



ASA Newsletter

OCTOBER 2019

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Some plants for sale at the Annual General Meeting



Welcome to the New ASA Year!

The ASA membership year ends with the financial year and the tenure of the ASA committee ends at the Annual General Meeting. Two events that passed since the last Newsletter.

So far, this year has been off to a great start, with many events being planned and other exciting things for members.

For the committee, there was some shuffling of positions and some new faces. A full list of committee can be found on page 9. Everyone on the committee is excited to see the ASA bring people together over our shared loved of Aroids.

There were also some changes to the constitution voted on at the AGM, which include new types of memberships. The new memberships are honorary, where individuals are nominated to be involved in the ASA and

do not have to pay membership, but do not get a vote nor can they be involved in management. The new types of membership are:

Founder, to recognise anyone who played an instrumental role in the founding of the ASA.

Honourary, to recognise people who have made a contribution to aroids.

Patron, for anyone who contributes significantly to the running of the society.

A nomination form has been attached to the newsletter if you know someone that you would like to nominate.

New Committee Positions

As well as new membership types, several new committee positions were created prior to the AGM. Unfortunately, some

of these were not filled, so we are putting out a call for anyone to fill the below positions:

Interstate Representative Coordinator: The ASA is Australia wide, and organising events in other states is a lot of work. So we need someone to liaise and assist our State reps to run their events.

Social Media Coordinator: Communication in 2019 is hard. There are so many channels to reach people and we need your help to manage them. This would involve regular posting on Facebook, Instagram, and handling correspondence therein. If you're good with social media, we need you.

General Committee: There are odd jobs that don't fit into other roles, if you're eager and handy, let us know.

Please note, all committee positions are volunteer and no one is paid for their time.

Call for Contributions!

The ASA committee love Aroids, and some of us have been growing them for many years. This being said, none (or not many!) of us are experts.

For this reason, we would like to ask you, our members, to contribute your own knowledge and experience to the newsletter.

We know that some of you are seasoned growers, and maybe you have discovered a fun fact, a growing technique, a tool, or a practice surrounding aroids that no one else knows. We would love if you would share these with us!

Similarly, many of our members are new to aroids, or gardening in general, and

would greatly appreciate some general insight to help them get started.

Either way, the ASA would love contributions from our members to publish here. If you would like to contribute, please get in contact with our Editor, Aaron, or email:

secretary@aroids.net



The first prize in the October online raffle drawn at the General meeting tonight



ASA News

ASA ONLINE LIBRARY

We have a place where members can access our back catalogue of Newsletters, information sheets, and presentations. Just go aroids.net/files.html. To ensure these files are only accessible to current ASA members, the username and password have changed since last year:

Username: Member
Password: ASA2020

CHRISTMAS PARTIES

As the calendar year sadly come to an end, we like to host Christmas parties in each state to show our appreciation to our members and to give everyone a chance to unwind. So far the parties for SA and South QLD have been organised, and the other states will soon be announced. The ASA will provide catering and there will be some great presents for lucky members. It has previously been suggested that a Planta Claus (Kris Kringle) would be fun, so please speak to your state coordinator about this so they can get it organised.

SA: 15th December 12:30pm
POTSO Botanic

Brisbane: 10th November TBC
Figs on Sylvan

NSW: 14th November TBC
Green Beanz

VIC: 30th November TBC
Royal Botanic Gardens

All other states, keep an eye out for more details in your emails.

AROID STORIES

In the last newsletter, Matt Bogart told us about his trip to Indonesia to find a favourite childhood aroid. Part two of his adventure is continued in this newsletter. If, like Matt, you have an awesome plant story to share, please get in contact with us so we can help you publish it.

POLLEN SHARING

As the weather warms up, aroids are starting to flower. The only thing more exciting than seeing our plants flower is to see them fruit. The pollination timing of aroids makes it hard to self-pollinate, so ASA member Anastasia has created an online spreadsheet to help connect people with pollen with those who with flowers, and visa versa. If you would like to add to the spreadsheet, you can find it here: <https://bit.ly/2pRqiLx> Thanks to Anastasia for setting this up.



Upcoming Events

October General Meeting

Tonight, October 9th is a General meeting for the ASA at [Sunnybank RSL](#).

Plant sellers arrive at 6:00pm set up by 6:15pm, doors open 6.20pm for members to sign in, purchase raffle tickets and set up popular vote.

Plant sales start 6:30pm, meeting at 7pm

Guest Speaker Jordan Ives, will talk on Tips and Tricks for growing Aroids in the subtropics.

