

AROIDA AUSTRALIS



Cover Image -
Anubias 'Panda' by
Peter Egler.



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Porcelain vessel with Cyrtosperma and Green Ants by Mollie Bosworth

AROIDER FACT - Well known aroider and Aroida Australis contributor, Mollie Bosworth is also an award winning artist. Best known for her porcelain work, usually wheel thrown and employing many surface techniques including decals and watersoluble metallic salts. With more than thirty years of ceramic practice, Mollie now also works with the historic photographic technique of cyanotype. Often her work is driven by the materials and processes. Also, textures and patterns in nature influence her work, often drawn from her love of gardening and the tropical North Queensland environment in which she lives. To see more of Mollie's work or to purchase her unique art, visit www.molliebosworth.com

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Letter from the Editor

It has been a whirlwind six months with the anticipation of Tom Croat's visit and the sad news of Michael Pascalls death. I am personally very excited by this issue with a dive (pardon the pun) into aquatic aroids with Peter Egler! I have always wanted to set up an aquascape with these plants so his information is especially useful. We have had a few changes in office bearers and state representatives since our January issue so please make sure you are up to date, especially if you require information regarding Tom's visit and where you can meet him. And as always, keep an eye on our socials for the exciting events and raffles as they are announced. I have just heard news that some of Michael Pascall's plants have been bequested to the society to help raise money for Tom's visit and the ASA, so expect some exciting prizes in our upcoming competitions. Thankyou to our members who have submitted their stories and pictures and I continue to encourage you all to do so. Sharing knowledge is what we are all about. Happy reading! Liz Showniruk



Aroid Society of Australia



The ASA, an incorporated not for profit organisation, was founded in 2017 by a group of like minded individuals with the goal of encouraging and promoting interest in the aroid family of plants. The ASA provides its members with a network of experts to assist in plant identification and encourages the development of new types of Aroids within Australia.

The ASA is responsible for convening plant sales, conferences, speakers and shows, through a network of state representatives, as well as through social media. The ASA co-operates with other organisations with similar goals both in Australia and internationally to further our networks and knowledge base.

We are run by a network of dedicated volunteers who are all passionate plant people in different ways. Most importantly our society is about having fun and making friends in a warm and welcoming environment, bringing into contact all those who collect and grow aroids.

Please send all correspondence to: Aroid Society of Australia Inc, P O Box 442, Salisbury QLD 4107.

committee@aroids.net

Membership Fee Schedule - Single annual membership \$35.00,

Family/couples membership - \$60.00,

Concession card holders - \$25.00

Submissions and letters to the Aroida Australis including advertising. Liz Showniruk. editor@aroids.net

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AGM - Our 2023 Annual General Meeting will be held at Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-Tha Auditorium, Mount Coot-Tha Rd, Toowong QLD on Thursday September 14th at 6:00pm. All are welcomed and encouraged to attend, and indeed run for a position.. For further information please email committee@aroids.net

Ahoy Aroiders! by Andrew Baker – Interim President

First of all, I'd like to thank our wonderful editor Liz for producing two fabulous editions of the 'Aroida Australis'. The society has greatly benefited from the reintroduction of a newsletter and I would like to thank those members and guests who have contributed in any way shape or form to the content produced in this and the previous issue.

Financially the society's position continues to strengthen as we have now been able to fully transition out of the COVID19 era, which in result has seen a return to our regular in person meet ups with an increased frequency across most states. It has also been fabulous to see a majority of our members continue to support the society with our membership renewals remaining strong even with the tailing off of the "Aroid hype" experienced in the COVID years.

It's been great to see all the pictures and hear all the stories of members enjoying themselves at the various meet ups, garden visits and other events throughout the country. We're really excited to be continuing to bring these awesome events to members and can't wait to share with you what we have planned with our upcoming visit by Dr Tom Croat!!!

I would also like to thank you, our members, who continue to engage with the society, be that renewing membership, attending events and even contributing to our Facebook pages. The society is always looking for ways to engage members and encourages you all to participate in any way you can. At the end of the day; the Aroid Society is YOUR society!

Once again it is with gratitude that we thank the Committee Members, numerous Volunteers, State Representatives and those who have donated prizes. This cohort has really helped the society begin to flourish again and it's great to see some new faces volunteering at our various meetups!

I would like to finish by thanking all our previous Office Bearers, State Representatives and general committee members for all their contributions over the years in growing our Society from humble beginnings to the nation wide club we are today.

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Citizen Scientist - Glen Smith stumbles across an unusual aroid on his evening walk...

I've owned and lived on this property for about 28 years, this place in the Bellingen valley on the NSW north coast with my brother Ray. He passed away from cancer in late 2019. Well every evening we would take our dogs for a stroll around the house area of our 38 acre property. It's a routine for the dogs, to let them have time to go to the toilet before going inside for the evening, night time is nature's time. So since Ray's death this walk has become a kinda walking meditation for me as well, a time to take in the beauty of where I am lucky to call home. While on our stroll the other evening I noticed this very unusual looking plant, I'm no botanist but I knew it was different so I go inside to get my phone/camera to take a few photos for my own interest.

That night I posted the photos on a Facebook Australian plant ID page to try get some idea of this strange looking plant, someone replied it looks like a *Typhonium brownii*, then another person said by my area it could be the endangered species *Typhonium sp. aff. brownii*.

Well being a little confused and excited that I may have found an endangered species on my property I posted on a local Bellingen naturalist site the photos, the response was immediate, a local botanist got in touch saying she would assist me take a pressing of the plant to send to the Royal botanical gardens for a concrete identification, she also offered to come look at the plant.

Well the botanist came out today, realising it was just the one plant we decided a pressing at this stage was not the right way to go. So lots of photos taken and measurements of all the plants parts to be used for further identification instead.

