



Society for Growing Australian Plants, Cairns Branch

Newsletter 146

February 2015

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EXCURSION REPORT – MIRRIWINNI, NOVEMBER 2014

2014's Christmas breakup saw Cairns SGAP gathering at David Barrow's property in the foothills of Mt Bartle Frere, not far from Mirriwinni.

David and his wife opened up their lovely house, located on the banks of a bouldery rainforest creek and surrounded by gardens of native and exotic tropical beauty. Their driveway crosses the creek and approaches the house through dense trees and neatly maintained lawns. An alternative entry is provided by a wooden footbridge, which has been squeezed into a space between gigantic *Xanthostemon chrysanthus* (golden pendas).

After a pleasant and lazy lunch, we took a slow walk around the garden perimeter and down the creek. A combination of hard work and carefully nurtured natural regeneration had produced an attractive and diverse native garden. After so little rain over the preceding months, things were pretty dry and crispy. Nevertheless, our casual stroll discovered a remarkable diversity of plant life on this small property – 96 species of ferns, fern allies, and flowering plants, with a single cycad thrown in for good measure. Mary and Pauline were able to identify seven orchid species, including a large *Robiquetia* with its distinctively tangled roots, although sadly none were in flower.

Despite the dry conditions, splashes of colour were spotted here and there – the brilliant red fruits of the poison walnut (*Cryptocarya pleurosperma*) and the hidden crimson flowers of *Hornstedtia scottiana* were attractive finds. All in all, it was an exceptional Christmas break up in a lovely location.



Poison Walnut – *Cryptocarya pleurosperma*



A beautiful approach – footbridge to David's house.



Angiopteris evecta



Tabernaemontana pandacaqui



Hiding amongst the leaf litter, the brilliantly coloured, bird-pollinated flowers of *Hornstedtia scottiana*.



A tangle of roots in the tree branches pointed to this quite substantial *Robiquetia gracilistipes*

November 2014 Species list

Compiled by Stuart Worboys and
Mary Gandini

Ferns and fern allies

ANGIOPTERIDACEAE

Angiopteris evecta

ASPLENIACEAE

Asplenium nidus (birds nest fern)

BLECHNACEAE

Blechnum orientale

CYATHEACEAE

Cyathea cooperi (tree fern)

GLEICHENIACEAE

Dicranopteris linearis

LYGODIACEAE

Lygodium reticulatum

OPHIOGLOSSACEAE

Ophioglossum pendulum

POLYPODIACEAE

Belvisia mucronata

Drynaria rigida (basket fern)

Pyrrhosia longifolia (felt fern)

PSILOTACEAE

Psilotum complanatum

Psilotum nudum (fork fern)

SELAGINELLACEAE

Selaginella australiensis

Selaginella longipinna

WOODSIACEAE

Diplazium sp.

Conifers and Cycads

ZAMIACEAE

Bowenia spectabilis

Ancient Flowering Plants

LAURACEAE

Cryptocarya mackinnoniana
(Mackinnon's walnut)

Cryptocarya murrayi

Cryptocarya pleurosperma (poison
walnut)

Litsea bindoniana (big-leaf
bollywood)

Neolitsea dealbata (bollywood)

PIPERACEAE

Piper mestonii

Monocots

ARACEAE

Epipremnum pinnatum

Rhaphidophora ?australasica

ARECACEAE

Archontophoenix alexandrae
(alexandra palm)

Calamus moti (wait-a-while)

Licuala ramsayi (fan palms)

CYPERACEAE

Thoracostachyum sumatranum

FLAGELLARIACEAE

Flagellaria indica (supplejack)

HEMEROCALLIDACEAE

Dianella bambusifolia

Dianella atraxis

PANDANACEAE

Freycinetia scandens (climbing
pandanus)

Pandanus monticola

ORCHIDACEAE

Bulbophyllum baileyi

Bulbophyllum prenticei

Cymbidium sp.