The online raffle will be drawn on the night, details of the raffle are in your email and on Facebook.

Popular Vote The popular vote gives you a chance to

win a \$50 voucher to spend on plant sales. To win, all you need to do is bring a unique, special or attractive plant and display it in the popular vote section. You must be a financial member and bring a plant along that you think will be of interest. Upon arrival, bring your plant to Bec to get a number to display with your plant.

For Sellers: If you would like to sell on the night, please be set up by 6:15 pm. Aroids only for sale please. Each seller is responsible for setting up, packing down, and tidying their area. There will be pricing labels available at

meeting, \$2 for 40 labels. The ASA will take a 10% commission on the sale of plants, unless the person is a guest speaker or travelling from interstate.

What to bring: The ASA does not provide single use plastic bags, so please bring your own bags or box to carry your plants home. ASA now has EFTPOS for auctions and raffle but plant sales are still cash only.

Any pots/plants for sale must be clean or in bags.

Please bring a plate of supper to share, the ASA will provide coffee and tea.

Sales start at 6:30pm, don't miss out! For more information:

secretary@aroids.net

South East QLD Bus Tour

On Sunday February 9th 2020, the ASA will go on a bus excursion to the northside of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast area.

The first stop will be Stephen Flood's. The next stop is yet to be determined, but will be

potentially a garden or nursery. Third and final stop will be a visit to Stan Walkley's garden at Rosemount on the Sunshine Coast.

This will be an all day trip, with first pick up on the Southside from Trevor

Crawford's at Mt Cotton with a 2nd pickup at Shell Service Station Nudgee.

Lunch will be provided, simple sausage sizzle with dessert and a raffle (tea and coffee of course).

Tickets are \$5 per person and numbers are limited.



Aroid Biographies

Matt Bogart

HUNTING FOR THE CAMOUFLAGE PLANT OF SUMATRA, AGLAONEMA PICTUM

PART 2

WRITTEN BY MATT
BOGART

Continued from previous newsletter

Still on a high from seeing my first wild *Aglaonema pictum* and all the other amazing plants we had come across during the first week of my trip, we got back in the car and drove another three hours north to a small town at the bottom of a different mountain range. Here, we met up with a local hunter and, leaving our car, we piled into his truck for the 2.5 hour drive up through the hills to his village. The road up the hill quickly deteriorated into a muddy, washed-out track with several sections that would give any off-road enthusiast pause.

As we bumped, bounced and spun our wheels upwards, the temperature quickly dropped. When we reached our destination, we found ourselves in a very small village surrounded by dense rainforest. Every afternoon and morning, the village and surrounding hills were blanketed in a thick mist

and, as a result of cloud stripping, the forest here was constantly wet and had a very different floral assemblage to our previous location.

The rainforest here was also noticeably intact, with no logging or oil palms in sight. Here, the villagers relied on a few small rubber and cocoa plantations scattered throughout the hills for most of their income. They also harvested Nilam/Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*), extracting the oil to sell for the essential oils industry.

That evening I was informed that I was the first foreigner to visit the village and that we would be the first people from outside the village to visit their rainforest! This was an exciting proposition as it meant that no collectors had been through here yet and we had a very good chance of finding pictums and other species that perhaps hadn't been described yet.

The next morning we woke to heavy mist and the tranquil sound of water dripping from leaves as they precipitates the moisture from the clouds. After a quick breakfast, we headed off with our hunter, walking back down the washed out road for half an hour before dropping off the side of the hill and heading down towards the river that wound its way through the valley below. This descent took us another hour and a half through thick rainforest and small rubber and cocoa plantations.



As we walked through one of the patches of cocoa we noticed lots of small pictums growing in the leaf litter. Young pictums often have a plain green leaf with a white stripe down the middle of the leaf as opposed to any pattern. Realising we were close, we did a quick scout around the cocoa crop for any mature plants that might show the famous tricolour pattern.

Our hunter told us that the farmer would be keeping the undergrowth cut short under the trees and after a quick search we realised that this meant any mature plants would have been cut back. We continued down the hill, reassured that we had a high chance of seeing some mature plants in the days ahead.

Emerging from the rainforest onto the banks of the river, we stopped for a rest and drink on the boulders. Here, large areas of the bank were covered in a rheophytic *Schismatoglottis* species. Growing to about 30cm high, this species has thick creeping rhizomes firmly stuck to the rocks with long maroon petioles and a thin spear shaped leaf. The trees growing alongside the river were a testament to how much moisture the clouds brought to the area with the trunks covered in ferns, mosses and orchids. I counted three species of tassel fern and five species of orchid growing on the lower two metres of one tree beside where we were sitting!