Story and picture by Glen Smith



Aroida Australis



Direct from Grower

We are a boutique nursery in SE Qld, owned by Neil & Lisa Paterson. We do NOT sell Tissue Culture plants, instead propagate from our own seed and cuttings.

Posted in the Pot

We post all around Australia with Express Post. And post in the pot for the best plant health.

Hard to Find & New Hybrids

We have a passion for quirky, unusual, variegated and rare plants. Neil has been hybridising since childhood, studied plants at Uni and is passionate about Aroids. He is always "playing" to see what he can create next. If you can't find it elsewhere - ask us.



Odd Spot Plants
hello@OddSpotPlants.com.au

Overlooked Aroids

An exploration of aquatic and semi aquatic aroids by Peter Egger.

As many readers will undoubtedly know, the family Araceae makes more than a significant contribution to ornamental horticulture. Having said that, of the approximately 140 currently recognised aroid genera, only a handful of these are represented in the collections of indoor plant and aroid enthusiasts. Several of these genera are particularly popular, such as *Anthurium*, *Alocasia*, *Epipremnum*, *Monstera*, *Philodendron*, *Syngonium* and *Spathiphyllum*. One group of aroids however, has largely been overlooked by the aroid enthusiast, even though many plants from this group are readily available, are relatively inexpensive and can often be highly ornamental. Additionally, this group of plants are smaller and require less space to keep than their more popular cousins. If you have walked through the aquarium section of a pet store, you may have walked right past some of these small aroids!

These are the semiaquatic aroids, a group of plants extremely popular amongst aquarists here and abroad, who treat them as “aquatic” plants when aquascaping aquariums. Ironically, the vast majority of semiaquatics would prefer to be grown in a humid terrarium or in a shadehouse/greenhouse, rather than an aquarium. The aroid genera commonly cultured for aquarium use are *Anubias*, *Cryptocoryne* (commonly referred to as “crypts”), *Bucephalandra* (“buce”) and *Lagenandra*. Being of generally small size, highly ornamental, and offering great diversity in cultural requirements to satisfy both casual plant keepers and hard-core collectors up for a challenge, it is puzzling to me why these plants remain uncommon, or in most cases absent, from the collections of aroid enthusiasts.

What makes an aroid “semiaquatic”?

Semiaquatic aroids spend most of their life above the waterline of rivers and streams in their native habitat. When the season is dry, these plants are usually found emerged on muddy banks or firmly anchored to rocks or logs. However, in the wet season when watercourses are full, semiaquatics often become submerged and begin adapting to life

beneath the surface of the water. These seasonal adaptations can involve dramatic changes in the morphology of the plant to allow it to withstand turbulent water conditions and to continue photosynthesis and sexual reproduction in a watery environment. For example, during high water periods, some *Cryptocoryne* species will develop long, tubular spathes to allow pollinating insects safe passage to the spadix which lies below the surface!

I started keeping semiaquatic aroids as an aquarist more than a decade ago. The plants were part of my aquarium landscapes and provided benefits to the fish living alongside them. I quickly became fascinated by the beauty and incredible diversity of the genus *Cryptocoryne*. However, it soon became apparent that a significant number of the crypts in my aquariums were misidentified, and that this stemmed from most aquatic plant retailers and aquarium hobbyists not seeming overly interested in the true identity of the plants they grew and sold. Up for the challenge of doing something about this, and supported by a background in biological sciences, I decided to start growing my crypts in an emergent state so I could flower and subsequently identify them. My journey growing semiaquatic aroids as emerse plants had begun, and as my collection grew, so too did the number of genera that would be on my identification hit-list. The desire to accurately identify the plants in my collection, and to raise the quality in the aquarium plant trade, ultimately led me to establish a small plant nursery called Tankquility. Confidence in plant identification is a cornerstone of the business.

Below - Figure 1. A “red” form of *Cryptocoryne affinis* - submerge grown.



Figure 1.

A brief introduction to some of the semiaquatics available to the aroid collector

Genera which are readily available in Australia:

Anubias

This is a genus with a range restricted to tropical Africa. *Anubias* are extremely hardy plants and make excellent subjects for a new emerse-grower to develop and hone their skills. They come in a range of sizes, leaf shapes and colours (yellow-gold, green, variegated, etc.), and are very adaptable to different growing media. In fact, *Anubias* species can easily be mounted on wood and rocks in terrariums and paludariums; their roots adhering to hard surfaces with ease, similarly to orchids. The smaller cultivars like 'Petite' and 'Pangolino' can be used for their carpeting effect, while larger and more decorative species and cultivars make great centrepiece plants. Stunning variegated cultivars are available in Australia, though can require more stringent growing conditions to maintain optimal variegation, especially when they are grown submersed.

Take-aways: Small to large plants which are very easy to grow, can be mounted, and include variegated varieties.

Bucephalandra

Currently comprising 32 described species endemic to Borneo, of (usually) obligate rheophytic lithophytes, the species of this genus range from 15mm to around 40cm in height and are varied in morphology and growth habit. One of the reasons that *Bucephalandra* have become so popular for aquascaping is their colour variety, which includes blue, red, purple and almost black forms. Whilst most species grow upright or have a scrambling habit, one species forms pendent masses (similar to *Anthurium vittariifolium*) over one metre in length. *Bucephalandra* can sometimes prove troublesome to grow, with a few species being frustratingly erratic when grown under emerse conditions. Unfortunate for collectors, almost all plants available in Australia are only sold with trade names that are arbitrarily applied and of dubious value, and plants sold with species names are usually incorrectly identified. As a general rule, *Bucephalandra* identification can only be confirmed by examination of the



Figure 2.

