

Newsletter

Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens

2015 No 1

The heat is on and with it has come some great rainfall, thunder and lightning shows! Glorious tropical weather and soon the fabulous fungi will appear. Welcome to 2015. Enjoy the latest from 'The Botanic Gardens'...

Oh what a night!

Christmas in the Gardens... our Friends of the Gardens annual event.



They all came...

...many of the Garden Friends volunteers (wearing their sunny yellow t-shirts)

...and many, many, people to a perfect night of entertainment.

...and not a raindrop in sight.



The Garden Friends volunteers had two selling points and roving sellers with baskets to make sure everyone had the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets (prizes...Gift cards worth \$250, \$150 and \$100.), safe flame candles, glow-sticks and songbooks.

Lindsay Hains and her musical students were the first group of entertainers to kick off the festive feeling and later followed the ever popular Anette Worthington and then a great jam session with bells and instruments and Karen Bonham (who took her first Christmas in the Gardens selfie!

The Gardens even had a bit of a light show with the trees illuminated as the darkness fell and glow-sticks and candles twinkled. What a crowd! What a great fundraiser... over \$1,000!



What was on for the rest of the school holidays?



'All Wired for Christmas'. Christmas Decorations made from Nature and Rainbow wire!

2 sessions were held per day (10am -12noon and 2pm - 4.00pm) on the following dates; December: Tuesday 16th Wednesday 17th, Thursday 18th

45 children participated in this creative and festive session... They created all sorts of festive decorations using gum-nuts, pinecones, driftwood, leaves, seedpods, rainbow wire and sparkly bits and pieces after indulging in a Christmas decorations hunt in the Tropical Shade garden of the Botanic Gardens.



All the children were thrilled with their creations and they were excited to proudly put them on show at home. A bit of Christmas bling!



In January there were more activities combining nature and creativity.

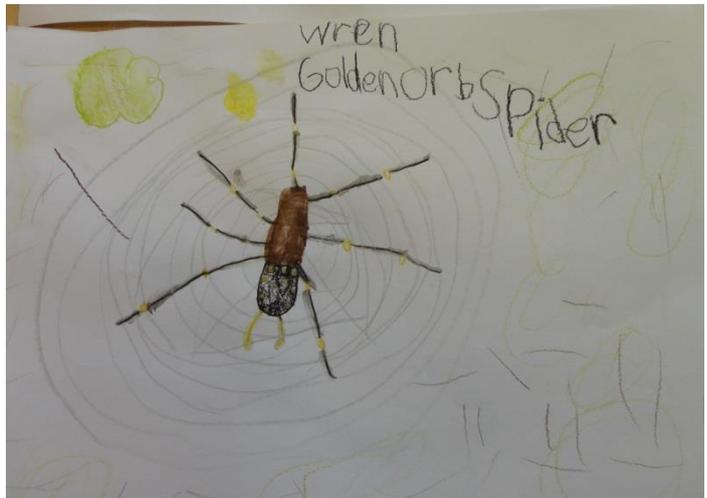
The first week in January was Microscopic Marvels...

There were 1 or 2 sessions (10am -12noon or 2.00pm – 4.00pm) per day on the following dates;
January: Wednesday 7th, Thursday 8th, Friday 9th:

During this up close session, 25 children went for a walk through the Botanic Gardens using magnifying glasses, anna-lupes and hand-lenses to get up close views of nature.



Returning to the Meeting Room, the children used the Botanic Gardens' microscopes to inspire a larger than life image / artwork to take home. Lots of different creatures, fungi and plants were first drawn with watercolour pencils and then delicately added to with paintbrushes and water. Lots of concentration to get the fine details.



Week two... Web@BotanicGardens...



Again 1 or 2 sessions (10am -12noon or 2.00pm – 4.00pm) per day on the following dates; January: Wednesday 14th, Thursday 15th, Friday 16th

Is it a Spider's web, the World Wide Web or Spinners and Weavers?

Plants and creatures which spin, twist, weave and twirl have secret places in the Gardens.

39 children discovered many different types of spiders, cocoons of moths and birds in nests in these hidden spots.



Making webs with spiders, bird's nests and some weaving were the creative activities after the discovery walk through the Tropical Shade Garden.

A wonderful bonus for one session was a real spinning wheel and Lyn (Charlotte's grandmother) spinning some alpaca wool.



The last week... Bugs, Beetles and Bees...

Despite the rain and thundery weather...School holiday activities still happened for 1 or 2 sessions (10am -12noon or 2.00pm – 4.00pm) per day on the following dates; Wednesday 21st, Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd January.

32 Children were introduced to bugs, beetles and bees either in observation containers, photographs, pinned specimens in the meeting room or on plants and flowers during a walk through the Botanic Gardens.