After a short break, we made our way upstream to where the valley floor was wider with large areas of level ground to explore. We zig-zagged back and forth across this area, looking for a glimpse of camouflage patterned foliage. Large *Amorphophallus titanum* specimens were growing everywhere and the undergrowth was dominated by huge thickets of another *Schismatoglottis* species and the very glossy *Pentastemona egregia*.

After a few hours we decided to make our way back up the hill and search the forest near

Young *A. pictum* in cocoa plantation



where we had seen the young pictums in the cocoa crop earlier. The area around the cocoa was made up of large basalt boulders with a thick layer of leaf litter on top. The trees and smaller plants here were growing in this layer, with larger trees sending roots down a stream we could hear flowing somewhere beneath us.

Navigating this area turned out to be quite treacherous and putting a foot in the wrong spot could see you step straight through the leaves and end up thigh deep between the boulders. The first time I put a foot through one of these gaps I noticed what appeared to be a bunch of leaf litter off to my right launch into the air and spin off into the forest. It took a few more of these pitfall experiences from myself and my companions before I realised that the puff of leaves that appeared to erupt



from the ground were actually small groups of micro bats that were roosting in the caverns beneath our feet and erupting through gaps in the boulders when our clumsy scrambling disturbed them.

It turned out bats were not the only thing hiding here however. After dropping between two particularly large boulders I found myself face to face with my first tricoloured pictum. Even standing so close to it I could see how the pattern, which seems so bold and striking when in a pot, actually makes the plant

almost impossible to see in the forest.

This particular plant was still quite young and had the remnants of its white centre strip still but was beginning to show its true colours and pattern. The thick velvet leaves were a dark green with two lighter shades of green breaking up the shape of the leaf. We soon discovered more plants in the area which were more mature and had fully developed pattern and colour. The three shades of green were quite different to the traditional 'jungle camo' pattern usually seen



Left: Platerodilus Beetle

Above: Aglaonema nitidum

Below: Schismatoglottis sp. along riverbanks





on specimens in Australia. In saying this, the almost black base colour, combined with the lime green pattern, and extremely velvety texture of the leaves made them no less stunning. The plants themselves were growing in only a

few inches of decomposed leaf litter in the crevices between boulders or between the roots of larger trees where leaves were collecting.

They appeared to be more prolific in this environment than in the surrounding forest and I wondered if it was due to reduced

Fruiting
Amorpho-
phallus
titanium
spadix





competition from more vigorous undergrowth species. We spent the rest of the afternoon hunting down and photographing pictums amongst the boulders, and taking an occasional break under the nearby cocoa trees. It was under these trees I found another critter I had been hoping to see in these jungles. Platerodilus are often called trilobite beetles due to heavily plated and spiked bodies of females resembling extinct trilobites. Females remain in this larval form while males develop into small unassuming beetles.

We spent the next few days in this area and went on to find more of these green tricolours, bicolours and *Aglaonema nitidum*, as well as some stunning grey Schismatoglottis with leaves 1.5m high with a spread of nearly 2 metres! Another highlight was finding a fruiting spadix of *Amorphophallus titanum*. While I have seen many titanum inflorescences in botanic gardens, this impressive spadix dwarfed those cultivated specimens, being almost 6 feet high. I can only imagine how impressive (and pungent) the inflorescence would have been!

It was with great reluctance that we made our way back down the mountain for the last time, leaving behind the clouds and pictums and a lot of unexplored territory!

I left Sumatra on a high, satisfied that I had achieved what I set out to do. Not only had I seen wild pictums but I had the opportunity to see many other plants from my collection in the wild. While I couldn't bring them back with me, I took home some new inspiration on how to better grow my own plants.

I had also found some species that were confirmed as undescribed which was a huge thrill. Best of all, I met some amazing people and I was met with incredible hospitality wherever I went. I am already planning a return trip in the near future with the intent of

collecting specimens of the new Homalomena and Schismatoglottis species so that they can be formally described and maybe one day brought into cultivation. Hopefully at the same time, I can push further into the mountains to see what other amazing plants are waiting to be discovered.

