
GARDENS GAZETTE

AUGUST 2025

Newsletter for Friends of the Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens Inc



**LISMORE
RAINFOREST BOTANIC
GARDENS**



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**"Every gardener knows under the cloak
of winter lies a miracle - a seed waiting to sprout,
a bulb opening to light, a bud straining to unfurl.
And the anticipation nurtures our dream."**

- Barbara Winkler, American author and editor



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge those who are supporting us financially and/or with their knowledge, skills and experience.

Andrew and Jeni Binns,
Janelle Saffin,
Jenny Dowell,
Mavourneen Kennedy,
Southern Cross Uni,
Waste Facility staff,
Paul Boxsell LCC Sign Shop,
Ginger Blue Graphic Design,
Fair Dinkum Constructions,
Interactive Landscapes
Bruce Jobson Plumbing,
RBG at Mt Annan,
Ben De Nardi Paper Plans,
Hugh & Nan Nicholson,
Accurate Tree Solutions,
MJC Excavations,
Richmond Sand, Gravel &
Landscaping,
Lismore Garden Centre,
Lismore City Printery,
Geoff McGrath Landscaping,
Golden Grove Naturals,
Peter Gow Electrical
Susan Oliver Graphic Design

*and all who have supported us in
any way including some who have
requested to remain anonymous.*

*We couldn't do it without you -
THANK YOU!*

THE FLRBG COMMITTEE

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Cover photo:
Phaius australis Swamp Orchid
Photo: Tracey Whitby



FLRBG Greeting Cards

Perfect for birthdays, thank-yous,
and everything in between.

Set of 12 cards - \$10.00

12 beautiful full colour cards featuring
photos, taken by the Friends of
Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens,
of local plants and animals.

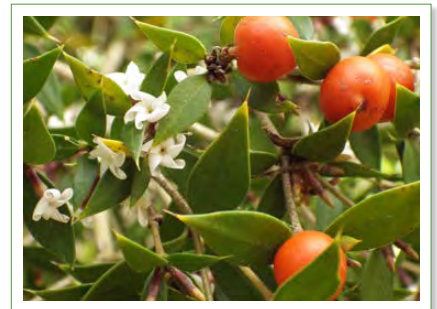
Cards have been left blank for you to
write your own message. Our card
set makes a perfect and thoughtful
gift too!

To purchase a set, send an email:
publicity@friendslrbg.com.au

Card 1: *Alyxia ruscifolia* Prickly Alyxia
Photo: Phil Jarman

Card 2: Sensory Garden
Photo: Florence Treverrow

Card 3: *Backhousia myrtifolia* and insect
(Grey Myrtle)
Photo: Phil Jarman



*This newsletter contains active links to websites, email and references. Just click
the coloured text to be directed to an external site.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was an unusually wet Autumn which resulted in delays to plantings and more repairs to damaged paths which is why visitors would have seen more red and white tape blocking access than usual. Our volunteers are slowly effecting repairs and the pond deck repairs are now finished. The bridge in **Room 6**, which replaces the causeway which was washed away in the 2022 flash flood, is almost complete and railings will be installed shortly. The path on the other side of the bridge which connects to **Room 5** and up to the plant nursery will be another part of the gardens to explore.

Open Day went well as the rain finally stopped and the visitors came to enjoy guided walks, learning about native bees and purchasing plants. Coffee and cake in the visitor's centre kept me busy.

Thank you to all our volunteers and guides who helped on the day.

We continue to seek a grant for a shed for storage of equipment and supplies and a workshop where our construction and maintenance team of retired tradesmen can work under cover in all weathers. Maintenance of infrastructure is a requirement of our MOU with Lismore City Council.

Discussions are continuing with Council about an automated irrigation system for the gardens. This is a high cost project, requiring grant funding, but is essential to the health of the plant collection.

We are also hoping to relocate the nursery to somewhere more accessible in an area near the first carpark. Planning has begun with a site survey to be conducted shortly. The potting shed and shade house are both capable of relocation.

Elsewhere in the gazette our curator has written about the SARDI project. It will be very interesting to learn the results of the contents of the air samples as they are processed.

Spring is a great time to visit the gardens and we look forward to seeing you soon. The gardens are open every day except public holidays and entry is free but we welcome donations. Check out our website for account details for direct deposits.