The live creatures on display were Christmas beetles, Harlequin Bugs with a female guarding her pink eggs and nymphs already hatched, Orange spotted Beetle, Small iridescent green Leaf beetle, ← and water beetles called Whirligig beetles which spun round and round on the top of the water.



We certainly learnt some interesting facts and the importance of these creatures to our survival on the planet. Pollination of flowers is essential for crops to grow and supply us with food.



Did you know that Australia has 10 major groups of native bees?
 ← We saw the Blue banded native bee flying around getting pollen and a large Carpenter Bee too. Many people call it a Bumble bee, but there are no Bumble bees in Australia except for in Tasmania. They are introduced bees. So too are the European Honey bees that we know from its honey making antics.



For the children in the Wednesday sessions there was another creature beginning with B... a very friendly bird, which loved being with people.

The bird enthralled the children, who were able to have him sit either on their arm, head or shoulder. During the walk we left the bird to sit on the 'Roaring Meg vine on the Lookout Deck and on walking back past the Malta Garden arches, there it was waiting for us.



The bird walked back with us part of the way, but then rode on Maya's hat all the way to the meeting room.

Making a creative bug, beetle or bee was part of the session with children using, clay, wire, beads, sequins and skeleton leaves to make their 'bug' or using watercolour pencils to draw and paint one.



On hand were also some bug and nature games which were fun to do while the rain poured outside. It was great way to round off the school holidays.



During December and January there was an opportunity to escape the heat and view the latest exhibition in the Lagoons Gallery.



'Power of Nature'... Creative Shots Photo Club's Annual Exhibition

Creative Shots Photo Club members had been out and about taking many different images during the year to portray the theme of their exhibition... 'Power of Nature'.

It might be a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, the surge of incoming waves on rocky shores, a lightning storm, or a newly sprouted seed. It may depict the destructive results of weather or the wonderment of nature's design.

This combination of images made for an exciting exhibition that was on display from 3rd December 2014 to 18th January 2015 at the Lagoons Gallery, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

Visitors to the exhibition were also encouraged to vote for the image they felt best demonstrated the exhibitions theme 'Power of Nature'. Always welcoming new members, you can find out

more about the Creative Shots Photo Club at www.creativeshots.com.au. They meet monthly at the Botanic Gardens meeting room. Come along on the third Monday of the month at 7.00pm

'SUNDAY PAINTER' Exhibition by Uta Wild is now on show...

Lagoons Gallery: Wednesday January 21st - Sunday 1st March 2015



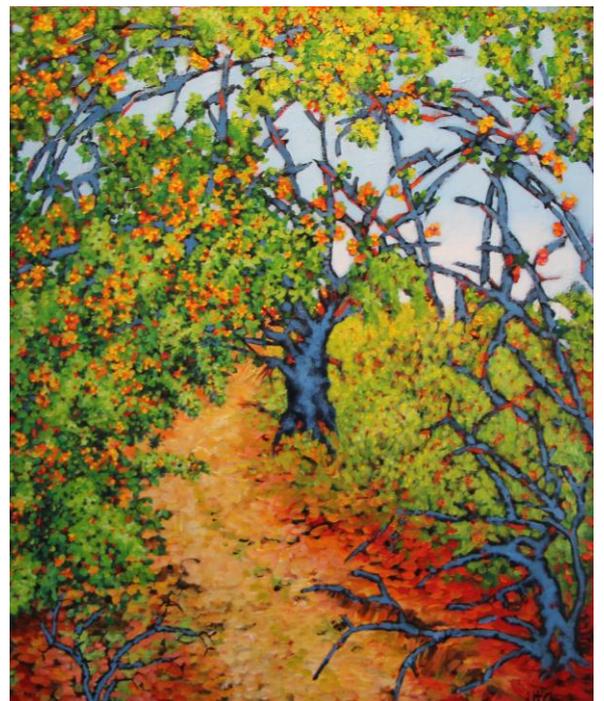
Local artist, Uta Wild is a well-known painter in traditional and figurative abstraction images. Born in Ravensburg, Germany, Uta has won many art prizes and has sold her works both nationally and overseas.

← Image: Whose Egg is It Now?

Uta has been classed as a natural colourist and her exhibition includes acrylic paintings of landscapes, animal and/or figures in landscapes, birds and flower images. Come and view these very colourful artworks. The exhibition is complemented with a display of different bird's nests.

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

Image: Lantana Country →



We are getting excited! It will soon be here! Wednesday February 4th ... The Botanic Gardens Meeting Room is the... "Friends Meeting Place"



The Meeting Room at the Botanic Gardens has many uses for many different users...

Beginning February 4th 2015 it will be a regular place for the Friends of the Gardens Volunteers to gather.

The "Friends Meeting Place" will continue on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month throughout the year (except school holidays... unless the volunteers want to work with Maya and young children.)