Above Figure 2. *Anubias* 'Panda' - emerse grown and below, Figure 3. *Anubias* 'Pinto' - emerse grown



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Top Left Figure 4. *Bucephalandra* sp. (TQ-01079) - emerge grown and bottom Figure 5. *Bucephalandra* sp. (TQ-01069) - emerge grown.



Figure 5.

inflorescence. Interestingly, of the 100 plus clones in my collection, most which I have flowered have turned out to be new, undescribed species, indicating the genus will grow significantly in size as more research is conducted. This presents an opportunity for avid collectors to be on the leading edge of this research. To allow the tracking of individual clones I label *Bucephalandra* species with a collection number (TQ-).

Take-aways: High diversity in natural shape and colour with most plants remaining undescribed.



Figure 6.

Top - Figure 6. *Bucephalandra* sp. (TQ-01044) - emerge grown. Middle - Figure 7. *Bucephalandra* sp. (TQ-01044) - picture of the inflorescence (which has had the spathe artificially removed) - note the interstice staminodes, a unique characteristic of the spadix which sets *Bucephalandra* apart from all other aroid genera.

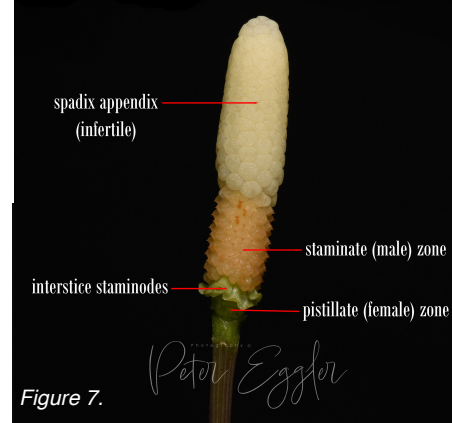


Figure 7.

Bottom - Figure 8. *Bucephalandra micrantha* (TQ-01077) - emerge grown - the smallest member of the genus coming in at a meagre 15mm in height.



Figure 8.

Cryptocoryne

Whilst around 70 species of *Cryptocoryne* have been discovered, many more natural hybrids occur, and new species are regularly being described. Taxon dependent, *Cryptocoryne* cover a vast array of natural habitats; from estuarine, to hard-water calcium-rich streams, to highly acidic peat swamp forests. Due to this diversity of habitat preference, conditions for cultivation vary widely, with some species being extremely challenging to grow. Some interesting propagation methods have evolved; one species (*C. ciliata* var. *ciliata*) has floating, hairy seeds to colonise islands, and another (*C. elliptica*) has developed the ability to propagate from detached leaves. Due to such variety, species selection is important when starting to cultivate *Cryptocoryne*. Crypts which lend themselves to (and in fact prefer) emerse cultivation include some of the Sri Lankan species such as *C. beckettii*, *C. undulata* and *C. wendtii*, which are the species most often sold in aquarium stores. The Sumatran species *C. moehlmannii* and *C. pontederiifolia* are also easy to grow. Strap-leaved plants in the *crispatula* group generally require higher humidity or regular misting to keep looking their best, though the Indian species *C. spiralis* is an exception (it is more forgiving and can be grown in lower humidity like any other typical aroid).

Below - Figure 9. *Cryptocoryne wendtii* 'Tropica' emerse grown.



Some cultivars of *Cryptocoryne* exist, including a bright pink variety of *C. wendtii* aptly named 'Flamingo'!

Take-aways:
Incredible diversity in appearance and growing conditions, with some cultivars being highly ornamental and others presenting extreme cultivation challenges for enthusiasts.



Figure 10.

Above - Figure 10. *Cryptocoryne crispatula* var. *kubotae* emerse grown. Below right - Figure 11. *Cryptocoryne pontederiifolia* - emerse grown. Below left - Figure 12. *Cryptocoryne nurii* var. *raubensis* 'Rosen Maiden' - submerse grown.



Figure 12.



Figure 11.



Figure 13. *Cryptocoryne pontederiifolia* - inflorescence. Figure 14. *Cryptocoryne pontederiifolia* - kettle of the spathe (opened to show internal structures). Figure 15. *Cryptocoryne ciliata* var. *ciliata* - inflorescence. Opposite - Figure 16. *Lagenandra ovata* - emerge grown.

Lagenandra

Closely related to *Cryptocoryne*, there are around 20 species of *Lagenandra*, all of which are restricted to the Indian subcontinent. Only a few species are held within Australian collections, the most common being *L. meeboldii*, which is represented by several naturally-occurring colour forms (some with stunning leaf patterning and colour). Narrow-leaved forms of *L. meeboldii* are known in cultivation, likely a rheophytic adaptation. *L. meeboldii* normally reaches a height of no more than 25cm when grown emerge. Other species such as *L. ovata*, can grow to around one metre in height and would make striking emergent plants (half in and half out of the water). *Lagenandra* cultivation requirements are relatively straightforward, and some species having potential as houseplants due to their tolerance of low humidity.

Take-aways: Potential houseplants with a wide range of naturally occurring colours and sizes.

Genera which are not commonly available in Australia:

Aridarum and allied genera (*Burttianthus*, *Heteroaridarum*, *Pursegloveia*)

This group of plants contains rheophytes endemic to Borneo with usually coriaceous leaf blades. This group may be either lithophytic or terrestrial. Long term culture under submerse conditions is uncertain, but several species are currently grown emerge by collectors in Australia. To date, most have proven to be reliable in cultivation.

Fenestratarum

This genus contains two species of obligate rheophytic lithophytes endemic to Borneo. Long term culture under submerse conditions is uncertain at present. I am currently growing *F. malayadii* emerge, which has so far proven to be reliable in cultivation. The other species, *F. culum*, a highly ornamental needle-leaved species, is also in several Australian collections.

