

Newsletter

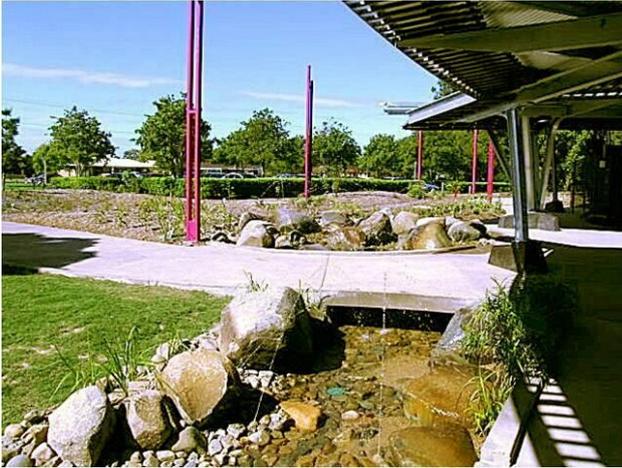
Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

2013 No 3

Welcome... Birthday Celebrations reach a climax on May 24 with a Book launch.

Enjoy the latest from 'The Gardens'...

**WE ARE 10 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR... Look how we have grown!
More Then and Now images...**



Featuring the Finch Hatton Gorge Waterway in 2003... and ten years later in 2013.



Orientation Garden Path zig-zags towards the Sugar Cane Wall & Life Forms sculpture...2003
In 2013... The Orientation Garden path can be followed without knowing where it ends...

One of the birthday presents for the Gardens...

...is taking a long time to happen.

The planting of 1,000 plants!
That's a hundred plants for each of our ten years
has being dampened by rain... again.
This special Planting Bee originally planned for
March 23rd, then postponed till April 13th, will now
happen on May 4th, fingers crossed and weather
permitting. Everyone is welcome to join in.



There's Special Wildlife in the Gardens...



Small Explorers found them during their wildlife session in the Botanic Gardens ... and soon they will feature in an exciting Children's story book, titled...

"The Bungee Jumping Caterpillars."

These caterpillars live on the Tree Omphalea *Omphalea celata* and become North Queensland Day Moths *Alcides metarus* or "Zodiac Moths".



As a special birthday present to the Botanic Gardens, Kate, Maya and Carolyn... three Friends of the Gardens with the assistance of a RADF (Regional Arts Development Fund) grant have created this special, local children's book to highlight not only the caterpillars and moths, but also introduce readers to 'threatened in the wild' plant species that are local too, and are growing in the Botanic Gardens. The book will be launched on the Botanic Gardens opening 'birth-date' on May 24th at the Lagoons Gallery.



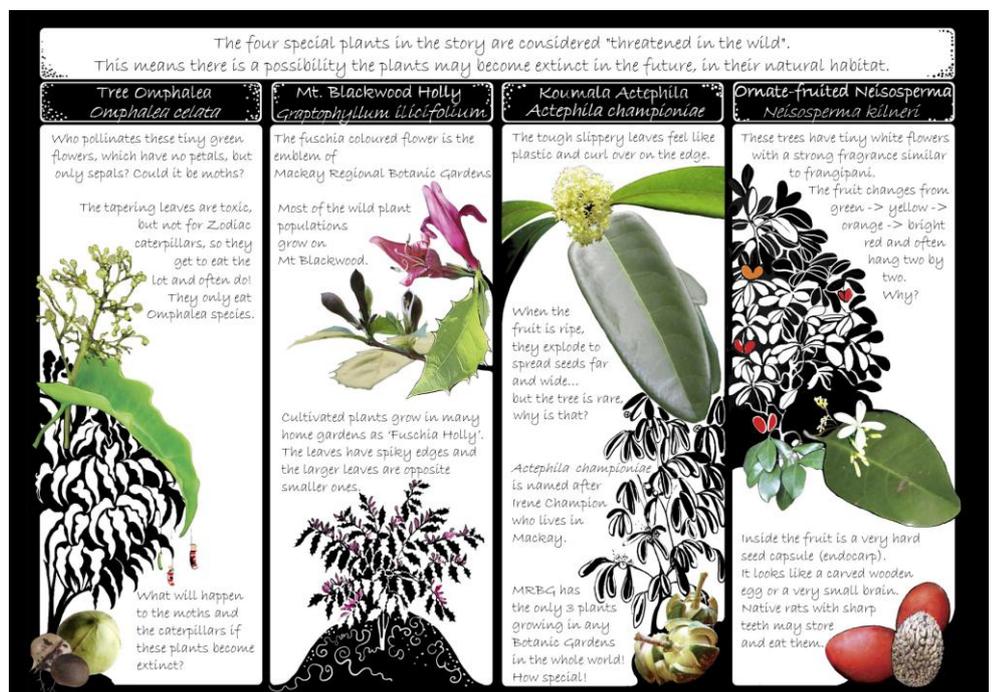
A SNEAK PEEK...

