



The NATIVE GARDENER

*Abelmoschus moschatus subsp.
perosus*

Newsletter of Society for Growing Australian
Plants, Townsville Branch Inc
PO Box 363 Aitkenvale Qld 4814

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August 2003

August Meeting

Wednesday 13 August

CSIRO Davies Laboratory off University Road

7.30pm Library and Plant and Book Sales

8.00pm Subject – 'Revegetation & rehabilitation of vegetation for
Townsville and Thuringowa'
by Ally Lankester

All are welcome - bring a friend

Committee Meeting: 25 August 2003 7.30pm
(Last Monday of Month) Tumbetim Lodge

Membership Fees:

New:	\$45.00	New (student):	\$34.00
Renewal:	\$40.00	Renewal (student):	\$29.00

Additional household member: \$1.00

New Members (half year from Oct 02) \$25.00

NB: A RED SPOT INDICATES THAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS OVERDUE

Chairmans Ramble

Hello fellow members. Hope that you are all keeping well.

We scored 1.5mm of rain last month. How did everyone else fare? Couldn't have got less could you?

This year will probably be the last one where we will have a Plant Sale at the Orchid Society Hall, Pioneer Park. In all probability they will be moved to a new location by next August and the likelihood of a Plant Sale in March is looking slim. But I guess we will just have to wait and see where they are relocated to and decide then where we hold our Plant Sale's in future.

Hoping to see you all at the next meeting.

Bruce

In Flower in July

Acanthaceae	<i>Graptophyllum ilicifolium</i>
Elaeocarpaceae	<i>Dubouzetia saxatalis</i>
Mimosaceae	<i>Acacia leptostachya</i>
Myoporaceae	<i>Eremophila bignoniaflora x polyclada</i>
Myrtaceae	<i>Austromyrtus magnifica</i> <i>Calytrix exstipulata</i>
Proteaceae	<i>Grevillea decora</i> <i>Grevillea dielsiana</i> (grafted) <i>Grevillea 'elegans'</i> <i>Grevillea 'flamingo'</i> <i>Grevillea 'honey gem'</i> <i>Grevillea 'jester'</i> <i>Grevillea 'Sandra Gordon'</i> <i>Grevillea sessilis</i> <i>Grevillea 'strawberry blonde'</i> <i>Grevillea tenuiloba</i> (grafted) <i>Grevillea wickhamii</i> (Bungle Bungle form)
Rutaceae	<i>Geijera salicifolia</i>

August Sale

This is scheduled for Saturday 16 August at The Orchid Society Hall at Pioneer Park.

A new format of 8am to 2pm will be tried to fit in better with the other stall holders at Pioneer Park. Set up as usual on Friday afternoon from 4pm. All assistance from members will be gratefully accepted particularly on the morning of the sale.

Aroster will be circulated at the next meeting.

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FUNGIMAP

The fungus flora of Australia is remarkably poorly known. While there are thousands of people who can identify orchids, eucalypts or wattles at sight, there are very few amateur or professional naturalists who can do the same for the fungi. Fungimap is a collaborative project between professional and amateur mycologists and naturalists to gather information about the distribution of fungi throughout Australia.

Fungimap started as an initiative of mycologist Tom May at the National Herbarium of Victoria in 1996. It is now a joint project of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Fungimap aims to map the distribution of 100 species of Australian mushrooms, toadstools and other fungi using the information sent in by a network of volunteer recorders across Australia.

The 100 species of fungi have been chosen for their importance in answering questions about biodiversity including distribution, rarity and conservation status and ecology, and for the fact that these species can be identified in the field by distinctive characteristics without the need for collection.

FUNGIMAP has Regional Coordinators in some states (but not in Queensland) who run workshops and forays.

FUNGIMAP has a web page with information and extensive illustrations of the target species: <http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/fungimap/>

FUNGIMAP has a regular Newsletter with articles, feedback, maps and other information (found at the website, or mailed free).

Contact details: FUNGIMAP, Royal Botanical Gardens Melbourne, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Victoria 3141, or e-mail: fungimap@rbg.vic.go.au
Coordinator: Gudrun Evans (03) 9252 2374 (Mon - Thurs)

Exceptional Eumycota (or Fantastic Fungi)

Fungi are perhaps the most unappreciated, undervalued and unexplained organisms on earth.

Fungi is the name given to a group of organisms which most people associate with mushrooms, plant disease and/or mouldy food, but they are present in a spectacular array of shapes, sizes and colours. The species diversity of fungi is vast, but largely undiscovered. It is estimated that there are about 1.5 million species of fungi on the planet, but only about 70,000 species have been described. In Australia, there is an estimated 250,000 species, and only about 5% of these have been named. The study of fungi (mycology) can be rewarding and intriguing, and in recent years a number of books and CDs with great pictures of Australian fungi have been published (see below).