Furtadoa

This is a genus of three species restricted to Peninsular Malaysia and Sumatra. At least two of these are known to be obligate rheophytic lithophytes (information on *F. mixta* is limited). *Furtadoa sumatrensis* has proven easy to grow both submerse and emerge, and it is relatively common to find in the Australian aquarium hobby. There is some discussion of *Furtadoa* being synonymised with *Homalomena*, though the bounds of each genus currently appear unclear.



Figure 16. *Lagenandra ovata* - emerge grown.



Figure 17



Figure 18.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.

Figure 21.

Schismatoglottis

Being widespread and comprising a large number of species, the genus *Schismatoglottis* is already well-known to many aroid enthusiasts. What is perhaps not known, is that two *Schismatoglottis* species are equally at home in an aquatic environment. *S. prietoi* (from the Philippines) and *S. roseospatha* (from Borneo) have been found growing both as perennially aquatic and emerse rheophytes in nature. Both species make good terrarium and aquarium specimens and are relatively easy to grow. *S. prietoi* is a miniature clumping species, while *S. roseospatha* is larger, with some specimens having - you guessed it - a pink-coloured spathe!

This article is intended to be an overview of a group of often-overlooked aroids. I hope to have piqued an interest in this diverse and endearing group of plants. There is much more to tell (and show), and I hope to share more in some future articles... Story and pictures by Peter Egglor

Opposite top - Figure 17. *Pursegloveia aegis* - emerse grown. Opposite middle left - Figure 18. *Furtadoa sumatrensis* "red" - emerse grown. Opposite middle right - Figure 19. *Furtadoa sumatrensis* "red" - inflorescence. Bottom left - Figure 20. *Schismatoglottis roseospatha* - emerse grown. Bottom right - Figure 21. *Schismatoglottis roseospatha* - inflorescence at staminate anthesis showing thread-like strands of pollen.

To see more of Peters plants please visit his online store tankquility.com.au



Image - *Philodendron pastazanum*

The ASA has a series of artist quality prints available for sale including this lovely

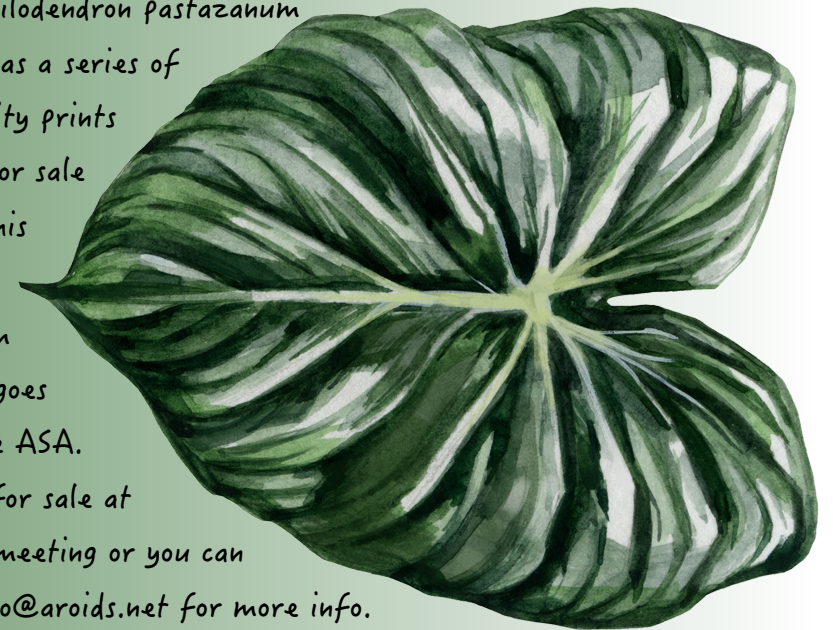
pastazanum

All profit goes back to the ASA.

Available for sale at your next meeting or you can contact info@aroids.net for more info.

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Kathryn Edwards proves that old gardens are an awesome treasure trove of lost delights.

Anthurium 'ANAVELVET' (NOID)

In recent years a 45 year old 5 acre garden was rediscovered by a new owner in Far North Qld.

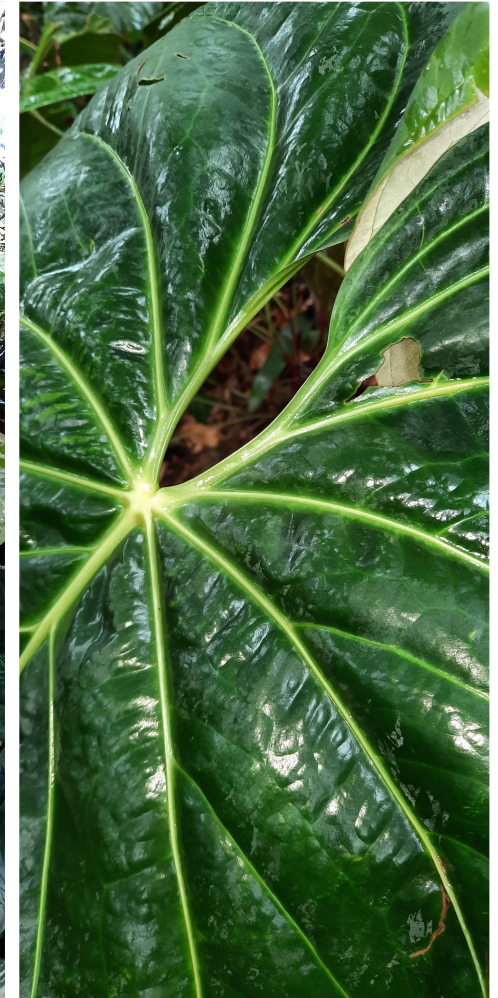
History records that the garden's original designers were short listed for the ABCs Open Garden Competition in the 1990s. One of the (ABC) judges described their garden inspection as if being "at a birthday party" with so many presents (plants) in a beautiful structurally designed landscape.