Hazel Bridgett

president@friendslrbg.com.au

FLRBG August 2025



Top: Coastal banksia *Banksia integrifolia*
Below: *Micromelum minutum* Lime Berry fruiting in the Gardens.
Photo: Florence Treverrow



Top: Plant stall - Open Day 2025.
Below L to R: Bee advice with Julia and Graeme. Volunteers - Susan and Ros. Visitors on a guided walk with Trudi in the Hoop Pine forest

A Wonderful Day at the 10th Annual Botanic Gardens Day - Sunday 25th May

On a day that defied the odds and stayed dry, more than one hundred enthusiastic visitors and volunteers gathered to celebrate the **10th Annual Botanic Gardens Day** on Sunday 25th May. The event was a vibrant mix of guided walks, native plant sales, engaging talks, and fun activities for all ages.

The nursery stall was the heart of the event, bustling with activity before the action moved down to the Visitor's Centre, where children enjoyed hands-on nature-based activities. It's always a delight to see happy gardeners heading home with armfuls of native plants.

Children joined in the fun by searching for the "Big 5" plants in the Gardens using their plant passports, and many added personal messages to hang on their favourite plants.

Throughout the day, eight guided walks gave visitors the chance to explore every corner of the Gardens.

Richard's talk, "*Megafauna to Microplastics*," drew a large and engaged audience. Graeme offered native bee starter kits and expert advice, along with the unique opportunity to taste native bee honey.

Chris answered many questions at his native grasses display, and visitors enjoyed browsing a range of cards and books. Homemade treats made the morning tea especially memorable.

Guests came from near and far – including Bendigo, Collarenebri, Warrnambool, and even one all the way from New Zealand!

A heartfelt thank you to all our wonderful volunteers, especially those who generously kept the Visitor's Centre open throughout Botanic Gardens Week to warmly welcome guests. Your efforts made the event another resounding success.

This Open Day was proudly supported by BGANZ (Botanic Gardens Australia and New Zealand).

GROWING CONNECTIONS AT THE NURSERY

After retiring and returning to Lismore full-time, I felt drawn to give back to the community that welcomed my family and me so warmly back in 1989. An information day at the **Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens**—and the infectious enthusiasm of its volunteers—was the nudge I needed to get involved. When I moved to Sydney in the early 2000s, the Gardens were just beginning to take shape. Returning years later, I was amazed at the transformation: a vibrant space shaped by countless hands, hearts, and hours.

I joined with one humble request: my back and I were firmly anti-weeding! I needn't have worried. On my introductory tour of the gardens, **Jenny** at the Nursery welcomed me with open arms and immediately declared I'd be joining her team, and honestly, I couldn't have wished for a better match.

Since then, I've been immersed in the fascinating world of our native plants: learning Latin botanical names (still a work in progress!), harvesting delicate seeds, sowing with care—and cultivating patience. Some of these tiny seeds take years to emerge, but I believe the reward is worth the wait.

Helping out during Open Day in May was another highlight. I met fellow plant enthusiasts, from backyard bird and bee lovers looking for the right shrub to landowners reforesting local acreage. Our seedlings represent the biodiversity of the Northern Rivers region and of course the Gardens are the showcase of what those seedlings will become. The large group of volunteers were on hand for talks, guided walks and morning tea. It reminded me that we're all growing something, whether it's plants, knowledge or community.



Liz, rugged up against the cold .. it's a freezing morning in the nursery!

There's a quiet joy in starting fresh: after a career in management where I was expected to have all the answers, I now find pleasure in asking questions and being a beginner again. Though I might feel a twinge of guilt seeing our amazing Weed Warriors out in the field, my Wednesday mornings at the Nursery have become a cherished ritual, where I'm cultivating not just seedlings, but new friendships and exercising the "little grey cells".

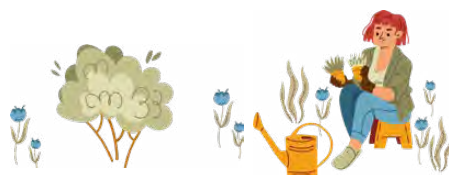
Liz Terracini

NEWS FROM THE NURSERY

Midwinter is no time to propagate new plants in the Nursery, and so we have been turning our hands and minds to other tasks and ideas, and I'm reflecting on the range of skills our volunteers bring to the **Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens**.

This Winter, **Liz** has turned her hand to **Bonsai** using excess small plants of *Ficus macrophylla* to make starter bonsai plants that people may like to buy. Using materials we have to hand, and gathering information from people and various sources, she set about experimenting with various techniques. Ideas such as taking 3 small trees and weaving their fine trunks together to create an interesting effect. This foray into Bonsai, using endemic rainforest plants has already created considerable interest.

