

Newsletter

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

2015 No 8

The end of the year is approaching quickly and what a year it has been. Enjoy the latest from "the Botanic Gardens".

Did you see it?

'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.

Did you see the Flying Duck, an Australian native orchid, very aptly described? *Caleana major* by Maya Harrison



"Orchids in Paradise"



"Orchids in Paradise" was a combined 20th Australian Orchid Council and 50th Tropical Queensland Orchid Council Conference and Show held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) on Friday the 18th September to Tuesday 22nd September 2015.

It provided 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 "Orchids in Paradise" pre-conference tour included visits to the Orchid House, Guided walks in the Botanic Gardens, and lunch in the Lagoons Gallery and Cafe where the Botanic Art Interest Group's (BAIG) orchid artworks were on show. The BAIG ladies also had cards made of their artworks and sold many to the visitors, especially the native orchids. Packs of these cards were used as presentation gifts for the Conference speakers.

The Pre-conference tour group were delighted to see the orchids in our Tropical Shade Garden. Swamp Orchids, Golden Orchids, Queensland

Black orchid and the Vanilla orchid were all blooming beautifully just in time for their visit. Now the Christmas orchids are beginning to bloom too.

Plant Profile:

Calanthe australasica, the Christmas Orchid



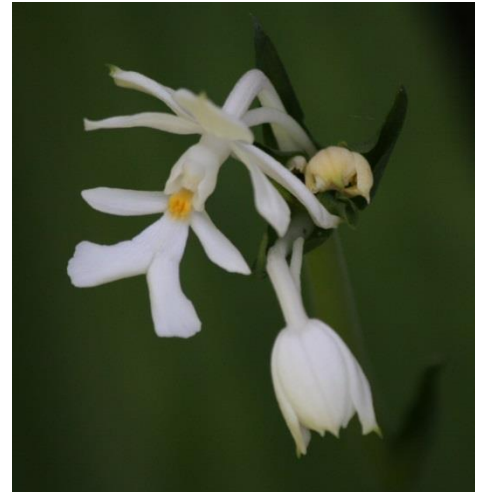
The Christmas Orchid is an evergreen terrestrial orchid. It has soft, obovate leaves which grow to 90cm with showy white flowers borne on erect spike to 150cm in summer.

Distribution: QLD, NSW, South-east Asia. Propagation is by seed or by division.

Cultivation: Readily grown in heavily shaded, moist but not badly drained position in sheltered, warm garden and is an excellent pot plant. It is commonly seen locally at Eungella.

Do you see the little figure in each individual flower?

Look carefully... there are two arms and legs, a little head with a yellow necklace or scarf and a really big sunhat?



Come and see them flowering now in the Tropical Shade Garden.

Calling all artists who would like to exhibit their works during 2016: Lagoons Gallery Exhibition dates are available now!

The Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens is committed to providing opportunities to local artists through the **Lagoons Gallery** and also where possible, utilizing outdoor spaces of the Botanic Gardens site. Based on availability most exhibitions, installations and displays will feature for a minimum of 4 weeks.

To take part in the selection, please submit your completed proposal, with an attached CV/outline and photo documentation of your work to the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens - Attention to: Visitor Services Officer, Maya Harrison, P.O. Box 41 Mackay 4740 or simply call in to Botanic Gardens Administration at 9 Lagoon Street West Mackay.

Lagoons Gallery Exhibition proposals can be found on the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens website under the What's On / Exhibitions tab. Scroll to the bottom of the Exhibitions page and click on the link for a PDF of the Exhibition proposal.

Below is the website link.

<http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au/events/exhibitions>

Contact Botanic Gardens 49527300 or email botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au for more information.



Community Interactions... Guided walks:

During September, the regular free Friday Guided walks have fewer numbers, now the weather is getting much hotter. Two people attended the Special walk to discover the Coal Gardens and we finished in the Shade Garden to escape the hot sun.

3 people attended a walk led by Helen Paulsen at the same time Maya led 45 participants in the Preconference Tour for the "Orchids In Paradise Conference on Sept 18th.



Almost 40 people participated in the Beautiful Walks of Mackay through the Regional Forest section of the Botanic Gardens. The walk was arranged by Mackay Conservation Group (Peter McCallum) and led by Maya on Sunday 27th Sept.