Unfortunately, the garden was never opened to the public due to health issues at the time. Many of the plants had been sourced by the owners through well known Cairns nurseryman, Bob Nevin, (Nevin's Nursery). Bob was an international orchid judge, collector and importer of orchids, rare plants and aroids and traveller to Hawaii, Chang Mai, Phillipines, Central and South America, Thailand and Malaysia in the mid 1970s and early 1980s.



Of recent years, this amazing garden had fallen into disrepair and sadness. In 2017 the new owner discovered so many treasures under fallen palm fronds, tropical regrowth and downed rainforest trees and began an amazing clean up and renovation.

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The discovery of very large specimens of a velvet *Anthurium* (as yet unnamed) created a bit of excitement. Locally, it is now named *Anthurium* 'ANAVELVET', named after Ana, the garden's saviour.

The plant had been self seeding in the rainforest and about 10 specimens of this plant have been discovered so far, including 4 very old specimens. There are only 2 other anthuriums present on the property and these are located at least 50m away; these are *A. waroquanum* and *A. macrolobium*, and unlikely to be pollen contributors. All mature 'ANAVELVET' specimens appear to be identical, thus supporting the assumption that this plant self pollinates and is a species not a hybrid.

Anthurium 'ANAVELVET' has very large leaves with several specimens at 880mm long. The adaxial surface (upper leaf) is very velvet, whilst the abaxial surface is a lighter green and smooth. The leaves are slight bullate, quite sturdy and hold their shape well. The sinus is usually overlapping. The petioles are subterete and have one flat upper side, although not all petioles are the same. The mature specimen plants stand erect and hold their large leaves above the ground. The plant produces an inflorescence regularly with the peduncle being of similar length to the petioles. Some seed has been collected and sown. The spathe is usually green with a long (200mm) spadix of whitish/turning pinkish colour held erect and upwards. The cataphylls persist at the base of the stem and are difficult to remove. Story and pictures by Kathy Edwards



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AROIDS IN ART - Angela Meyer

"Looking at the shapes and forms of tropical foliage has inspired many of my paintings. I first began painting the tropical fruit in my mother's garden, growing up in Kuranda in the 1970s. Over time, botanical art has been a specific genre that I always return to.

Throughout history references to botanical nature have considered the link between aesthetics and science, and creative contemplation has inspired many artists to go to the tropics and record what they see. Indeed, the naturalist and explorer Alexander Von Humboldt inspired a fascination for the South American tropics when he went there in the late 1700s.

Imagery of the Antipodean Pacific was made popular by Paul Gauguin, whose work resonated with the sociological and landscape aesthetics of the tropics. The Australian painter Ray Crooke has left a legacy of work produced in Cairns and the Pacific Islands.

The tropical flora of far North Queensland is luscious in terms of the endemic rainforest species and ecosystems, and is an imaginative journey of the world when exotic species are introduced to gardens and collections. In our timeline of existence many native rainforests are being cleared for agriculture, urban expansion or mining, and documenting the beauty of nature celebrates a lived experience of the diversity of botany.

This painting includes the King Anthurium veitchii, *Dracaena surculosa* (Florida beauty), the brightly coloured *Aechmea*, and the *Hoya nicholsonii* vine. The plants play home and host to birds, butterflies, insects, and other creatures that feast on their nectar and pollen. The act of painting celebrates my appreciation of nature."



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Molly Bosworth makes a spectacle of her spectabile !

Building a Spectabile
Tower – Finding a
solution for growing a
large pendant
anthurium

In my rainforest garden in Kuranda, I have always strived to grow my aroids outside in natural settings although this can be challenging at times. My large, established *Anthurium spectabile* had been settled on a black wattle stump for many years but it was hanging forward and the leaves were getting too long, around 1.7m, and dragging on the ground. It's a plant originating from my father's collection, so I was keen to see it reach its full potential. I had been searching for a solution for many months, but I was unable to figure out a way to get the large plant higher. All the surrounding rainforest trees are vertical without horizontal branches.

Below - Anthurium spectabile in its original garden position and surrounded by established ferns and aroids.



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I was grateful when a friend, John Edwards, with a practical engineering background, suggested building a gabion tower as a solution. The proposal involved a galvanised steel cage attached to four steel internal posts, cemented into the ground. It would be filled with quincan lava rocks providing a relatively easily made, permanent solution.

Left - Detail of the original stump and Below Left - Filling the tower with volcanic rocks.

We aimed for 2m X .8m, but taking into consideration the size of the purchased materials, it's final height was 2.4m with the last .4m holding the potting materials. John set to work gathering the materials, fabricating the cage structure, and digging holes for the footings.

The structure was positioned under the forest canopy, in a position with good natural light and where it can be observed from my verandah. The cage was filled with volcanic rocks from Mt Quincan. On the inside edge,

all rocks were sized larger than the 10cm squares of the mesh. Smaller rocks could be fitted towards the middle. A 13mm irrigation pipe was incorporated within the tower for future watering.

The rocks finished at the 2m height. The remaining 40cm was lined with a fine plastic mesh and some fibre from a nearby licuala palm, to hold the potting mix. The potting mix used was small 20mm quincan and pine bark with a healthy serve of Organic Xtra.

Then it was time to remove the *spectabile* to position it on the tower. It had grown quite a long stem so this was trimmed along with about 3 lower leaves to get the growing tip down further into the potting mixture.



Above - Volcanic rocks inside the cage, and below, thoroughly misting the newly planted Anthurium.