We decided to extend the hardening off area benches, which also involved extending the automatic watering system. We also wanted to provide irrigation to the



small orchid house at the same time. Using her extensive knowledge of laying irrigation systems on farms, **Pauline** took this job in hand. After planning the layout, Pauline got to work with materials and tools we have on hand. She even inserted in-line taps so that we can control water flow to different areas. For instance, the water flow to the orchids will only be turned on periodically. The setup to propagate *Dendrobiums* in a small disused hot house was another idea of Pauline's and we have managed to propagate up to 3 dozen *Dendrobium kingianums*.

So "hats off" to the volunteers for their ingenuity, imagination, knowledge and hard work, without which we would not have the vibrant Lismore Rainforest Botanic Garden that we have today.

Jenny Wilson



Marie and Denis in Room 5.

A Lasting Legacy

On 17th August, members of the Friends will gather to show their appreciation for the dedication and generosity of **Marie and Denis Matthews**.

Marie, (who has retired from the Gardens to live in Ballina), and her family, will unveil two signs in the Gardens in areas that have special meaning to the couple, whose combined years of volunteering at the Gardens total well over fifty.

In her time as President, Marie was instrumental in executing the plans for the **Sensory Garden** and can be seen in photos, roping out the first paths, planting and taking photographs of the first spring display.

She set about creating the **Hoop Pine Forest Walk**, seeing the potential for quiet contemplation the forest provided, then plotting the path's course between the trees in the established forest.

The history display in the Visitor's Centre, created by Marie, documents every phase of the Gardens' development. Her collection of photos, PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, newspaper articles on native plant gardening, and other key documentation encompasses much of the knowledge regularly used by the Friends. Marie's most recent project was transforming an unremarkable view of old vehicles and a dog pound into the tranquil area now known as



SIGNS OF CHANGE

After many years of reports of visitors never finding the Botanic Gardens, some giving up just as they were getting close, others ending up in despair at the council's works depot, a new sign has appeared on Wyrallah Road. With the assistance of Council, drivers now have accurate signage to find us.

Thanks to Destination NSW for their support as well. The Gardens are only 3 kilometres from the Lismore CBD. Look out for the majestic hoop pines after you see this sign

Top to bottom: Denis explaining the design and historical purpose of the labyrinth to visitors. Marie posing for a Sydney Morning Herald shot 2013 Opening of Gardens. Denis relaxing in Palm Gully.

Room 5. Through dedicated planting and care, she introduced picnic tables, a living cubby, and a small ford over a wet area, enhancing the space and bringing new life to this part of the Gardens.

Denis, who died in 2024, was a dedicated long-term member of the Friends managing committee.

An enthusiastic physicist, Denis played a key role in designing the labyrinth at the summit of the **Hoop Pine Forest** and the **Solar Clock** in the **Sensory Garden**, both of which have become major attractions in the Gardens.

He also supported the publication of books for the Gardens and assisted Marie with editing.

Thanks to the vision and commitment of **Marie** and **Denis**, the Botanic Gardens have grown into a significant destination in Lismore. Their passion for rainforest plants and deep appreciation of the importance of biodiversity continue to inspire others.

MYRTLE RUST DISEASE

What does myrtle rust look like?



The infection generally starts as small purple spots on leaves. Within these, bright yellow pustules form and these fade to yellow and grey as the infection progresses.

The spots appear within 3 to 5 days of infection. Further pustules may develop and continue releasing spores within 10 to 12 days. The spores can remain viable for up to 3 months.

What plants does it affect?

In Australia, Myrtle Rust can affect many common plants including:

- eucalyptus species
- willow myrtle (*Agonis flexuosa*)
- turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*)
- bottlebrush (*Callistemon* species)
- paperbark (*Melaleuca* species)
- water gum (*Tristania neriifolia*)
- tea tree (*Leptospermum* species)
- lilly pilly (*Syzygium wilsonii*)
- scrub turpentine (*Rhodamnia rubescens*)

New host species in Australia are continuously being discovered. Currently it is thought to threaten some 350 different species.

More information can be found in the Australian Network for Plant Conservation host list.

What can you do?

