

Newsletter

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

2015 No 7

Spring has Sprung... with warm sunny days and flowers bursting into bloom. Enjoy the latest from 'The Botanic Gardens'...

Did you see it?

Cultivating Consciousness

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

The Farmer and the Tree Hugger exhibited 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



Part of their exhibition was outside in the Finch Hatton Gorge Waterway fountain pool.

Titled 'Wave Harp', it is constructed from individually cut and crafted stems from a bamboo forest at Finch Hatton.

Lesley Kane stated of the work... "Potent combinations of art, music and history inspired this work alluding to breaking waves, pulsating ocean rhythms and the mystery surrounding the historical voyage of the S.S. Yongala from Mackay.

'Wave Harp' was a finalist in the STRAND Ephemera Townsville, The North's Sculpture Festival.



'Wave Harp' is still on show if you haven't seen it yet.

There is lots of time to take a very close look at the newest exhibition. 'Botanica 2015'... 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 will complement the 20th Australian Orchid Council Conference and Show being held in Mackay in September.

Featured image is *Dendrobium* cv. by Julie Inkson.

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.

*** The Artists will be available 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.



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. Early Bird tickets available now!

More details on the website. <http://orchidsinparadise.com.au/index.html>

Plant Profile: *Phaius australis* Swamp Orchid

This is a spectacular clumping ground orchid that has long 'pleated' dark green leaves that arise from partly buried egg-shaped pseudo-bulbs.

It can be up to 2m tall when in flower with up to 12 showy orchid flowers borne on the upper part of the cane-like stems. The flowers that can be up to 100mm in diameter are probably the largest of the Australian orchids.

It was once widespread in eastern Australia, growing in swamps with grasses and sedges in the open or in open forests; however it is now **Endangered** in the wild.

It usually grows in swampy grassland or swampy forest including rainforest, eucalypt or paper bark forest, mostly in coastal areas.

See it blooming in the Tropical Shade Garden now!

Threats to its continued growth in 'the wild' are ...

Illegal collection for horticulture or cut flowers.

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 and... Invasion of habitat by introduced weeds.



Public consultation for detailed design of Stage three of MRBG.

Mackay Regional Council invites you to have your say on the future design stages of the Botanic Gardens.

Council is currently preparing detailed design options for the remaining undeveloped section of the Botanic Gardens. There is approximately 30 hectares of Gardens to be developed, and we want your ideas! The design team, Place Design Group, will aim to create one of the most significant gardens in regional Australia.



Around 75 people came to the FREE consultation event at the Botanic Gardens on Saturday 29 August, between 10.30am and 1pm. The event was held on the viewing platform at the Botanic Gardens, next to the Lagoons Café, who provided free tasty treats on the day. Attendees also went into the draw to win an iPad.

Attendees actively engaged with the panels on show as well as taking the time to talk to the consultants. More people engaged with the panels at the Twilight Street Party in the city heart the same night.

You can also get involved and submit your feedback online, so visit the project page at our online engagement website [Connecting Mackay](#) to find out more. Feedback forms are also available at the Administration building of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. The forms can then be posted, faxed or left at the Botanic Gardens.

Please feel free to forward this information on to your friends and family.

If you have any enquiries, please don't hesitate to contact Joanne Hennessy directly on 4961 9975.



Some of the interactive panels where attendees placed stickers

Congratulation to local artist Kate Brunner for winning an iPad at our Community Feedback Day and presented by Cr Theresa Morgan. As you can see she was absolutely thrilled!



Education officers share Botanic Gardens secrets.

Francis Blines, Education officer from Brisbane Botanic Gardens came to visit our Botanic Gardens to see how Maya utilizes the site and the buildings, especially the Meeting Room, for educational sessions.

Seeing photos of the children interacting with the resources made the information come alive. We also talked about worksheets I create, the Australian Curriculum and how each school has a tailor made session depending on their curriculum focus.



Maya also spoke of her Small Explorers sessions for Kindergartens, Family day care and Child care groups and groups of parents/ grandparents with their young children. Much was discussed in the 2 ½ hour session which included a walk to show various garden areas used for not only plants but creatures too.

Image: Maya Harrison and Francis Blines standing near the *Neisosperma kilneri* Ornate-fruited Neisosperma tree.

Plant profile:



Neisosperma kilneri **Ornate-fruited Neisosperma** **Apocynaceae**

Classified as vulnerable and of significance to this region, this rainforest tree has been promoted by SGAP Mackay Branch for many years.