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A large termite nest was found positioned around the stem which had probably been blocking nourishment and growth. Old roots were removed and trimmed. The plant was positioned and backfilled with potting mix then watered in well. A hose can be attached to the poly and the plant watered when needed.

The plant has been growing well since it was transplanted to the tower in July 2022. It has produced an amazing amount of new roots throughout the potting mix and now roots are visible going down over the rocks. Since transplanting, all inflorescences have been removed so the plant can concentrate on leaf growth for the time being. The latest leafblade has now reached over 1.8m long.

The next phase may be adding some climbers around the tower to make it blend more into the garden setting. Thanks so much to Kathryn and John Edwards for their ideas and execution of this project. Story and pictures by Mollie Bosworth



VALE MICHAEL PASCALL

1959 - 2023

As most of our members know, our former president Michael passed away after a short battle with cancer. His absence within our community leaves a remarkable void. We have lost a wonderful man, friend and gardener.

Michael was the first president ever elected by the members of ASA, and is the only president to have held office for the maximum of three years.

Michael made sure that he attended the SEQ meetings regularly, making the 18 hour journey with a ute full of plants and his famous sugar bananas, which were always extremely well received by members.

Michael was best known for his dry humour, loud shirts and passion for the spelling of *anthurium vittariifolium* (yes it has the double "r"!!!).

Rest easy, our friend



"I would like to take a moment to reflect on the life of Michael Pascall in North Queensland, where he firstly came to live in the Whyanbeel Valley before moving to Tully. In moving to the tropics, he became bitten by the plant collecting virus. Perhaps, the saying, "going troppo," has evolved into plant collecting as a contemporary global trend. The impact of this phenomena is that the tropics can live in any climatic zone with the help of humidifiers and heating, thus creating a surrogate tropical climate.

We personally have bought plants from Michael at Rusty's Market in Cairns over the years, and he has bought plants from us. He has always been of good conversation at aroid gatherings, and was especially kind to our family when we suffered hardship in recent years. Michael was a kind and generous person, who, in Ken's early days learning about aroids, was a bastion of available knowledge. Michael willingly shared his knowledge about aroids with anyone passionate about growing tropical plants, fruit trees, aroids, palms, gingers, and cycads. He was especially excited about showing us his amazing exotic banana tree collection. His jovial smiling face lit up social gatherings, and to that end, he will be greatly missed."

A tribute to Michael by Ken and Angela Hossen



Above - Michael loved his tropical fruits. Left - Pictured in Whyanbeel Valley, circa 1999! From Left, Peter Sergeant, Michael, Bruce and Wynne Robinson. Opposite, as a youth and at his home in Tully with a well deserved beer!

Thankyou to the ASA, Sharon, Wynne and Angela for your contributions.

Dr. Tom Croat

Story by Liz Showniruk

The man, the myth and the legend.

As we eagerly await the upcoming visit from Tom Croat, I thought it was well due to introduce our esteemed visitor by giving our readers a brief glimpse at this legend's life. Tom was kind enough to share his biography with me and I have taken from it some excerpts to give you a taste of his epic adventures

Born into a family of 7 children, Tom came into this world in 1938, shortly before America would enter the war. His family had a farm in Iowa.

“For me the end of the war was signaled by a single episode. One day the sky was nearly blackened by the overflight of hundreds of planes all flying west over Warren County, obviously representing planes from the European theater heading for Omaha, one of the SAC bases with further distribution into the desert southwest for permanent storage in areas where many of them reside today”

On completing his schooling, Tom joined the Army and found himself in post WW2 Germany, working as part of a radar unit. His time in Germany was cut short so that he may return to Iowa and assist his family as they struggled on the farm.

Tom enrolled in Simpson College with the intention of becoming a teacher and chose to major in Science. When he wasn't farming he was studying or working to pay for the tuition.

‘I was about 24 when I finally left the farm and I was anxious to leave. I had spent my entire life there except for the two years spent in the service. So when I graduated from college I was anxious to go out to see more of the world. Having had traveled a bit while I was in the army stationed in Germany between 1957 and 1958 I had wanderlust for more travel.’

A teaching post in the American Virgin Islands gave Tom the opportunity to travel the West Indies where he enjoyed exploring and snorkelling in the bountiful, coral filled seas. Fluent in Spanish, Tom would go on to travel central and south America.



Right and top right - Life on the farm in Iowa. Above - US Army's 10th Mountain Division, Bavaria 1957 - 1959. Below - Simpson College. Below right - St Thomas, Virgin Islands 1962 - 1963.



"In May with the school year ended, and with what appeared to be a large sum of money saved up (about \$1,000), I set off with my old Army duffle bag and 300 rolls of film on a sloop sailing for the island of St. Barts, the first stop on a journey through the Lesser Antilles to Trinidad and then all over South America."

On returning to Iowa, Tom enrolled into the University of Kansas, where he had received an NDEA fellowship and began studying botany for the first time. This is where Tom would also meet his future wife, Patricia.

"As my graduation approached I thought about where I might be able to work. I had naively written to Walter Lewis, Editor of the Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden expressing interest in working on their Flora of Panama project (little did I know that I would later be in charge of that work)."

From here Tom's adventures would take him all over the world, where he found himself in the wildest jungles, sometimes in pickles and tricky situations!

"As time went on in Madagascar I came to realize that my arms were covered with scratches from the spiny plants. These scratches and cuts had become infected, perhaps owing to malnutrition. I visited an American Lutheran mission hospital, and the doctor thought it might be an endemic disease requiring amputation of each area of infection. He advised me to go to the Lutheran hospital near Ft. Dauphin to have my wounds checked. They decided to first give me antibiotics, hoping that I was just suffering from malnutrition. Fortunately, the strong antibiotic cured the condition."