Originally, fungi were thought to be part of the plant kingdom, but following on from the theories of evolution, postulated by Darwin, and the development and use of the electron microscope, researchers recognised that fungi were very different from other organisms and thus were classified into their own kingdom. Subsequently, it was found that the so-called "slime-mould" fungi (they're slimy but not mouldy), exhibited characteristics of both fungi and animals, and were therefore placed in the kingdom Protista. Slime-moulds are sometimes called "pseudofungi" and will not be discussed further.

The true fungi kingdom is usually called Eumycota (from the Greek *eu* meaning good or true, and *mycota* meaning fungus). The scientific classification below this level becomes very confusing and is often of little value to the amateur mycologists since microscopic analysis is often required. However, it is worth mentioning that the kingdom Eumycota is made up of four phyla (the major taxonomic group below kingdom):

1. Chytridiomycota (chytrids) – water moulds
2. Zygomycota (zygote fungi) – moulds e.g. bread mould
3. Ascomycota (sack fungi) – cup fungi, truffles, morels, flask fungi, mildews, moulds and yeasts
4. Basidiomycota (club fungi) – agarics (mushrooms with gills) boletes (mushrooms with pores), polypores (woody pore fungi), shelf fungi, coral fungi, jelly fungi, puffballs, earthstars, false truffles, stinkhorns, rusts and smuts.

It is usually only the last two phyla (sack fungi and club fungi) that are of interest to many amateur mycologists and photographers (due to the fantastic colours and shapes of their fruiting bodies). Most non-scientific books tend to group these fungi by their morphological features (Bruce Fuhrer's book is an excellent example).

Fungi play an important ecological role, particularly in the transport, storage, release and recycling of nutrients. Fungi do not possess chlorophyll and consequently cannot produce their own food, therefore must obtain their carbohydrates by other means. Some are parasitic, some live on dead tissues and some are symbiotic. Mycorrhizal fungi form a symbiotic relationship with plants. In return for carbohydrates, these fungi form fungus-root systems that are far superior to plant roots alone and act as an extension of the root system, resulting in improved nutrient uptake for the plant. Despite their central role in ecosystems, knowledge about fungi remains at a low level.

In Australia, there has been some interesting research into truffle-like fungi and their relationship to Australian native mammals. These fungi produce fruiting bodies that remain buried in the ground until unearthed and eaten by an animal. This relationship is thought to be of mutual benefit since the animal gets a food supply and the fungi have an effective means of dispersing its spores. The edibility of Australian truffle and truffle-like fungi for humans is largely untested. Further reading on this topic can be found at:

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/truffle-like.html>

I hope that this short article, and Felicity's talk at the last SGAP meeting has stimulated some interest in fungi. In particular, I hope you now appreciate that not all fungi are damaging to plants, and that in some cases may be beneficial.

Nanette Hooker

Books on Australian fungi:

A Field Companion to Australian Fungi by Bruce Fuhrer
Australian Fungi Illustrated by Ian McCann
Common Australian Fungi by Tony Young
Fungi of Southern Australia by Neale L. Bougher & Katrina Syme

CD-ROMs:

101 Forest Fungi of Eastern Australia by A.M. Young
Fungimap CD-ROM

Produce Sampling at the July Meeting

Danielle Haller generously bought along some produce for members to sample at the July meeting. The jams and honey were the following:

Riberry (Lillypilli) jam	Lemon Myrtle honey
Davidson's Plum jam	Macadamia butter
(Finger) Lime marmalade	Small Leaf Tamarind jam

These were all products of Rainforest Foods and their website is www.rainforestfoods.com.au, and their contact number is 02 6685 8097.

The wine Danielle bought was Davidson's Plum Wine, made by Australian Bushtucker Wines, PO Box 504, Nimbin, NSW 2480, ph 02 6689 0220.

Ed note: They were all very nice and members took more than a passing interest in the sampling, and no, Danielle was not acting on a commission basis!

Grass seeds needed

I am interested in acquiring seeds of the following grass species for research purposes. Does anyone have any of these seeds?

Brachiaria distachya
Calyptochloa gracillima
Chrysopogon aciculatus
Paspalum distichum

Brachyachne tenella
Chloris divaricata
Lepturus repens
Paspalum scrobiculatum

Alternatively, does anyone know where these species grow, and I can collect the seed at the appropriate time of the year? These species are native perennial grasses that grow in north Queensland.

If you can help, please either email me (nanette.hooker@jcu.edu.au) or phone me (0439 788 794).

Nanette Hooker