamii*, White Stringy Bark *Eucalyptus portuensis*, Brush Box *Lophostemon confertus*.



From this point, SGAP members continued to Cape Hillsborough for their SGAP birthday celebration and some of the Garden Friends went to the base of Mt. Blackwood to the 'living room' of Kevin and Maya's future house for a picnic lunch and later a walk to 'Picnic creek' on their 45 hectare (115 acres) bush property. The Botanic Gardens sits on 51 hectares for comparison.

What are the Garden Friends doing this month?

**Garden Friends Guided Walk:
Saturday 8th August > 10.00am – 2.00pm**



The Garden Friends are out and about again, this time heading to Rowallan Park reserve... a short drive north of Mackay. The park is a nature reserve owned by Queensland Scouting Association Central & Coastal Region. There is quite a bit of history associated with the park, which Bob Hodda will tell us a little about. As well as that, of course there will be many interesting plants which Meryl Ritchie will describe.

The walking will not be difficult. When you RSVP, we can provide directions for driving to the park, then a site map to let you reach Mervyn Johnstone Lodge, which is where we will meet at 10 am.

As usual we will have a barbecue lunch following the walk. Please bring a plate of salad or dessert to share with the group. Meat and rolls as well as soft drink, tea and coffee will be provided – oh and we will also be celebrating the 75th birthday of our president Bill!

Plant profile...

Polyscias australiana Ivory Basswood, Basswood



Polyscias australiana is a small to medium tree found in riparian and well developed 'wet' rainforests or on the margin of rain forest but also found as a regrowth species in disturbed rain forest. It usually flowers and fruits as a shrub.

The blaze odour is strong, generally regarded as unpleasant.



Young shoots are densely rusty-hairy. The leaves are alternate, pinnate with 3 to 19 opposite leaflets and one terminal, each up to 27 cm long (usually much less), glabrous and paler below.

Small white flowers form on a spike.



The fleshy, globular purple-black berries are eaten by Southern Cassowary, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Wompoo and Superb Fruit-doves, Pied Imperial-pigeon, Green and Spotted Catbirds, Tooth-billed Bowerbird and Metallic Starlings.



Wompoo fruit-dove



Leaflets turned upside down are often found in the playground of the Golden Bower Bird.

References:

Melzer, Rhonda; Plumb, Joel (2007): *Plants of Capricornia*, Capricornia Conservation Council, Rockhampton
<http://keys.trin.org>

Bush Foods Quizzes: Did you have a go?

More than 100 people / families participated in Free **Bush Foods Quizzes** (there were 2 quizzes to try):

The quizzes were also used as a team building exercise by the Green Army volunteer group as well as members of the Botanic Gardens staff.



And the winner was... Isabelle

Isabella Refalo is 4 years old.

She won **"Some Tasty Tucker"** (Products made from bush foods) which was the prize of the **"Bush Foods" July School Holiday Quizzes** at the Botanic Gardens.



Wonder what the quiz will be during the next school holidays...
September Monday 21st – Monday 6th October.



Other School Holiday activities... Bush Foods and Crafts sessions.

45 children including a group from Life without Barriers came and discovered a wide variety of plant and animal species that have been used as food, shelter, tools, cooking and gathering implements as well as traditional medicines by Indigenous people in the past. They finished the two hour session with some weaving and bark painting activities.



← Cracking open macadamia nuts is hard to do without a hammer or a rock.

Pretending to make bush paints →
We rubbed chalk on rocks and then added a little water.



← Life without Barriers clients doing some bark painting.
Julie and her Granddaughter joined in too.

This bark painting included some of the icons used by indigenous people →



Which bush foods did we try?



'Special' Free Friday Guided Walk... "Have A Blooming Good Time" Friday 14th August 10.00am – 11.30am



Bottlebrushes, Grevillea and Everlasting Daisies are providing lots of colour as well as nectar for the birds, bees and butterflies.

Join Maya, Botanic Gardens Visitors Services Officer and other Garden Friends and find what else is flowering or blooming in the Botanic Gardens during our lovely winter weather.

Let us know if you wish to come along by contacting the Botanic Gardens and booking the date with us or meet us at the Administration Building / The Garden's Shop just

before 10.00am. Cost Free:

Needing refreshments after wards? Try the tasty menu at the Lagoons Café and view the monthly art exhibitions in the Lagoons Gallery.