"That same day after we had barely gotten underway when we had a tragic accident. Having passed beneath the magnificent waterfall of the Rio de La Paz, we met a logging truck. Our edge of the road caved away, and we promptly found ourselves rolling over and over, seven times by my estimate. When we reached the bottom of the ravine, the front wheel was hanging from a large boulder with the rear end in the river. We just walked through the front window, which was now a large door. My 5-year-old daughter, Anne, was unconscious, and my 3-year-old son, Kevin, had vanished." (He had fallen out the window on the first roll and was crying, trying to come down to where we were, 300 feet below)



Left - Mafally Tribesmen at Lavanono near Indian Ocean, Southern Madagascar. Below Left - Hopelessly hung up in Honduras, Fortunatley we had blocked the road so others helped us out.



Above right - Trying to clear boulders from Santa Rita Road in Colon Province, Panama. Left - Impromptu field operation with a razor blade to remove botfly larvae. Lynn Hannon operating on Tom's back in the field in

And to conclude, in Toms own words a summary of his extraordinary career.

“Finally, a summary of my collective activities is in order because it has been one of my principle activities over my career. I have collected in 42 countries, making nearly 108,000 collections, have described nearly 1500 species as new to science with as many as another 1700 species new to science but as yet unpublished. Some record setting collecting experiences including collecting 1000 collections during a single week in Madagascar in 1975, 225 collections made in a single day on Cerro Pirre in Panama in 1973 and 125 collections made in 45 minute in Belize on a trip with John Dwyer in 1973. Persistent effort and spending up to 4 months a year in the field in as many as 6000 localities has insured that my scope of general knowledge is broad making it easier to delimit species on a local basis. Though I have not collected in Panama in more than 20 years I have collected nearly 4 times as many specimens there than any other collector. Studies have shown that collectors who spend most of their careers in the field and who collect in many different areas and who are devoted to a specific group of plants that compels them to continue going to the field end up collecting most of the new species. In fact, most new species are discovered by fewer than 3 percent of all collectors. I am proud to have been included in this group of megacollectors.



Aroida Australis

Since I am now entering into the twilight of my career and can't predict how many more years I will be healthy enough to continue this heavy schedule of collecting and research it is impossible to know if I will be able to complete all the work I have started but I intend to give it my best.” Special thanks to Tom Croat for supplying his stories and pictures.



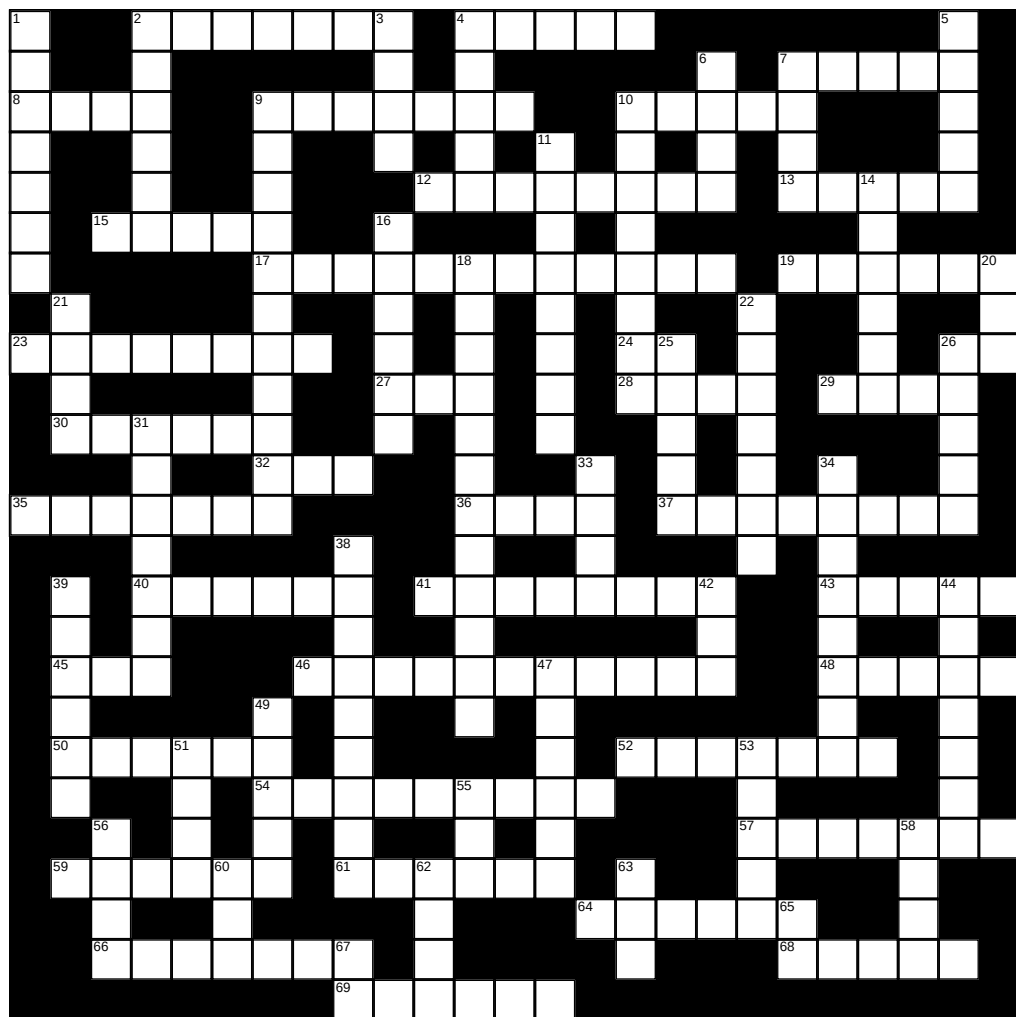
Left - Successful collecting begins with your equipment. Vest holds up to 10 large colelcting bags, ziplock bags, GPS, field notebook, insect collecting bags. Waist belt carries sheathed machete, sheath knife and clippers. Suspenders carry two cameras. Top pocket in vest carries rain coat. Above - Pacific Slope near Queremal, Valle, Colombia



Opposite - Colellcting lots of plants is the real purpose of all this turmpoil. Pressing sorted plants at Tinalandia in Ecuador. Left - Being properly prepared is the key to success. Tree climbing gaffs are about 4 inches long and are used for climbing.