Daryl Barnes also attended on behalf of Birdlife Mackay. A Nankeen Night Heron was spotted on the Railway bridge rocks and also a sleeping brown carpet python.

There was a lovely write up in the local paper about it titled 'Walk through the wild'



Walk through the wild

Residents discover gardens' hidden wonders



Jacki Wirth enjoyed the walk with her granddaughter Anika. Denis Fitzsimmons is in the background.



A zodiac moth caterpillar was one of the exciting discoveries on the walk.

By LUCY SMITH

EVERY day Mackay residents pass through the Botanic Gardens without knowing the full extent of its native residents.

Roughly 40 residents learnt a little bit more about the gardens last weekend at a Beautiful Walk organised by the Mackay Conservation Group.

Mackay Conservation Group project officer Peter McCallum said participants "saw things they weren't expecting" on the walk.

"We saw a carpet snake hiding under the rocks and spotted a nankeen night heron, which is unusual to see. It's lucky we had someone from Birdlife Mackay pointing out what it

was," he said.

The group of explorers tasted bush food and learnt about native plants.

Mr McCallum said the group saw a Zodiac moth caterpillar, a species found in the area.

"It's got beautiful colours ... the caterpillar drops down on a web from the tree, and climbs back again when it thinks the danger's disappeared," he said.

The Beautiful Walk is a monthly event run by the Mackay Conservation Group, which receives funding from Mackay Regional Council's Natural Environment Levy.

Mr McCallum said the walks were a great way for residents to learn more about areas of Mackay they may already be familiar

with.

"They can rediscover places like the Botanic Gardens. Most people who go there are jogging or walking the dog, and they're not really looking at the things in the gardens," he said.

"Often you have to look up into the trees to really see the wildlife."

On the last Sunday of October, the walk will take place at Sandfly Creek.

Mr McCallum said the area, situated in East Mackay, had a unique history and environment.

"In the mid-1980s there was a proposal to put a massive tourist development there, with a marina and hotel," he said.

"Eventually it was turned into an environmental reserve. It's highly valued as a site for migratory birds."



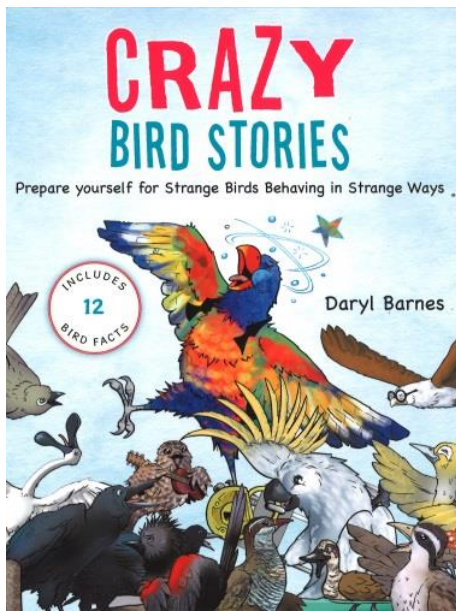
Visitors Services Officer Talks with Community.

Not just the walks but talks as well.

Maya presented a talk on "Butterflies and Moths" to 32 participants from Parkinson's support group. The group learnt about the plants the butterflies and moths use during their life cycles as well as seeing caterpillars, cocoons and a zodiac moth fly into the room.

(Maya planned that for the moth to fly in... Ha ha)

CRAZY BIRD STORIES BOOK LAUNCH



Around 50 people supported Daryl Barnes for an official Book Launch of his first book called "Crazy Bird Stories". There was also the opportunity to do a little bird spotting from the deck with binoculars and scopes. Children were kept busy making crazy bird masks.

This all took place on the Lagoon's Café deck on Friday 25th September from 4.00pm when many birds were coming into roost on the trees surrounding the Lagoon. Pelicans were in large numbers too.



Congratulations Daryl and thanks also to the Lagoons Café staff for assistance and nibbles. Crazy Bird Stories (complete with bird facts) is available in The Garden's Shop for \$20 a copy. Great Christmas gift!

Education sessions in the Botanic Gardens.