If you have any of these species on your land

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has a Saving our Species program that collects seed, cuttings and root suckers of critically endangered species:

- Native guava (*Rhodomyrtus psidioides*),
- Smooth scrub turpentine (*Rhodamnia maideniana*)
- scrub turpentine (*Rhodamnia rubescens*)

You should contact the program by email:

savingourspecies@environment.nsw.gov.au

A good source for identifying native plants is the Royal Botanic Gardens web site [PlantNET](https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/plantnet)

Ian Ball

'SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS OF AIRBORNE PATHOGENS IN AUSTRALIA'S BOTANIC GARDENS'

Myrtle rust is a disease caused by the exotic fungus *Austropuccinia psidii* (formerly *Puccinia psidii*), which infects plants in the *Myrtaceae* family.

Common Australian *Myrtaceae* species include eucalyptus, lilly pilly, turpentine, bottlebrush, paperbark and tea tree.

Since myrtle rust was first detected in NSW in April 2010 it has spread across the eastern Australian landscape via airborne spores. Myrtle rust can now be found in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and on the Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory.

As myrtle rust lesions age, they merge and can distort the leaf



SAVING NATIVE SPECIES

GAME CHANGER PROJECT FOR AIRBORNE MYRTLE RUST SURVEILLANCE – LISMORE RAINFOREST BOTANIC GARDENS COLLABORATION

LRBG is now hosting a highly sophisticated sampler for airborne fungal spores. This device developed in South Australia, draws in air, filters out any fungal spores and captures these in small vials. The vials are then sent via snail mail to the offices of **South Australian Research and Development Institute** where the DNA of the spores is examined for the presence of *Myrtle Rust*. Any Myrtle Rust spores are then forwarded to the **Australian National University** where **Doctor Ben Schwessinger**, and his research team, do a more detailed analysis identifying particular strains of Myrtle Rust and any mutations in the fungus. Strains of concern identified through sequencing are reported to State and Federal agencies following biosecurity protocols.

The sampler at LRBG is one of nine located along the east coast from Queensland to Tasmania and in Canberra, Adelaide and SW Western Australia. This monitoring program is funded by the **Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)** under its **Saving Native Species- Game Changer** program.

Using advanced monitoring devices, the smart air samplers, we capture airborne spores from high-risk areas like botanic gardens. These spores are then subjected to DNA extraction analysis to quantify myrtle rust DNA captured in air samples and further differentiate rust strains and identify variants of concern. We use nanopore sequencing is an advanced technology that allows real-time analysis of DNA.

Rohan Kimber and **Nicole Thompson**, from **SARDI** visited the gardens on Monday 17th June and met with **Hazel Bridget**, **Tracey Whitby** and **Peter Gould**. They commissioned the sampler, downloaded software, and



demonstrated how to load sample vials. Samples will be collected every second Wednesday and mailed to SARDI in prepaid envelopes. ANU have now launched the project website.

Top: Peter and Damian checking the air sampler.

Bottom: Hazel, Matt Palmer LCC, Peter, Rohan and Nicole setting up the sampler.

<https://www.sporetracker.com.au/about>

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/insect-pests-and-plant-diseases/myrtle-rust>

TREE PROFILE – Peter Gould

Incense Cedar is a small to large tree growing to about 27m in height and a diameter of 60cm.

Bark:

The bark is grey to dark grey, somewhat hard, scaly and fissured.

Leaves:

The leaves are compound with 4 to 6 leaflets that are elliptic, oblong elliptic, or almost obovate, glossy above and paler below. There is no terminal leaflet.

Flowers:

Small cream flowers appear in loose racemes in the forks of upper leaves. They have 5 divisions in the calyx and 5 lanceolate petals about 4mm long. Flowering is from March to May.

Distribution:

Incense Cedar grows in warmer Subtropical and Tropical Rainforests with the largest specimens being found on red volcanic soils.

There are two distinct populations. The southern population extends from Woodburn on the Richmond River, NSW to the Bania National Park west of Bundaberg in Queensland. The northern population extends from near Cardwell to Badu Island in Torres Strait. It is also found in Vanuatu.

Timber:

The timber lacks the deep red colour that made other trees in the family Meliaceae so sought after by cedar getters and loggers. Its timber is yellowish, drying pale, tough and has a distinctive onion-like smell. It has not been widely used.

References:

Floyd, A.G. 1989, *Rainforest trees of mainland eastern Australia*, Terania Rainforest Publishing, Lismore, NSW.

Floyd, A.G. 1990, *Rainforests in New South Wales (Vol 1)*, Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton, NSW.