It is endemic to this region, and is locally-common in a number of disjunct populations from Mt Dryander north of Proserpine to Koumala. It was first collected on Mt Dryander in 1871 and was described by Ferdinand von Mueller.

In more recent years it has been recorded on Mt Blackwood and, in 1991 the population, in the 'Range west of Koumala' that was originally collected by Frances in 1927, was re-located. It has sweetly perfumed white flowers and the mature fruit, borne in pairs, are large and bright orange to deep red.

The extremely hard brownish endocarp, that contains the seeds, is distinctive and ornate, hence the common name Ornate-fruited Neisosperma. Propagating material of this species has also been provided to the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Education sessions in the Botanic Gardens... what a busy month!



August 6th ... 15 Matsuura students came with an interpreter and discovered some of Australian Bush Foods. They were more adventurous than me and tried the Cheese fruit *Morinda citrifolia*. They said it tasted just like blue vein cheese. They weren't so keen on the Cluster figs though after seeing the pollinating wasps inside. It was delightful to see the children coming up with the correct Japanese words when the interpreter was struggling and I'm sure that helped them remember some of the information shared.

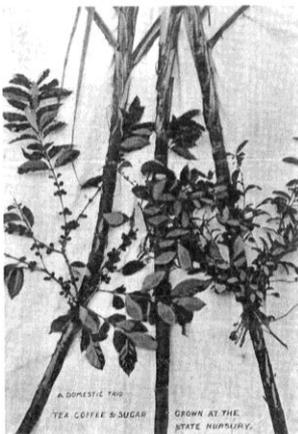
August 11th ... 37 Prep children from St John's Catholic School learning about life cycles of both fauna and flora.



August 18th ... Guided walk with 14 special needs students from Mirani High School where we discovered bush foods, birds, small creatures, seeds and berries. We even went to the Kitchen garden to see what was available to eat and tried out the 6 turf trial squares to see which turf was the best to lie on.

August 18th and 19th ... 2 buses each day of students from Mackay State High School participated in self-guided visit to the Botanic Gardens.

August 28th ... 100 year 2 children from Fitzgerald school had a History focussed guided walk in Heritage Gardens and Torres Strait Islander Gardens.



Acclimatisation Garden

Early in the development of the new colony that was to become known as Queensland, a series of research gardens were established in many of the new settlements to trial introduced and local species of plants to assess their potential for food, fibre and for other economic purposes. The Mackay State Nursery garden was established across Kaliguil Lagoon above the Pump House – now the site for the Botanic Gardens operations, nursery and research gardens. Many crops were trialled here including tea, coffee, sugar, avocado, etc with varying degrees of success. This garden reintroduces some of these crops to the site.



Cremorne

John Greenwood Barnes began the development of a major garden at Cremorne in North Mackay in 1867 where a diverse range of palms, tropical fruit trees and food plants were successfully established at the instigation of Baron von Mueller the botanist from Melbourne Botanic Gardens. This was effectively the first botanic gardens for the city and Barnes modelled his development on the famous Cremorne Gardens in London progressively adding many attractions. Regrettably his enterprise suffered from flooding and today only a few coconut palms remain.

Small Explorers:

August 17th ... Small Explorers sessions: 'Plant a Seed and Grow a Mind, 20 children and parents / grandparents / carers.

August 20th... 48 children from Eimeo C & K Kindergarten came and learnt about all sorts of creatures including caterpillars of the four o'clock moths, crickets and ant lions and the habitats they live in. The image shows the children and the adults too searching for Harlequin Bugs in the Native Hibiscus bushes in the Screens and Hedges area of the Gardens.



August 25th and 27th... Slade Point Kindergarten cancelled due to expensive bus costs for their small group. Maya is looking at ways to overcome this problem. Any suggestions?

August 28th ... Small Explorers sessions: 'Plant a Seed and Grow a Mind, 15 children and family day care carers.

"Plant a seed and grow a mind"



August 17th... 20 children and parents / grandparents / carers got fascinated by all sorts of seeds, big, small, spiny and smooth that become plants like the ones growing in our Botanic Gardens. The session included story reading, making a recycled pot, planting a seed or two to take home and a small walk in the Gardens.

August 28th... Another group of Family Day Care Providers from Inspired ec and their children had a similar experience, sorting seeds learning about seeds, having a walk in the garden to find some seeds on plants and later making recycled newspaper pots to

plant pumpkins and marigolds in (They were the seeds in the story).



What's happening for kids this school holidays?

There is a new book for children and bird lovers!

You can get your own signed copy when you attend the...