Schools: 165 children attended 2 Plant-ed sessions

Mackay West State School Year 2. September 11th.

118 children came in two separate groups from 9.30 – 2.30.

There were three rotations for each group, so 6 small sessions in total however, the last rotation was abandoned so the group could walk back to their school without getting too wet. The group were studying plant and creature life cycles. There were many examples to view in our Gardens and in the display in the meeting room. The group took over all the space on the Outlook deck and outside the meeting room for lunch.





47 children came to learn about Living Things / Life cycles during their education session involving meeting room set up with creatures, posters, books and games. The walk with Maya helped the children discover many creatures that would otherwise go unnoticed.



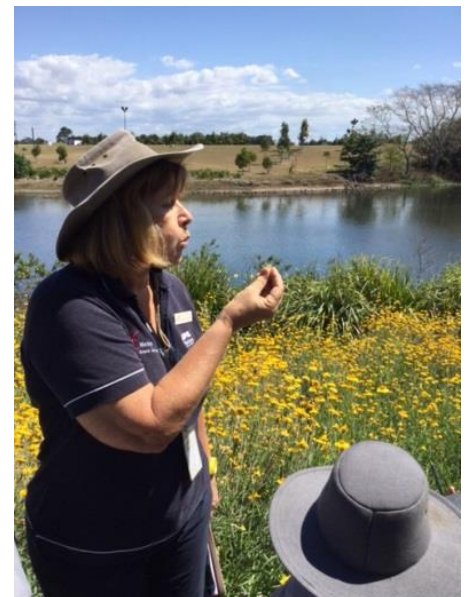
← Harlequin Bugs with pink eggs,
Sunbird's nest,
Assassin Bug, →
Case Moth
Caterpillars, Bungee
Jumping Caterpillars



and their cocoons, Eastern Water Skinks, and lots of Green Ant nests exposed because of the Spring drop of leaves.



Yes, in the tropics our seasons are a bit different. Leaves fall off the trees in Spring and have new growth again in a few weeks.) Then there were the seeds of the Everlasting Daises that we dispersed by blowing their tiny parachutes.



‘Plant a seed and grow a Mind’

2 privately arranged Small Explorers Groups “planted a seed and grew a mind”.

Totalling 31 children, there are now many recycled pots with pumpkins and marigolds out in the community. Why Pumpkins and Marigolds? There were the seeds in the story which was read to the children amongst other activities that kept them interested.



We looked inside familiar fruit and vegetables to find the seeds and for some children they discovered some new tastes.



We sorted seeds and found out which ones floated.

We saw the biggest seed in the world (Coco De Mer), and the smallest gumnut that grows into a big tree. We blew parachute seeds and tossed winged seeds into the air to watch them spin all the way to the ground.



We walked in the Gardens and found even more seeds.



Making the recycled pot from newspaper required not just our hands but our arms as well.

Planting the seeds in a little hole was intricate for small hands.

Are we seeing the future horticulturists or at least future gardeners that can grow their own food?



Small Explorers Kindy groups.



22 children from Eimeo Kindergarten were very keen to find creatures living in different habitats in the Botanic Gardens. They were certainly surprised to see how small the egg of the Common Grass yellow butterfly was and how the caterpillar was exactly the same colour green as the leaves it was on. Very tricky to see! It certainly inspired heads down and tail up to draw one of the caterpillars on their worksheets. Another caterpillar dropping down on a silky thread also got their attention.

School Holiday Activities.

Dinosaurs appeared in the Coal Garden and families came to see them.

There was yet another quiz for the school holidays, this time focussing on Dinosaurs. There were also Activity sessions of 2 hours with the same theme. What did they get up too?



The meeting room was set up with a glass table filled with real fossils, and on the larger table there was petrified wood, plant fossils in mud stone, a dinosaur egg which hatched over the two weeks and dinosaur dig sets.



Children ventured to the Coal Garden to see dinosaur footprints, petrified wood and plants similar to those from ancient times and had the opportunity to complete the dinosaur quiz too. One group is photographed here standing on petrified wood sample that are in the Coal Garden.



Along the walk back to the room one group discovered a wayward freshwater tortoise. We observed it in a large tub and found out there were turtles in the dinosaurs times too.