Harden, G., McDonald, B. and Williams, J. 2006, *Rainforest trees and shrubs-a field guide to their identification*, Gwen Harden Publishing, Nambucca Heads, NSW.

Atlas of Living Australia: https://biocache.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?q=lsid:https://id.biodiversity.org.au/node/apni/2886936#tab_map

View PlantNET-FloraOnline:

<https://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Anthocarapa~nitidula>

ANTHOCARAPA NITIDULA

Common Name:

INCENSE CEDAR, BOG ONION.

Family: MELIACEAE



Top: Illustration. Botanical sheet (Source: PlantNET - FloraOnline).

Bottom L-R: Flowers and Leaves (Source: iNaturalist Australia).

JAPANESE STUDENTS FROM YAMATO TAKADA, LISMORE'S SISTER CITY, VISIT THE GARDENS

Four students from Yamato Takada, Lismore's sister city in Japan, spent a morning at the Gardens during their stay. With their chaperone, Kiyonari Kishimoto, the students walked to the labyrinth at the summit of the *Hoop Pine Forest*, rang the bell at the top and wandered back through the *Wilson's Park Garden* to the *sensory garden*.

Keito Morii, Ayaka Fukui, Ayumi Komeda and Shinnosuke Ueda planted two *Lime Berry* (*Micromelum minutum*) plants in the sensory garden. As the *fringed wattle* (*Acacia fimbriata*) was blooming in the gardens, we shared information about the national flowers of the two countries, the Japanese unofficial flower being the *Cherry Blossom* (*Sakura*) and the *Chrysanthemum* (*Kiku*) which appears on the Imperial Seal and the Japanese passport.

While learning about our native frog species and the cane toad, a beautiful rainbow appeared, though the sun shone.



Top: Admiring the rainbow at the Frog pond deck.
Bottom row L-R: Walking down the Hoop Pine Forest path. Japanese students and their chaperone Kiyonari Kishimoto at the Hoop Pine Forest bell. Students planting *Lime Berry* *Micromelum minutum* plants in the Sensory garden.



The volunteers work mornings are **every Wednesday**
- **Gardeners** start at 8am and finish at 11am,
Nursery Group begins at 9am and finishes at 12pm.
Wear long sleeves and pants, hat, gloves and bring your morning tea.





HOME - AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDEN LOCATIONS

friendsbotanicgardens.org



The Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens is excited to announce that their Home Page now shows an interactive map of all the member Gardens in Australia.

Now, the breadth of all AAFBG member botanic gardens and arboreta across Australia is shown on the opening page of AAFBG's website. One click will lead to an address, contact details and website for every member garden. It's a wonderful, easy-to-use tool, assisting travellers to plan and locate botanic gardens in cities and regional towns throughout Australia.

FOR YOUR DIARY - CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2025!

DATE	EVENT	WHAT + WHERE	TIMES
Sunday 17th August	Friend's dedication of special sections of Gardens	For Denis and Marie Matthews. Meet at Visitors Centre 10.45 to walk to Room 5 by 11 am	11.00am
Sunday 31st August	Guided Walk	Butterflies of the Rainforest with Linda	10.00am till 11.00am \$5 adults
Sunday 28th September	Guided Walk		10.00am till 11.00am \$5 adults
Saturday 26th October	Guided Walk	Useful Plants Walk with Andreas	9.30am till 10.30am \$5 adults
Sunday 1st November	Friends 2026 LRBG Calendars for sale - \$12 members \$15 non members	Orders to be received by 1st October - email: publicity@friendslrbg.com.au	
Sunday 30th November	Guided Walk		9.30am till 10.30am \$5 adults
Sunday 28th December	Guided Walk		10.00am till 11.00am \$5 adults

We welcome private groups and school bookings. For more details please email: publicity@friendslrbg.com.au

WEEDING BLITZ AT HOOP PINE FOREST - COME ALONG AND LEND A HAND!

Join us for a Weeding Blitz at the Hoop Pine Forest on **Saturday, 6th September 2025, from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon**. We will gather at the Visitor's Centre at 8:30 am. Please wear sturdy shoes, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, hat and insect repellent, and bring your own water. Tools for weeding and collection buckets will be supplied, but if you have a favourite weeding tool, feel free to bring it along. Please be aware that some parts of the forest are steep and may require a bit of scrambling. A delicious morning tea will be provided for all participants as a thank you for your help. To participate, please register at membership@friendslrbg.com.au.

Susan Fitzpatrick - LRBG Weed Warrior and Membership Secretary