'The Bungee Jumping Caterpillars'... have moved to the printers...

After days and days of proofing, checking and making changes... the 28 pages (including the covers) of illustrations, photos and text combinations have made the printers.

Kate Brunner, the illustrator has done a fantastic and mammoth job of the artwork, which becomes the book.

Here is a sneak peek at the 'Plants' page... showing the four 'threatened in the wild' plants from the Central Queensland Coast Bioregion. Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens showcases the plants of this Bioregion...



What's on show in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens' Lagoons Gallery?

'Glory – The Full Manifestation'... An Exhibition by Pam Finlay Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens Lagoons Gallery 3rd April - 28th April 2013

"A garden is a celebration of nature's beauty. Through my artworks I aim to revisit the garden and its flowers captured from a microscopic perspective. By portraying fragments of the flower I am choosing to capture a glimpse of the complete picture and consequently encourage the viewer to contemplate.

Through these works I am also interpreting the majesty of a flower and its unfading beauty, the resilience and tenacity of a flower, how it forms and metamorphoses. Flowers exude energy and vitality and their colours and graceful form are intriguing. The flower is the glory of a plant, the full manifestation".



'Cattleya' by Pam Finlay

Pam's exhibition is a collection of acrylic paintings and mosaics.

On Friday 5th April, Pam had a "Meet the Artist" session, during which, she demonstrated to interested visitors how she captures the essence of the flower and transfers that to a canvas.



Children were particularly enthralled and were keen to help her with the painting.

Her husband John and friend Peta joined her for the occasion.



Pam Finlay was also present at the First Free Friday Guided walk... Guided walks are available every Friday from 9.30 - 11.00am

"Up Close and Personal with Nature" on Friday, April 5th was just glorious...



Maya and Artist Pam Finlay led adults and lots of children too, down the Garden's paths to see Nature up close with the use of Anna-lupes, hand lenses and Magnifying glasses. It was an informative stroll through the picturesque Botanic Gardens and the highlight for everyone was the Zodiac moths, the real white bat flower (Pam had paintings of the same plant in her exhibition) and the huge hawk moth caterpillars. A wonderful blending of nature and art... up close and personal.



In the Gardens, Dale reports...

Myrtle Rust... Have the rains brought a reprieve?

There is still little sign of Myrtle Rust at the MRBG and around Mackay – the disease has been recorded on just 2 groups of Beach Cherry *Eugenia reinwardtiana* (both previously infected) and no other species at the MRBG to date.



Horticulture/site works

More rain has led to cancelled staff collecting trips to Eungella, postponed planting bees and minor flooding of the Gardens and infrastructure. MRBG Staff have spent the majority of their time mowing and snipping, weed control, pruning, lots of dead wooding in more established areas as well as some planting has occurred. Repairs to some deluge washouts, irrigation and minor infrastructural repairs due to vandalism also occurred.