Later in the Botanic Gardens Meeting room they pretended to be paleontologists by digging up fossils, learning about plants similar to those dinosaurs might have eaten, while making their own plant fossils and dinosaurs using clay.



Vacation care groups totalling 76 children came and tried out the Quiz!

See how you go with this sample of Questions...

Dinosaurs Ruled Quiz

Check the map and walk to the Coal Garden for this School Holiday Dinosaur Quiz. The answers to the quiz can be found on the signs.

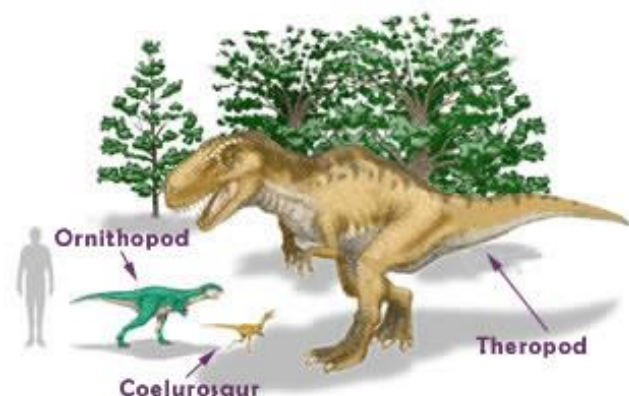


1. How many dinosaur footprints did you count?

2. Which dinosaur might have made these footprints?

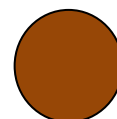
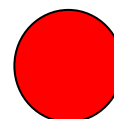
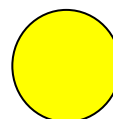
3. Did Dinosaurs eat Gum trees or Conifers?

Circle one of the pictures.



4. One tree that existed during dinosaur times and was rediscovered still living in Australia in 1994 is the... Willy Wonka Pine or Wollemi Pine? Circle the correct words

5. What colour did Ginkgo leaves turn in Autumn? Tick the correct colour



6. A Conifer called a Podocarp was unusual because it produced fruit.

Was it called a... Circle the correct words

'Pineapple pine', 'Plum pine' or 'Peach pine'

She was a winner:

Abigail won the recent School Holiday Quiz at the Botanic Gardens. Standing with new Botanic Gardens Curator, Richard Brown, Abigail was beaming as she received the three dinosaur prizes; a Dinosaur Dig set, a dinosaur egg that she can watch hatch into a dinosaur and a wooden model of a Stegosaurus to put together too.

There will be a new set of Quizzes during the Christmas School Holidays. Make sure you come along and enter so you can win some more great prizes.



Friends of the Gardens involvement:



We called all Dinosaurs... to gather for a stampede at the Coal Garden! Saturday > September 5th at 4.00pm with Carnivores and Herbivores feasting at 6.00pm

It is really the Friends Guided walk and BBQ at the Botanic Gardens and you didn't need to be old to come along.

The Coal Garden had some very interesting features and plants for us to discover and the walk was led by Helen Paulsen who was the Curator of the Botanic Gardens at the time the Coal Garden was created. 22 people participated in the walk which also gave the opportunity to see photos

showing how the area was created and the story of the pathways.



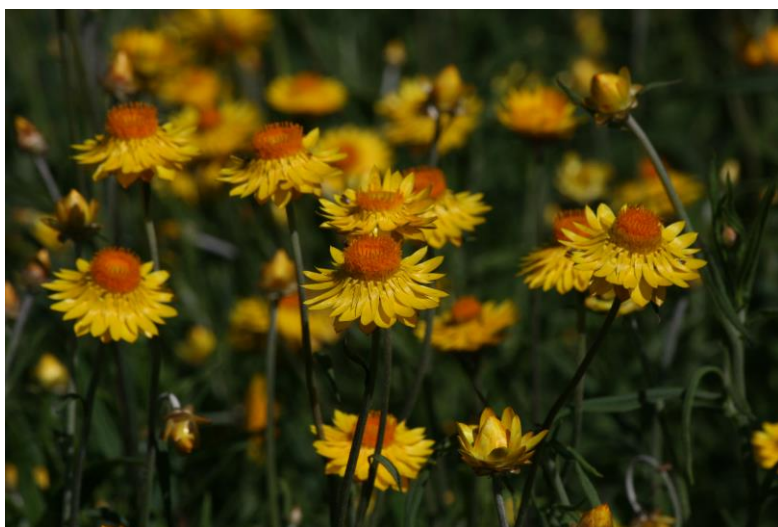
The flora paths had many specimens imprinted in the concrete and the sedimentary layers/ seams of the coal garden wall were created using real coal.