Those Golden Everlasting daisies are putting on a show!



Remember we wanted a sea of Golden Everlasting Daises *Xerochrysum bracteatum* to view from the Lagoons Outlook Deck. Come down to Botanic Gardens walk out on to the Lagoon Outlook Deck and see their golden yellow blooms glowing in the sunshine. It is a great contrast when you walk from Screen and Hedges on the lower lagoon path into the cool dark shade of the trees of the Finch Hatton Gorge Waterway area, cross the bridge at the base of the waterfall and then step out into the open sunshine and be met by the yellow everywhere. Just glorious! The photos don't do it justice; you just have to see it.

You will also notice the progress of the path underneath the Lagoon Outlook Deck. The path has been up-graded, a rock wall installed and we are just waiting for the fence that will complete this section of the lower lagoon path.



What's On in the Future...

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>

'Botanica 2015'...

An Exhibition by the Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Lagoons Gallery
Wednesday September 2nd – October 25th 2015



The Botanica 2015 Exhibition's features Orchids both native and exotic. The artists use a range of techniques to portray their chosen subject. The exhibition complements the 20th Australian Orchid Council Conference and Show being held in Mackay in September.

Botanical art combines detail, accuracy and artistry, with many hours needed for each watercolour painting, acrylic painting or graphite drawing. A glimpse into the inner workings of the botanical artists is provided by displays of their sketchbooks, photos, odd pods and all things flora, showing how the artists take a live specimen and create a "living" piece of botanical art.

Featured image is a Cooktown orchid *Dendrobium bigibbum* by Julie Inkson.

Meet the Artists: Wednesday September 2nd 10am - 1pm.

*** The Artists will also be able to speak about their orchid artworks to lovers of orchids attending the "Orchids in Paradise Conference". The pre-conference tour includes visits to the Orchid House, Guided walks in the Botanic Gardens, and lunch in the Lagoons Gallery and Cafe where the orchid artworks will be on show.

Miltonia spectabilis var. *moreliana* by Madge Barnett



Offshoots: A Florilegium from the Cairns Botanic Gardens An Exhibition by Julie McEnery

The offshoots exhibition will be shared by two Mackay galleries... **ARTSPACE** and **Lagoons Gallery** at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens



Lagoons Gallery

Opening Wednesday October 28th – Sunday December 6th 2015
Viewing times: Wednesday to Friday 10 am - 3pm and Weekends from 9am - 4pm

Artspace

Opening Night Friday October 23rd – Sunday December 6th 2015
Viewing times: Tuesday – Friday 10am - 5pm and Weekends 10am - 3pm

The *Offshoots* touring exhibition is a selection of works, taken from a series of five solo exhibitions presented at the Tanks Arts Centre in Cairns between 2009 and 2013. Apart from being a series of drawings, paintings and etchings, *Offshoots* is the story of a five year relationship between an artist, her local botanic gardens and her local arts centre.

Julie's work is informed by the principles of botanical illustration and incorporates a range of media including drawing, painting, etching, lithography and mixed media. She sees drawing, (in the case of this exhibition, botanical drawing) as a means to forming an intimate connection with the subject and bringing about the inspiration for creative mark making.

Julie McEnery trained at Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney during the 1980s, later relocating to Cairns where she co-owned a popular design studio, the Chalk Art Shop, until 2008. Julie now works as a freelance artist and illustrator from her Cairns studio, exhibiting regularly and tutoring in Botanical Drawing with Queensland's Flying Arts Touring Program.

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

Stop Press 1:

**Calling all Dinosaurs... Gather for a stampede at the Coal Garden!
Saturday September 5th at 4.00pm.
Carnivores and Herbivores feasting at 6.00pm**

It is really the next Friends Guided walk at the Botanic Gardens. For more information or to RSVP call or email Maya.

Stop Press 2:

We had a Curator for a day or nearly two...

Despite a hope that the position of Curator at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens had been permanently filled, I can confirm that Ross Demuth, who most of you will know, is going to continue in the role as Acting Curator whilst Council finalises permanent recruitment. This recruitment process will continue now in earnest following the recent preferred candidate not continuing in the role.

Whilst this is an unfortunate disruption in the desire to see a permanent appointment, the day to day operations at the Botanic Gardens will continue as usual and the program for the major design project for the Botanic Gardens will continue without impact. Council is committed to this project and has available resources to continue.