What will happen in the Friends Meeting Place?

- Friends of the Gardens will meet and socialize
- Help out the Botanic Garden's staff with plant label making
- Photograph monthly what is flowering in the Botanic Gardens to assist with a "flowering diary" and create a fantastic and accurate DATA BASE! The Botanic gardens has a camera that is easy to use.
- Friends may like to share cuttings, bulbs, seeds, fruits, recipes (just like the impromptu bulb sharing by Heather Melville at one of our guided walks)
- The computer (Yes, a computer just for the Friends) is available for... friends to research plants for signage, self-guided walks or just to add to their own knowledge.
- For those who prefer books to computers, reading a wealth of plant and creature related literature from both the Friends Library and the Botanic Gardens library.
- Friends who attend the Heritage Gardens Working Bees (on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays too) might like to refresh with a cuppa after their morning toil, cool down in the air-conditioning (muddy boots are welcome) and catch up with others.
- Friends may also like to be part of the plant's stock-take and assist putting out plant labels in the Gardens... a great way to learn which plant is which.
- Go on mini walks with Dale or Maya and learn more about the Gardens...so maybe guided walks led by Friends can occur more frequently during the year.



Let us know what you think or share some other ideas. This is a new venture for the Garden Friends and we are open to any suggestions. Call Maya on 49527300 or 0409750453 or email botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au .

Feel like joining the Friends of the Gardens and volunteer too, then visit the Botanic Gardens website under the tab of Get Involved. Download the Garden Friends brochure and fill out the membership form and come and join us.

http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au/get_involved/friends_of_the_gardens

**Just a note... STARTING March 4th!
Heritage Gardens Working Bees: Every 1st and 3rd Wednesdays too.**

Join Gardener Kellie and help to keep this part of our Botanic Gardens looking very smart and colourful with a whole array of things to do... weeding, dead heading flowers, planting vegetables, light pruning and lots of careful tending.

The “BIRD and the BEES” Garden Friends Guided Walk and Welcome BBQ.

Saturday February 14th Walk at 4.00pm, Welcome BBQ following at 6.00pm

The 14th February is Valentine’s Day and the reason for our Guided walk title > ‘The Birds and The Bees’.



Friends of the Gardens members will be joined by members of BirdLife Mackay.

With over 100 different species of birds making their home in the Botanic Gardens, we are sure to spot a few with binoculars, scopes or just with our eyes. The elusive Bush Hen may even make an appearance. Walking along the lagoon edge path will provide more opportunities to see wetland birds and possibly some small bush birds.

Bees will also feature on the day with some information about different native bees, which are often seen among the flowers. Meet some Blue banded bees, possibly Carpenter bees or some other of the 10 major groups of native bees.



A welcome to 2015 BBQ will follow with participants to bring along a salad or sweet / fruit to share. Bread rolls and meat will be provided for the BBQ.

Please R.S.V.P to Maya by Wednesday 11th February so catering can be organized. Contact by phone 49527300 or email maya.harrison@mackay.qld.gov.au or email botanic@mackay.qld.gov.au .

Forgotten to get a calendar for 2015... We have some lovely ones!
The Garden’s Shop might just have something for everyone.

**Jeremy Boot
Birds of Australia
Calendar \$20**



**Butterflies and
Other Invertebrates
2015 Calendar \$15**



Strange and smelly fruits appear in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens...

Are they at your place too?



Mysterious objects are appearing with almost magical speed of growth intriguing us with their colours, shapes and smells. The strange things popping up in the gardens and lawns here at the Botanic Gardens are the fruiting bodies of Fungi. Fungi vary in size from microscopic yeasts and moulds to bracket fungi a metre or more in width. In their method of growth, feeding and reproduction, fungi are different from all other plants. Fungi have a complete lack of the green pigment called Chlorophyll and they reproduce by spores, not seeds. As much as we might not like the weather conditions at the moment, for Fungi, the combination of humidity, temperature and the kind of soil they are in is just right for them to produce spores to germinate.

Image: Lacy Veiled Stinkhorn.

Mushrooms, toadstools, stinkhorns and other strange shaped growths, are 'fruits'...just like an apple is the fruit of the apple tree. These strange 'fruits' sole function is to produce spores and they have many variations in how they achieve this and then have them dispersed.

Mushrooms that look like umbrellas have their spores in the flaps of tissues (gills) under the cap.



Stinkhorns, which seem to have hatched from eggs in the soil are so named because of the foul odour that oozes from the moist brown cap.

The odour, similar to rotting meat entices flies and insects to land and walk on them and thus spread the spores with their feet.



Puffballs disperse thousands of spores at once as their thick skin breaks and explodes.

Visiting the Botanic Gardens during our damp weather, you will see many varieties of fungi, including stinkhorns. All you need to do is follow your nose...