Dendrobium baileyianum

Dendrobium discolor (golden orchid)

Pomatocalpa macphersonii

Robiquetia gracilistipes

ZINGIBERACEAE

Hornstedtia scottiana

Eudicots

ACANTHACEAE

Pseuderanthemum variabile

ANACARDIACEAE

Blepharocarya involucrigera (rose
butternut)

APOCYNACEAE

Alstonia scholaris (milky pine)

Cerbera floribunda (cassowary plum)

Hoya australis

Melodinus australis

Tabernaemontana pandacaqui
(banana bush)

ARALIACEAE

Polyscias australiana (ivory
basswood)

Schefflera actinophylla (umbrella
tree)

CLUSIACEAE

Garcinia warrenii (native
mangosteen)

CUNONIACEAE

Davidsonia pruriens (Davidson's
plum)

Gillbeea adenopetala (pink alder)

DILLENIACEAE

**Dillenia sp.*

Hibbertia scandens

Tetracera nordtiana (fire vine)

ELAEOCARPACEAE

Elaeocarpus bancroftii (Kuranda
quandong)

Elaeocarpus grandis (blue quandong)

EUPHORBIACEAE

Macaranga involucrata var.
mallotoides

Macaranga tanarius (macaranga)

FABACEAE

Acacia celsa (brown salwood)

Austrosteenisia stipularis (northern
blood vine)

Castanospermum australe (black
bean)

Entada phaseoloides (matchbox
bean)

Mucuna gigantea (burny bean)

LECYTHIDIACEAE

Barringtonia calyptata

MELASTOMACEAE

Medinilla balls-headleyi

**Tristemma mauritiana* (tristemma)

MORACEAE

Ficus congesta (redleaf fig)

Ficus virens

MYRTACEAE

Syzygium cormiflorum (bumpy
satinash)

Syzygium graveolens

Syzygium tierneyanum (river cherry)

Xanthostemon chrysanthus (golden
penda)

PHYLLANTHACEAE

Glochidion harveyanum

Glochidion sumatranum

PRIMULACEAE

**Ardisia elliptica* (shoe-button
ardisia)

Maesa dependens

PROTEACEAE

Cardwellia sublimis (northern silky
oak)

Carnavonia araliifolia var. *araliifolia*
(Caledonian oak)

Darlingia darlingiana

Grevillea baileyana

Helicia nortoniana (Norton's silky
oak)

RHIZOPHORACEAE

Carallia brachiata (carallia)

ROSACEAE

Prunus turneriana (almond bark)

RUBIACEAE

Nauclea orientalis (leichhardt tree)

Ophiorrhiza australiana subsp.
australiana (Australian snakeroot)

RUTACEAE

Acronychia acronychioides

Melicope rubra

Melicope xanthoxyloides

SAPINDACEAE

Diploglottis smithii

Guioa lasioneura

SYMPLOCACEAE

Symplocos paucistaminea

XANTHOPHYLLACEAE

Xanthophyllum octandrum

(Mcintyre's boxwood)

BOOK REVIEW

“AMONGST STONE AGE PEOPLE IN THE QUEENSLAND WILDERNESS” BY ERIC MJÖBERG. HESPERIAN PRESS, PERTH 407 PP, \$110. (WWW.HESPERIANPRESS.COM). AVAILABLE AT COLLINS BOOKSELLERS, SMITHFIELD.

Over the last 18 months, I have had the pleasure of involvement as voluntary scientific editor in an important historical publication. The translated journals of Eric Mjöberg, a Swedish scientist who travelled and collected extensively in north Queensland 101 years ago, have finally reached the shelves of bookshops. Although he travelled extensively in other parts of Australia and the world, I shall focus here on his north Queensland experiences.

Mjöberg was a renaissance man, with interests in anthropology, zoology, and botany. He was a meticulous observer and an avid collector of all natural and anthropological treasures. He records sampling aquatic invertebrates from the slime at the bottom of waterholes, bartering with Cape York aborigines for tools and weapons, and skinning an immature cassowary. He actively encouraged the felling of trees so he could search their canopy for new possums. He even returned a 400 kg termite mound to Sweden for display in their museum. Most controversially to modern sensibilities, he was fascinated by Aboriginal funerary practices, and collected numerous bodies in his Kimberley expedition, much to the horror of the families

whose trust he betrayed to obtain these corpses. The fascination with recording these activities continued in northeast Queensland, but he does not report stealing bodies in this document.