CRAZY BIRD STORIES BOOK LAUNCH

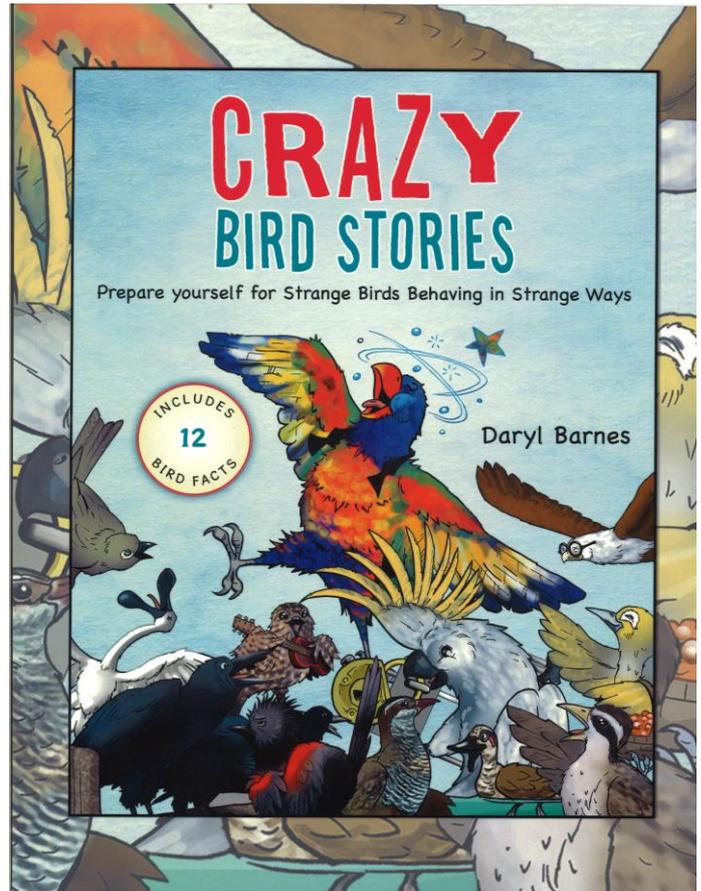
Consider this your invitation...

The Book Launch:
Friday 25th September 4.00pm
Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Lagoons Café

The Book launch includes **bird watching** opportunities on the Lagoon Outlook deck using **scopes and binoculars**; book reading; Rainbow Lorikeet and bird mask making; Birdlife Mackay's display and information and some tasty nibbles from the Botanic Gardens Lagoons Cafe.

Don't get in a flap about it...just come and join in.
R.S.V.P. by the 20th September to Daryl Barnes 49593382 or email dbarnes02@dodo.com.au

Children are very welcome.



More things to do during the School Holidays:

“Dinosaurs Ruled” A new School Holiday Quiz at the Botanic Gardens.
Win some Dinosaur models and a Dinosaur Dig set!

Calling all Dinosaurs lovers...

Have you ever wondered about the type of plants the Dinosaurs ate?

Will you discover Horsetails, Wollemis, Ginkoes, Pine Plums or just Petrified wood while trying out the latest School Holiday Quiz at The Botanic Gardens? There are footprints there already, so who has been there before you? Maybe dinosaurs are lurking!

Quizzes are available from Monday 21st September at the Botanic Gardens or online on the Botanic Gardens website.
www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au

Completed quizzes can be returned to Botanic Gardens Administration.



“Dinosaurs Ruled” School Holiday Quiz winner drawn Friday 2nd October...

And more things to do during the School Holidays: “Dinosaurs Ruled” School Holiday Activities ...



Children will venturing to the Coal Garden to see dinosaur footprints, petrified wood and plants similar to those from ancient times. Later in the Botanic Gardens Meeting room they pretend to be paleontologists by digging up fossils, learn about plants similar to those dinosaurs might have eaten, while making their own plant fossils using clay during the two hour session.

Sessions are available from 10.00am – 12.00noon on Wednesday 23rd, Thursday 24th Tuesday 29th, Wednesday 30th September, and Thursday 1st October 2015.

Each child **MUST HAVE...** hat, closed in shoes, water bottle and sunscreen to participate! Each group is limited to 10 school aged children (5 years and older)

Payment with Bookings by Friday 18th September... ensures your child attendance.

Cost \$5.00 each

Contact Botanic Gardens 49527300 or email botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au to book your child's attendance.

We have been in the news again...