The ASA is holding several events across the Nation where our members can meet Tom Croat. To find out about your nearest event please contact your state representative.

Aroida Australis Crossword - Test your knowledge!



Across

2. Sweet fruits of bacciferous plants.
4. Red
7. Usual ways of a plant
8. Give instruction to
9. Reaction to 64 across
10. Roman Goddess
12. Bluish Sheen
13. Between two
15. Popular swamp aroid (genus)

17. *Symplocarpus foetidus* common name
19. Any plants of the family Araceae
23. Esteemed botanist due to visit Australia in 2023
24. Present tense third person singular of be
26. Start
27. A little sleep
28. Before, prefix

29. Tree trunk
30. Three fates - Greek mythology
32. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium
35. Support structure
36. Father of nomenclature
37. See 36 Across
40. *Alocasia melo* alternative name
41. Plant fur
43. #Plantsmakepeople_ _ _ _ _
45. Edible tuber
46. *Alocasia clypeolata* common name
48. Motor to
50. Type of culture for mass producing plants
52. *Spathiphyllum* named after Spanish cubist.
54. Habit of 7 down
57. Nature lover
59. Of the leaf
61. *Dracunculus* familiar
64. Powdery substance produced by flowers
66. Triangular leaf
68. Before family - plant taxonomy.
69. Elongated leaf shape

7. Native *Raphidophora*
9. The art of underwater gardening
10. 10 across festival
11. *Dieffenbachia* 4 4
14. Equatorial madness
16. Grey, botanically speaking
18. Popular genus with aquarium enthusiasts
20. Classic aussie crisp bread
21. Plant storage organ
22. Japanese flower art
25. Gerden pest
26. Taxonomic rank after family
31. Lonely aroid genus
33. Sacred river (Kubla Kahn)
34. Painful plant needles
38. Popular Miami garden
39. Short for 18 down.
42. Over
44. 31 down single species.
47. Island of China
49. Formally *Schismatoglottis longifolia*
51. Planting medium
53. Photosynthetic, eukaryotic organisms
55. Fallen trunk
56. Garden tool storage place
58. Bud origin
60. Allow
62. Angle between a leaf and stem
63. Taro paste
- 65 Negative
67. Perform an action

Down

1. Leaf stalk
2. Two lobes
3. Central stalk
4. Alocasia _ _ _ _ _ Shield
5. Say
6. Type of bryophyte

Answers to the January Edition crossword.

Across - 2) Clouds, 6) botanist, 10) deforestation, 11) wet, 12) amazon, 16) pantropical, 18) pistias, 21) berry, 22) ecuador, 23) cytokinin, 27) aerial, 29) stylochaeton, 31) herbarium, 32) weed, 34) Gustavo, 36) variegation, 41) titanium, 42) absinthe, 43) flamingo, 45) pothos, 46) joseph, 47) leca, 48) adansonii, 49) xylem, 51) phloem, 52) epiphyte, 53) hybrid, 55) malanga, 57) spadix, 58) miticide, 62) green thumbs, 63) anubias. Down - 1) monteverde, 3) dracontioides, 4) spiritus sancti, 5) ent, 7) glucose, 8) biome, 9) lemna, 13) zzplant 14) green man, 15) caladium, 17) buse, 18) perlite, 19) gracile, 20) forgetii, 24) node, 26) terrarium, 27) root, 28) taro, 30) hydro, 33) deni brown, 35) vietchii, 37) thaumatophyllum, 38) fenestration, 39) Miguel, 40) calla, 42) araceae, 44) mojito, 50) miticide, 54) arisarum, 56) swiss, 59) queen, 61) ebay.



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ADVERTISERS - Would you like to see your business listed in these classifieds or an advertisement in our publication. With many members our society puts your business forward. Please contact Liz on editor@aroids.net if you would like to be part of our next publication.

Back Cover - Bruce Robinson and Martino Dang show us they are not afraid to strip down on World Naked Gardening Day which corresponded with the FNQ ASA event held at Liz Showniruk's property in Whyanbeel.



Aroid Society of Australia Inc

Membership Application Form

Annual Membership Period – 365 days from signup

You can now renew or join on line! www.aroids.net

The Aroid Society of Australia Inc (ASA) is an association for the promotion of aroids Australia-wide. Membership includes access to a network of collectors, growers and enthusiasts, newsletters, and other benefits.

The annual membership fee (below) applies to individuals, companies and other legal entities resident in Australia or overseas. Fees are payable by cheque, cash or direct deposit:

Account name: Aroid Society of Australia Inc
BSB: 064-186 **Account number:** 1086 3434

Please complete all sections of the form below and email the completed application to secretary@aroids.net or by post to **The Secretary, Aroid Society of Australia Inc**, P O Box 442, Salisbury QLD 4107

Membership Type: New Membership Renewal

Couples membership (One vote per membership) \$ 60

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Applicant's details:

| | | | |
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| Additional members (For Family Memberships) | Name: | | |
| | Name: | | |
| Would you would like to contribute expertise or time? | | | |

Signature: By ticking this box you agree that the information provided by you in the form is true and correct.

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Acknowledgments:

- All ASA communications are sent to members by email, and accessible via the Members-Only Facebook group.
- ASA does have public liability insurance.

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