Matt Bogart



Right : Two different *Aglaonema pictum* 'tricolour'



The first prize in the October online raffle drawn at the General meeting tonight



AGM Updates

After the recent AGM, there were a number of changes to positions within the ASA. The new positions and the volunteers fulfilling these responsibilities are below:

Management Committee

President	Michael Pascal
Vice President	Lee Thorneycroft
Secretary	Steve Best
Treasurer	Jordan Ives
Membership Officer	Mim Stocks
Editor & Web/Tech Support	Aaron Grinter
General Committee Member	Neil Crafter
	Jim Edwards

Interstate Representatives

NSW	Tammy Huynh
VIC	Karissa Baddeley
SA	Neil Crafter
North QLD	Michael Pascal
WA	Iain McGregor
TAS	Looking for volunteers!

Volunteers

Marketing	Sarah Boyle
Popular Vote	Bec Kor
Audio-visual Assistant	Jace Cowen
Auctioneer	Trevor Crawford
Raffle Tickets	Doug Spring
Plant Sales	Margaret Kraa
Refreshments	Judy Stephenson
	Sue and Lyall Barnes

Special Thanks

As Jim moves from the treasurer position, all of the ASA thank him for his hard work keeping the books together. Jace left the management committee after the AGM, so a big thank you to Jace.

The ASA would like to say a special thanks to those who volunteer their time and resources.

We thank David Burnett, Robyn Ganly, Greg Oldano, Peter Boyce and Trevor Crawford for their kind contributions and ongoing donations to our online raffle and auctions. We would also like to thank Chris Hall and Arden Dearden for assisting the ASA with plants.

Thanks to Matt Bogart for writing excellent pieces for the newsletter.



Aroid News

The Evolution of Aroids

Current theories of the evolution of plants rely on incremental shifts in various characteristics of individuals, following molecular phylogenetic analyses. But this understanding has struggled to make sense of the more dramatic morphological differences between groups.

In 'Durianology, discovery, and saltation: the evolution of aroids', Hay proposes that the solution can be found in saltation, the process of making large evolutionary leaps as opposed to small incremental steps, observed through Durian Theory, which takes a complete, holistic perspective when observing plants and their evolution.

Hay cites the late E.J.H. Corner as the creator of Durian Theory, which has little to do with Durians themselves and is actually a comprehensive and holistic theory for the evolution of the modern tree. Hay notes that Corner he knew that plant evolution is far more interesting, organic and complex than can be allowed for by the mapping of atomised abstract characters onto bifurcating cladograms.

Corner's theory parallels the recently resurfaced ideas of punctuated

equilibrium in biology, originating with Goldschmidt's 1940 'Hopeful Monster' theory, which Hay later references.

Hay utilises Corner and others work to sketch the theory, also drawing on his personal correspondence with Corner. The Durian theory has immense potential to provide insight into the evolution of angiosperm form. And, while it is difficult to prove via the current method, it explains far more about the actual objects of study.

While Hay lauds the impressive work of Molecular phylogenetic systematics to contribute to taxonomy, he questions the contribution of this work to understanding plants as systems, or their evolution. Deriding the pattern of increasingly confusing 'results' with discovery.

Hay's article, while long, is extremely interesting for seeking an understanding of aroids beyond the atomistic taxonomic descriptions. Hay mentions that he plans for this work to be part of a forthcoming book on the classification, evolution and natural history of aroids.

Hay, A 2019, 'Durianology, discovery, and saltation — the evolution of aroids', *Gardens' Bulletin Singapore*, 71(Suppl. 2), pp. 257-313.

Giant New Anthurium Described

An enormous new species, *Anthurium decipiens* has been described in Tatama massif on the western cordillera of the Colombian Andes.

The new species,

distinguishable from the evidently related *A. salgarensis*, stands over 3 m tall. The leaves are ovato-sagittate, between 160–180 cm long. Needless to say, this is an impressive plant,

we hope to see it in cultivation.

Hay, A. and M. Cedeno-Fonseca, 2019, 'Anthurium decipiens, a gigantic new and apparently apromyophilous species from western Colombia, with notes on the related and often confused *Anthurium salgarensis*', *Aroideana*, vol. 42, no.1, pp. 4-24



Left: *Anthurium decipiens* in the garden of Eduardo Calderón
Above and Right: *Anthurium decipiens*



Calendar of ASA Meetings

Next meeting:
General Meeting
General Meeting
Annual General Meeting
General Meeting

9th October 2019
12th February 2020
8th April 2020
12th August 2020
7th October 2020

Yours sincerely

The Aroid Society of Australia
Inc. Committee