SLOW DOWN | Surrendered wildlife happens more than people think

Possum Magic: Help is on hand

Louise Starkey
louise.starkey@dailymercury.com.au

BLIND, burnt and bare without a mother was the condition Ross the possum was in when he was surrendered to the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. Acting curator Ross Demuth was confronted with the wellbeing of the native animal on Monday, after being found on the side of the road.

"A lady walked in with this little possum (right) in her hand and she said, 'I found this little thing scrambling along in the grass, heading towards the road,'" he said. "It had problems with its eyes and couldn't obviously see properly, so I took him on board."

From there, Mr Demuth called Mackay's Australian Wildlife Rescue Service. AWRS carer and rescuer Fay Paterson said the condition of the surrendered possum was poor.

"His little feet have got burns on them and the smokiness in his eyes means either green ants, or something, has bitten his eyes," she said. "At the moment he's being treated with an eye ointment and hopefully he'll be all right." However, his surrender isn't uncommon. Ms Paterson has eight possums in her care at present.

As a volunteer to the AWRS, she encounters surrendered wildlife on a daily basis: including possums, snakes and joeys.

Ms Paterson encouraged members of the public to stop, analyse and call the AWRS, if animals are spotted injured or dead on the side of the road.

"If you see them on the road, for goodness sake slow down," she said.

WHAT TO DO

- If you see a dead animal stop, look around and check its pouch for young;
- Leave the baby in the pouch, if found, as few species fuse to the mother;
- Call members of the 24 hour wildlife rescue service on 0447 543 268.

POOR POSSUM: Ross the baby possum, with Visitor Services officer Maya Harrison, was found on the side of the road near the Botanic Gardens.

PHOTOS: LEE CONSTABLE

Remember all those Golden Everlasting Daisies...

FLOURISH: | Fields of flowers on show at Mackay's Botanic Gardens

Daisies bright start to season

Louise Starkey

louise.starkey@dailymercury.com.au

GOLDEN Everlasting Daisies have sprung into action at the Botanic Gardens, ready for the first day of spring today.

More than 900 yellow plants, also known as "paper daisies", were planted earlier this year to flourish just in time for spring.

Botanic Gardens visitors services officer Maya Harrison said the yellow attraction was a first for the Lagoon's edge.

However, they're not just visually appealing.

Ms Harrison said bees and butterflies had taken a liking to the daisies' new home.

"It's really going to keep them happy this season, with the nectar and pollen they produce available," she said.

The Powderpuff Lillypilly

AUGUST

Weatherzone's official figures for August were:

- Lowest temperature: 4.6 degrees (August 8)
- Average min temperature: 11.5 degrees
- Maximum temperature: 28.1 degrees (August 25)
- Average max temperature: 24.8 degrees
- Wettest day this month: 0.4mm (August 30)
- Total rainfall: 0.8mm

has also started to flourish, with a big "ball of puff" on show.

Ms Harrison said the Roaring Meg, also known as the Tecomanthe, has also started to bloom, along with the Brachychiton out the front of the Botanic Gardens. "This time of season really makes you appreciate what nature can



BLOOMING: Mackay Regional Council's Botanic Gardens visitor services officer Maya Harrison is surrounded by Golden Everlasting Daisies as spring starts.

PHOTO: LEE CONSTABLE

do," she said.

Spring is also looking to be warmer than average, according to a Bureau of Meteorology spokesman. "That could

make it more humid in coastal areas," he said. "It will be cooler inland."

"Expect rainfall generally close to average for spring. That means about 137mm,

if you live near Mackay Airport.

"In the short term, the next few days will remain fine around Mackay," he said.

Plant profile... *Xerochrysum bracteatum* Golden Everlasting Daisy.



Add a little everlasting sunshine to your garden...

These very popular plants bring long-lasting colour and warmth into the garden. There are many everlasting daisies available in nurseries with flowers varying from white through cream, lemon, canary yellow, gold and bronze.

This Everlasting Daisy has an erect habit and grows to around 1m in height. It has weak hollow stems and thin green leaves. Flowers occur from autumn to early summer and the plant will keep producing flowers particularly if spent flowers are continually removed. Butterflies and other insects love them and will flock to your garden adding another area of interest.

As seeds disperse, wild sown plants add a touch of surprise to your garden.

They are also excellent as dried flowers, keeping their shape and colour for years - just hang a bunch up-side-down in a dark airy place and let them dry for a few weeks.

What have the Friends of the Gardens been up to?



The Garden Friends were 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.

(Bells and Mirrors for Bill)

Around 30 friends and family visitors enjoyed the day, the history and the opportunity to say Happy Birthday to Bill McWhinney (President of the Friends of the Gardens) celebrating his 75th birthday.