When the large Brown Kurrajong *Commersonia bartramia* trees right next to the Lagoons Cafe reached the end of their fast growing and often short-lived life, a large, sunny hole was left after their removal, late last year. MRBG Staff have filled the gap by planting a new grove of advanced trees typical of Finch Hatton Gorge.

Taking centre stage is a grove of six Wheel of Fire *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (think Wheel of Fire Falls at the gorge) with their recognisable vivid red flowers, five Tree Ixora *Tarenna dallachiana* subsp. *dallachiana* will offer a delicious summertime fragrance of pineapple and gardenia to patrons and two replacement Brown Kurrajongs for some fast growing shade, all recently planted.

Flowers of *Tarenna dallachiana* subsp. *Dallachiana*



Whilst the next phase of works for the Meadowlands Amphitheatre surrounds are still in the planning phase, the Festival and Events plan for the site continued to be developed with meetings by a new Council committee to help guide, and decide on, fees and charges for events to be held in the facility. Council will be presented to approve the draft guidelines in April for final approval in May, with the first event - Rock, Pop Mime to be held in late July this year.

Children are not forgotten at the Botanic Gardens...

Kids are encouraged to get out of the house and discover fun school holiday activities which include creativity, discovery walk and especially around Easter time...a chocolate free time in the Botanic Gardens.



“Up close and personal using Nature as imagery?” was such an activity...

Pam Finlay, a mixed media artist with Flying Arts, in conjunction with her exhibition in the Lagoons Gallery conducted this school holiday activity on April 3rd & 4th for school aged children.

Using her artworks, magnifying glasses and different art techniques, she had children viewing the Gardens, its flowers and its creatures, up close and personal. Pam then assisted them to produce their own microscopic inspired artworks.

“Larger than Life?”



During 2 hour school holiday activity session with Maya 9th - 11th April, children used magnifying glasses, anna-lupes and hand-lenses to get a microscopic view of flowers, leaves and small, small creatures and then created a larger than life artwork using water colours pencils and acrylic paints. The rain did not deter families with all sessions being fully attended.



The Botanic Gardens supports research and learning...



Neisosperma kilneri

Tanisha, a student from Central Queensland University, undertaking a degree in Terrestrial Botany, utilized the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and its staff, to view and collect samples of native plants as herbarium specimens. On her tour of the Gardens, she was astounded at the variety of plants that are particular to the Central Queensland Coast Bioregion. She is sure that some of the plants will be of interest to her tutors and colleagues as they do not occur in the Rockhampton area, where her course is based.

What a special herbarium collection she will have to show.

In the Gardens, Dale report continues ...

HRG...

The Horticultural Reference Group (HRG) members of Curator Dale, Irene Champion, Meryl Ritchie and Lawrie Smith (in Mackay from Brisbane on a planning/consultation visit) met on March 26 to discuss upcoming plans to develop the slopes below the Nebo Road water treatment plant, finalised species and supply for the future planting in the Meadowlands car park and finalised species and approximate layout via a site visit to the planned 'Timber Trees' area, which is adjacent to the giant 'X' timbers of the Forest Arbour on Lagoon Street. Whilst several existing large trees need to be removed for this new 'garden', they are exotic and weedy and in poor form and will be replaced with over 50 new native trees, later this year. The HRG meet once a month to assist the Curator with planning upcoming planting bees, the species chosen and their interpretation including future signs and the supply of many of the plants being added to the Living Collection.

The HRG discussed and approved the inclusion of the garden beds north of the Railway line of Pioneer Peaks, Koumala Range and Reliance Creek into the now expanded 'Regional Forests' precinct as well as the naming of the 'Debella' garden on the south side of the Kaliguil Shelter. This will help clarify interpretation of these gardens as featuring species from the Central Queensland Coast Bioregion and offers clear contrast to the adjacent Brigalow Belt Garden that features many species found outside of our bioregion in the surrounding Brigalow belt Bioregion. Words for new signs planned for these gardens and beds between the 'Brigalow Belt bridge' and the South Sea Islander Hut were also discussed, planned for installation mid-year prior to the upcoming hosted visit by SGAP members from around Australia attending the ANPSA conference on the Sunshine Coast, in August.