Mjöberg commenced his Queensland explorations in Brisbane, where he sought the advice of Frederick Manoson Bailey. Bailey was still Government Botanist at the age of 90, whom Mjöberg described as “*a withered patricarch, grown old in the service of science*”. Mjöberg continued northward, arriving in Cairns on 3 January 1913, and finding it a “*dirty swampy little hole, full of malaria. Typhus and dysentery were permanent residents. Even the horrific Black Death or bubonic plague had once visited there, but without becoming established. Occasionally, there were rumours of smallpox... On the whole, Cairns reminds one of any small tropical town... There is a sort of lethargy in the air. People, who have settled there, seem somewhat tired and anaemic. When standing still, they have to lean against something, and when sitting down, they always have to put their feet up on the nearest chair or table. On every street corner, there is a hotel or ‘pub’, always filled with many drunken people.*”

Mjöberg was nothing if not intrepid. As a naturalist and field collector, he planned to arrive at the best possible harvest time – the wet season. He reported 19 consecutive days rain whilst camping near Malanda, and 26 days of rain at Millaa Millaa, and reported the effects of a cyclone on the rainforests of the Tablelands on 29 January 1913. All this time, he was collecting and preserving thousands of vertebrate and invertebrate specimens. Many paragraphs of the book are devoted to the pleasures of leeches and scrub itch mites. He reports the only preventative for scrub itch was to apply “*paraffin to the lower parts of one’s body*”.

Throughout the text, Mjöberg’s fascination with natural history is clear, and he worked like a machine to sample as much of it as he could. But this book’s great contribution is its

anthropological observation, recording with acuity simple but significant actions of his workers, and the rainforest aborigines he encountered. Some of Mjöberg’s actions are despicable – his unselfconscious graverobbing ambitions are particularly reprehensible, even taking into account the social sensibility of the age.

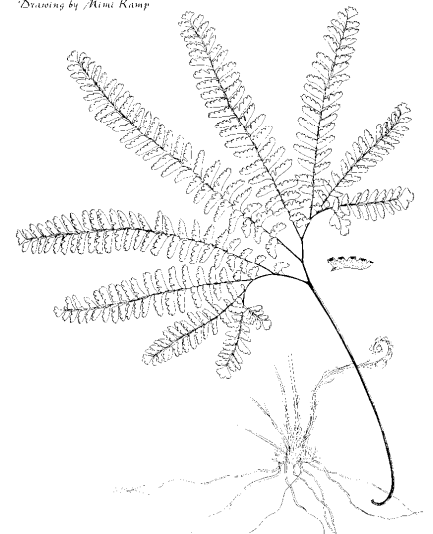
This book is a fascinating account of an outsider’s immersion in the tropical rainforests of north Queensland. At times a rollicking adventure story, at others a detailed natural history account, it is well worth a read by those with a broad scientific, anthropological or historical interest in the region.

FERNS WANTED!

With the construction of the Botanic Garden’s new display house well underway, the Gardens are on the lookout for native ferns to populate its moist, shaded pockets.

If anyone has ferns they’d like to donate, please contact Tony Roberts directly at the Cairns Botanic Gardens – t.roberts@cairns.qld.gov.au.

Drawing by Aini Kamp



WHAT'S HAPPENING...

Cairns SGAP

Meetings and excursion on 3rd Sunday of the month.

Sunday 15 February 2015, 12 noon. Stony Creek, Kamerunga - see map below. Weather permitting. Meet at the carpark at the entrance for lunch, followed by a stroll up to the old weir. Highlights along this walk include the beautiful waterfalls and swimming pools, and *Boea hygroskopica* growing on rocks near the end. There is no wet weather backup plan.

Sunday 15 March 2015, 12 noon. Redden Island, Machans Beach. Annual general meeting and excursion.

Tablelands SGAP

Meetings on the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Excursion the following Sunday.

Any queries, please contact Chris Jaminon on 4091 4565 or email hjaminon@bigpond.com

Townsville SGAP

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, February to November, in Annandale Community Centre at 8pm, and holds excursions the following Sunday.

See www.sgaptownsville.org.au/ for more information.



SGAP CAIRNS 2015 COMMITTEE

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Vice-chairperson	Pauline Lawie
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