There is quite a bit of history associated with the park, which Bob Hodda told us about. As well as that, of course there will be many interesting plants which Meryl Ritchie described.

Bob Hodda explaining about the South Sea Islander trails and graves.



Calling all Dinosaurs... ...Gather for a stampede at the Coal Garden!

This was the cheeky way Maya alerted us to the other Guided Walk put on for the Friends, but also including members of the public, to find out a little more about the Coal Garden section of the Botanic Gardens.



It was wonderful to have a different person to lead the walk, this time being Helen Paulsen, the first Curator of our Botanic Gardens.

We started at the beginning of time and with supporting photographs, participants were able to see how the Coal garden was created and the significant features in the area.

It is quite amazing to see the growth of plants in this garden.

The Wollemi Pine was one of the plants featured during the talk.

Afterwards, Carnivores and Herbivores feasted and new friends were made.



Plant profile...

Wollemia nobilis Wollemi Pine

THE WOLLEMI PINE is perhaps the world's rarest tree. It was discovered in late 1994 in a deep gorge of the Wollemi National Park 150kms from Sydney, the tiny remnant population numbers fewer than 40 adult trees.

The Wollemi Pine belongs to the ancient family Araucariaceae but its closest known relative exists only in the form of a fossil from the Jurassic Period.



A large and beautiful tree that is emergent above the canopy of Coachwood and Sassafras, it reaches 35 metres in height and one metre in diameter. Believed to be extinct until now, the discovery of *Wollemia nobilis* is a great botanical event of our time.

The Wollemi Pine is considered to be an endangered species due to its extremely restricted distribution, the possibility of a very restricted number of genetic individuals, its seemingly slow rate of recruitment of new genetic individuals, and the long time before sexual maturity.

The species is considered to be threatened by unauthorised collection (this may impede the long-term replacement of reproductive plants and cause a loss of genetic diversity), catastrophic fire events, the introduction of pathogens, especially fungal species such as *Phytophthora cinnamomea*, and other impacts from unauthorised site visits such as trampling of seedlings, compaction of soil and the introduction of weeds.

Commercial release of the Wollemi Pine was undertaken with the specific objective of reducing the threat to the population in the wild from illegal collectors. The Wollemi Pine is keenly sought after as a horticultural plant and through the commercialisation process the plant was commercially available in 2006.

Since the discovery of the Wollemi Pine, thousands of requests for plants of this species have been received. The popularity of the plant has been increased by its profile as one of the world's rarest plants and its status as a conifer species (a much collected and grown group worldwide). The biggest risks identified by the Recovery Team were over-collecting and the possibility of fire, disease or weeds entering the site. Therefore, collection and distribution of plant material required careful planning and control to minimise these risks. Initial assessment indicates that the wood quality of the Wollemi Pine is high, but further research is required to see if it is as useful as other members of the *Araucariaceae* family (Hoop & Bunya Pines etc) and amenable to growing in plantations.



Unfortunately – not every species is as ‘high profile’ as the Wollemi Pine...and this tree do not survive in many climates where high humidity and rainfall occur, such as our Bioregion.

“What’s On” in the Future

Special Free Friday Guided Walk: Friday 25th September

The Coal Garden will be featured...

Will we discover Horsetails, Wollemis and Gingkoes during this informative walk going back in time along the path? There are footprints there already, so who has been there before us? There may be dinosaurs lurking too!

Let us know if you wish to come along to any of the walks 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.

Lagoons Café is open Wednesday- Friday 10.00am – 3.00pm and Weekends 9.00am - 4.00pm Phone: 49526930 or email lagoonscafe@optusnet.com.au



Plant profile...

For all those orchid lovers, here is another one.



Dendrobium discolor Golden Orchid

The name is from the Greek dendron (meaning tree) and bios (meaning life).

The species are either epiphytic, growing on a tree, or occasionally lithophytic, growing over a rock. They have adapted to a wide variety of habitats.

The orchids in this genus often develop pseudo-bulbs, which unite into a long reed-like stem with a typical length of more than 30 cm. Short, ovate leaves grow alternately over the whole length of the stems. The axillary flower buds develop into short flower stalks with one or two terminal flowers. The orchids grow quickly throughout summer, but take a long rest during winter. In the spring, new shoots are formed from the base of the main plant and the dormant buds come back into action. The blooming flowers are found on pseudo-bulbs formed in the previous year.

**Make sure you take a walk in the Tropical Shade Gardens...NOW!
...And see our bloomin’ Orchids!**