Regional Forests Planting Bee

With two planned planting bees cancelled that were scheduled for March 9 and 20 cancelled due to wet conditions, six Society for Growing Australian Plants - Mackay Branch (SGAP Mackay) members met with all MRBG staff on site on Friday March 22 for a planting bee. These working bees are 'extras' on top of the usual Gardens Friends bees particularly for SGAP Mackay members, as part of a Memorandum of Understanding that the MRBG has with SGAP. These gardens planted in 1995 and 1998 were all commenced by and receive ongoing maintenance support and the provision of plants, from SGAP members.

In the Regional Forests garden on the South Sea Islander Hut side of the railway line, many new plants were added to the Dry Rainforest and Riverine Forest beds and the newly named Palustrine Wetland bed.

On the north side of the railway line, plants were also added to the Brigalow Belt garden and the now expanded Regional Forests precinct, in the Koumala Range and newly named 'Debella' garden (this was previously called the Dumbleton Rocks garden) adjacent to the Kaliguil Shelter. 'Debella' is the most northerly and driest section of our bioregion and is situated just south of Bowen. It includes coastal sands and the granite hills of Hydeaway Bay and Cape Gloucester.



Chris and Irene Champion in the Koumala Range bed planting *Actephila championiae*

Why the name 'Debella'? Our bioregion is divided into different sections called 'subregions'. Simply put - these are divided up and based on the species and vegetation communities found in different areas which are attributed to differing soil types and rainfall (amongst other more complex differentiations). The plants featured in this garden are species from critically endangered beach scrubs of this subregion. As well as Debella, other subregions include the Sarina - Proserpine Lowlands, Clark - Connors Range, Whitsunday as well as Byfield and Manifold - two outlier subregions found near Rockhampton and Shoalwater Bay. If you are reading this newsletter on line - [click here](#) - to find out more about our bioregion and learn a little more about these different subregions. Or next time you are at the MRBG, stop at the large map on the Lagoons Gallery wall - you'll see a map of these different subregions and where they are.



This planting bee added almost 100 plants to the Living Collection, ranging from tube stock to large 200mm sized pots.

These included...

← Brown's Aglaia
Aglaia brownii,

Duck's Foot
Cupaniopsis wadsworthii, →



Foam Bark Tree *Jagera pseudorhus*,
Giant Palm Lily *Cordyline manners-suttoniae*,
Glossocarya hemiderma,
Kapok Tree *Cochlospermum gillivraei*,
Melhania *Melhania oblongifolia*,



← Koumala Range Actephila *Actephila championiae*,
(vulnerable to extinction)

Red Bean *Dysoxylum mollissimum* subsp. *molle*,
Scaly Bark Ironwood *Backhousia kingii*,
two separate original collected provenances of
Scrambling Red Berry *Deeringia amaranthoides*,
Scrub Ironbark *Acacia fasciculifera*
and Yellow Beach Bean *Vigna marina*.

Two trays of Mangrove Ferns *Acrostichum speciosum*
along with quantities of clumping and creeping ferns

including Calves' Tongue Fern *Microsorium punctatum* and the 'Basket' Ferns *Drynaria rigidula* and *D. sparsisora*.

More plants will be added in mid April, including
Mt Blackwood Holly *Graptophyllum ilicifolium* →
taken from cuttings at Maya and Kevin's place that
borders Mt Blackwood and the Pioneer Peaks National
Parks, as well as attractive and highly scented vines and
sprawlers like Millaa Millaa Vine *Elaeagnus triflora*. Both
will add some interesting contrast to the 'sea' of tree
trunks that typifies many of the gardens in this precinct
at their current stage of development.



Friends Planting Bee...