In the Botanic Gardens... a new face!

Welcome to Richard Brown taking on the role of Curator

Hi there!

One month in and it's flown by! I must say that what an exciting time it is to be starting as the Curator of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens! Stage 1 and 2 of the Gardens are really maturing into something quite special and the detailed design is rolling forward for the ever anticipated Meadowlands section. I'm really looking forward to see exactly what will be designed for that part of the site and truly make the MRBG into an even more impressive asset to Mackay than it already is.



I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming months (please forgive me if I forget a name here or there!). Dale Arvidsson certainly left some rather large shoes to fill as he did an incredible job with an unbridled passion and commitment he brought to the role! I only hope I can carry that baton forward.

Before I sign off, I'd like to give a special recognition to Ross Demuth for acting in the Curators role for such a long time! I'm sure you would agree he did a great job keeping things moving forward.

Plant profile:

Syzygium wilsonii* subsp. *wilsonii **Powderpuff Lilly-Pilly.**

An attractive beauty, showing off flowers and new growth in the Tropical Shade Garden.

Syzygium wilsonii subsp. *wilsonii* belongs to the genus of *Syzygium* (family *Myrtaceae*) containing over five hundred species, fifty occurring in Australia.

Also known as the Powderpuff Lillypilly, it is perhaps one of the most attractive and versatile of the "Lillypillies", though still somewhat unknown and under-used in horticulture. The lillypillies are one of the most sought after horticultural plant groups for landscaping and gardens.

This species is endemic to the far north Queensland rainforests, from Ingham to Cooktown, in lowland rainforests from sea level to 600-700m, growing in relatively poor soils. This species can be easily incorporated into any patio, courtyard or rainforest garden.



It is a small shrub 1-3 m tall with extremely attractive flowers and foliage with clusters of edible fruit that attracts wildlife. It has weeping branches with lanceolate reddish brown new foliage. Stiff narrow leaves to 18 cm x 5 cm, dark green and dull on upper surface and paler on underneath side of leaf. This species is the only one of the lillypillies to have red flowers. They have large, fluffy heads and flower from spring to summer.

White clusters of ovoid shaped fleshy fruits. The fleshy fruits can be easily propagated from the seed once fleshy fruit has been removed.

Plant out in a shaded or sheltered position away from drying winds and full sun. It can also be used as a specimen shrub in a raised garden bed or against a wall. Keep the plant well mulched and composted, it's also responds well to regular fertilizing encouraging new growth. This species responds well to regular tip pruning increasing the number of flowers produced.

To increase the impact of the plant try to incorporate with other species such as palm lilies, native gingers, ground covers and ornamental grasses. This will help create a structured garden with differing layers of height. This species can also be used as an under storey plant for a more established rainforest garden. This species is a particularly attractive potted plant making it accessible for people with smaller gardens and courtyards. The flowers can be used to attract wildlife such as birds and honeyeaters.

This species is an excellent ornamental plant for a garden with its showy puffy flowers, reddish-pink new foliage and clusters of white fruits.

Reference: Text by Chris McCarthy, Australian National Botanic Gardens - growing, studying and promoting Australia's flora.

Christmas is approaching fast...