Skies briefly cleared and 22 volunteers jumped at the opportunity to help add more plants to the Kaliguil sector of the MRBG on Saturday March 23. Garden Friends were joined by other community members including Scouts earning their environment badge and some first time volunteers. More than 150 plants were added to the Ethnobotany Garden - Medicinal Plants bed, Sarina - Proserpine Lowlands and Hills garden, the Gateway Garden on Nebo Road and the adjacent Brigalow Belt garden.

These included...

Black Iron Box *Eucalyptus raveretiana*,
Brigalow *Acacia harpophylla*,
Broad-leaved Bottle Tree *Brachychiton australis*,
Field Lily *Crinum angustifolium*,
Fitzalania *Fitzalania heteropetala*,
Flame Tree *Brachychiton acerifolius*,
Foam Bark Tree *Jagera pseudorhus*, →

Medicine Bush *Pogonolobus reticulatus*,
An unusual white flowered form of Native Hibiscus *Hibiscus heterophyllus*,
Native Mock Orange *Murraya ovatifoliolata* (to infill a large hole left by a car that crashed into the beautiful hedge along Nebo Road),

Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia*,
Square-stemmed Broom *Spartothamnella juncea*,
A Pandanus *Pandanus* sp.,
White Currant *Flueggea virosa* subsp. *melanthesoides*,
Wild Orange *Capparis mitchellii*,
Yellow Beach Bean *Vigna marina* and
Yellow Flowered Daisy *Acmella grandiflora* var. *brachyglossa*. →



Planting Bees offer all budding green thumbs a chance to get their hands dirty and help the Botanic Gardens extend their plant collection. Thanks are extended to our regular band of "Gardener Friends" getting hot and sweaty and planting over 150 plants and thanks also to Robin McWhinney for always providing a scrumptious morning tea to recharge us with energy.

They are back...

Free Friday Guided Walks at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens...

The scenic Lagoons and glorious foliage make perfect backdrops during your informative stroll at the picturesque Botanic Gardens. Join us 9.30 am Fridays (April – October) at the Administration Building.

Free Friday Guided walks begin on April 5th and once a month, a Special Themed Free Guided walk is also available.



Botanic Gardens hosts Networking Meeting...

The Reef Guardian Networking Meeting provided opportunities for:

- An introduction to Reef Guardian School projects in our region and education resources
- One-on-one networking with school staff and other local partners to share resources, knowledge and other opportunities in 2013
- Exploring potential partnerships and assistance with projects
- Problem-solving issues relating to current environmental projects in the region
- Networking with teachers on how to kick-start or expand environmental projects in their school and region.



Groups included GBRMPA, Conservation Volunteers, Reef Catchments, Pioneer Landcare and Catchment, Sarina Landcare, Sun Fish, National Parks and Wildlife, Council's Sustainability, Water and Environment Departments, Botanic Gardens, Earth Smart Science, Reef Guardian Farmers, Turtle Watch, Mackay Conservation group, and teachers from a variety of local schools.

Plant-ed and Plant-ed Elsewhere...



Fitzgerald State School's hall was used by 4 classes of Year 3's (90+ children) to view Maya's collection of live and pinned creatures, posters, photos and books to discover "Creature features". It was a wonderful space to spread out and fully engage with what was on display, Thursday March 21st. Many of the creatures had not been seen before by the children, (even some of the teachers) and lots of learning occurred.

Oh... to have such a big undercover space at the Botanic Gardens. Viewing of the creatures and letting the children know that these creatures are all living at the Gardens, inspires children to encourage their parents / teachers to visit the Gardens.

Mackay North Primary school (50 Year 1 and some year 2's) finally made a full visit to the Gardens on Friday 22nd.

Previous years the weather (rain) had thwarted their best efforts. This time they got to see the living and non-living things in real life, in their habitats, at the gardens, rather than a sample taken to their school.



Contact with the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens...

Phone: 49527300 Email: botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au

or visit the website...www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au

****Who will you talk to... **Dale Arvidsson**... Curator,

Maya Harrison... Visitor Services Officer/ Education officer.