**Avoid the shopping hustle and bustle by spending at The Garden's Shop.
Check out what is available!**



**A range of
beautiful wooden
carvings by local
artist Ron Draper**
(prices as marked)

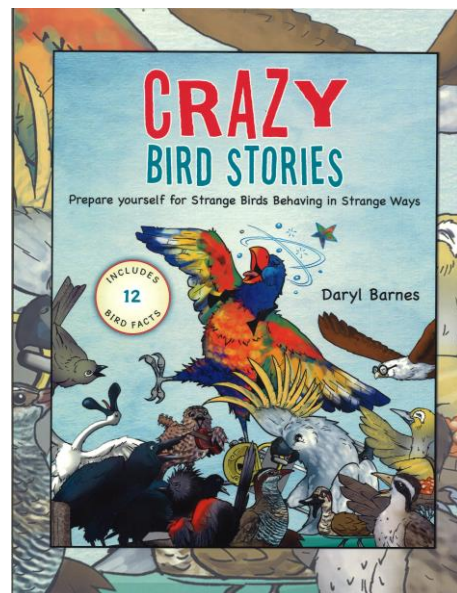
Books for children:



**The Bungee
Jumping
Caterpillars
(\$15)**

**And new
release →**

**Crazy Bird
Stories (\$20)**



**There are also some
wonderful Bell art products
including cards, notepads,
placemats, coasters, aroma
bloqs, clothes companions,
and soaps.
Prices range from \$7 to \$25.**

**And so much more! Come in
and browse sometime.**

Our next exhibition is shared with Artspace

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

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 McEnerny 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:

Feeling Creative?

Julie McEnerny is also conducting two different workshops at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens in November... BOOK NOW!



Botanic art, two ways:

A workshop series with Offshoots artist, Julie McEnerny

1. SKETCHING FROM NATURE

10am - 2:30pm Sat 14 November

Botanic Gardens Meeting Room

Julie prefers to work directly from life using a tactile approach to become familiar with the subject and its contours, 'sculpting' the form as done with charcoal or pastel. Water-soluble graphite pencils create subtle washes and strong detail, when producing interesting finished works or loose sketches. This workshop accommodates all levels of artistic ability. \$70 Members* (\$75 Non-mem)

Both workshops for ONLY \$130 (Mem*) or \$140 (Non-mem) Book now with Artspace Mackay, 4961 9722. *Members prices include Gallery Members and Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group Members.

Feeling Creative?



Botanic art, two ways:

A workshop series with Offshoots artist, Julie McEnery

2. MIXED MEDIA WORKSHOP
10am - 2:30pm Sun 15 November
Botanic Gardens Meeting Room

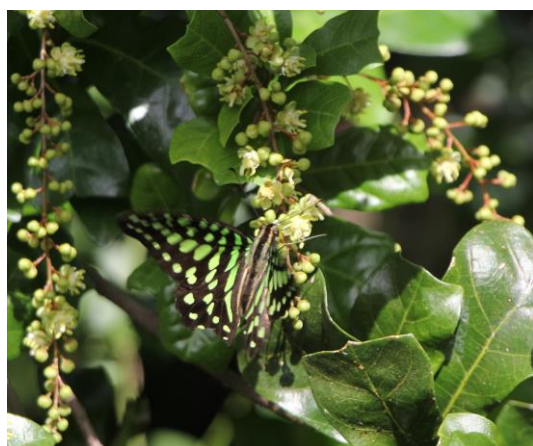
This workshop is about experimenting and creating but Julie asks that you also give a little thought to your materials beforehand and how you relate to the natural world. The 'Extra Materials' list on the back of this flyer may be helpful although your materials can be as simple or complex as you like; choose two, or three, or lots and feel free to include your own ideas. \$70 Members* (\$75 Non-mem)

Both workshops for ONLY \$130 (Mem*) or \$140 (Non-mem) Book now with Artspace Mackay, 4961 9722.

**Members prices include Gallery Members and Mackay Botanical Art Interest Group Members.*

The last Free Friday Guided Walk for 2015: Let's make it a Shady affair...

"Secrets of the Tropical Shade Garden" Friday 30th October: 10am – 11.30am



Join Maya and other Garden Friends to discover some of the plants and creatures that exist in the Tropical Shade Garden adjacent to the Administration Building. 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:

Free Guided walks for groups can still be organized for the rest of the year by contacting Maya on 49527321 or email. botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au

Needing refreshments afterwards? 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

Date claimer:

Saturday 28th November: Friends Christmas Gathering at Lagoons Café and Gallery. 6.30pm

Sunday 13th December: Christmas in the Gardens event: 5.30pm – 8.00pm

Make sure you have these dates marked in your calendar, so you don't miss out!