



AROIDA AUSTRALIS

Volume 1, January 2023.

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Cover image by Pei, who captured this stingray alocasia at night. "Being an amateur, I was so worried about spider mites that I would routinely backlight my leaves. This image was taken at night when I jumped out of my bed, thinking I've forgotten to check it this week!"

AROID FACT

Alocasia 'Stingray' is a cultivar of Alocasia macrorrhiza. Native to South East Asia.



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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:
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Membership Fee Schedule - Single annual membership \$35.00,

Family/couples membership - \$60.00,

Concession card holders - \$25.00

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Letter from the Editor

Hi everyone - It's me, Liz Showniruk. I cannot tell you how excited I am to be putting together this publication and sharing the stories of aroiders from all over Australia (and the world!)



I believe that societies like ours are so important in bringing people together to share what they love. This is our first edition of what I hope will be many more. I have been overwhelmed by the response from our membership to submit stories, pictures, celebrations and aroid themed joy! Reading through the submissions has taken me from Colombia to Tasmania, from failures to triumphs, from backyards to greenhouses.

I hope you get as much joy as I have done. Having grown aroids and tropical plants for many years, one tends to think they have all the knowledge and tricks. Reading these stories, seeing these pictures and reading poetry has made me realise that I am still a student, of both plants and people! Already I am planning to follow in the footsteps of Bruce Dunstan's adventures in Colombia, with a stop in Ecuador, to see first hand the aroid research that is going on.

Closer to home I now know first hand the struggles of growing tropical plants in cool climates and take my hat off to those who do it in style. I hope you enjoy this first edition as much as I have enjoyed putting it together.

Our next edition is not until July but I am already looking forward to what submissions will come through and I would LOVE to hear from YOU. You don't have to be a professional writer or photographer, just a passionate Aussie Aroider! Please send me your thoughts, ideas, submissions, pictures and poetry to editor@aroids.net



Our Founding Members - photo from the ASA archives.



MY AROID SOCIETY

Wynne Robinson discusses membership benefits

What do I get for my ASA membership?

Is a commonly asked question by our members and what answers to give have been much discussed by the current committee.

Long lists of everything that your membership dollars fund is the obvious response but also likely to make eyes glaze over and attentions wander (talk of insurance and I go instantly to a leaf filled fantasy that blocks out all sound).

Controversially I think a far more beneficial reply is that the question is wrong.

To paraphrase JFK, ask not what your Society can do for you but what you can do for your Society!

We are a group of people who all love Aroids and would like to connect, share and learn with others who have the same passion. Everything is done by volunteers, including those non plant related things that keep the Society functioning.

Every member is invited to be involved in every aspect of the Society and actively encouraged to do so. You don't need special skills or talents to help out and a knowledge of plants is not at all necessary. From nominating for any committee position at the AGM to volunteering a little time at a meetup or donating a plant for a raffle, there is something that you can do to help.

The more we all put in, the more we all get back and the more fantastic our Society will be.

I joined the committee at the last AGM as Queensland North Rep after helping a little with the organising and running of a few previous events up here. Trust me, I have very little idea of what I'm doing but am learning on the job. As a committee member I am involved in decision making for the running of the whole Society as well as organising events for Queensland North, making new friends and gaining new skills along the way. This is not a job I want to

do forever, ideally someone else will have a go in a year or two and someone else after that, keeping the position fresh with new energy and ideas.

If ever you feel a little shy going to meet ups, try volunteering your assistance on the day. It's a great way to meet everyone. There are plenty of us (me included) who feel a little awkward around new people and find helping a good coping strategy.

Maybe you could write an article for the newsletter, donate a plant for a raffle, help another member get to a meet up or any one of an infinite number of things that would, in some small way, make the ASA a better society for everyone.

So I guess if you still have to ask "what do I get for my ASA membership" the answer is new friends, new experiences, new talents and newfound confidence if you are also willing to ask "what can I do for my ASA"



Introducing our State and Territory Representatives

Our Society is nation wide but it's the state representatives that look after whats happening on a local level.



Tasmania - Robyn Everist. robyn@aroids.net

When you think of a lush, tropical scene you start to relax. It brings to mind empty, white, sandy beaches; abundant verdant jungles; cool and inviting pools of crystal-clear water.

The air is clean, lightly scented with that certain freshness which comes from huge, dark green leaves moving gently in the cool, clean breezes.

It's not just those on the mainland that have a craving for the tropics in their homes.

Down here in Tasmania we have a

determination to maintain the lush tropics in our homes despite having conditions that actively work against our dreams.

It's a marvellous obsession and not for the faint of heart. There is lots to learn about the needs of tropical plants in a cool climate – which ones will work, which ones to not bother with and trying to figure out why.

The Tasmanian chapter of the Aroid Society of Australia is all about sharing the joys and the disasters of successfully growing tropical aroids in a cool climate.



Robyns indoor jungle

North Queensland - Wynne Robinson. wynne@aroids.net

I moved to the tropics when I was 21 and have never looked back. I was drawn to the shapes, textures and colours of foliage and use tropical leaves extensively in my floristry business. Over the years I have collected many unique species of aroids and enjoy hybridising to make new and lovely plants. The climate of the Wet Tropics gives us northern growers the ability to grow tropical aroids outdoors where they can reach their full potential.

It's important to share knowledge and plants which is why I enjoy organising meetups, garden visits and other fun events.



Wynne at home in her tropical garden

New South Wales - Jenny Du. jen@aroids.net



Jenny with a stunning philodendron

Hello from Sydney! My name is Jenny and I joined the ASA early 2022 as the Sydney State Representative. Having grown up around plants as a child, I never really found the knack of it until about 5 years ago. As a typical Millennial I jumped on to Instagram and made a profile (@shelikesplants), where I quickly found an active and welcoming plant community! The first Sydney event was a blast, and could not have been done without

the help from fellow committee members who flew all the way to Sydney to help me out! Big thanks Pao, Jess, and our outgoing President, Jacob. With one final event in Sydney for 2022 just around the corner, I'm hoping we can continue the momentum for 2023.

Nat has lived in the Northern Territory for the past 16 years and throughout her career as a Park Ranger, developed a love for native flora in the Northern Territory tropics. This love has ended up with her having a number of aroids as houseplants over many years and she always has enjoyed collecting weird and wonderful aroids, particularly when she hyper-focuses on cultivars of a particular genus!!

Her journey into the rarer aroids began casually around 4 years ago, when she realised these once elusive genera were becoming more available.

With that, Nat ended up becoming admin on a few rare plant pages, and she now runs the Northern Territory Rare Aroid Community Page with a few of her close plant friends.

Her favourite plant in her collection is hard to choose, but she particularly loves her range of Anthurium genera and her variety of



*Natalie poses with the King of Anthuriums
Anthurium vetchii*

Monstera genera!

Nat has been the Captain for her local volunteer fire brigade in 2022. She has also been on the committee all year for the inaugural NT Caladium Festival.

Although Darwin hasn't had an ASA meet up as yet, now more Northern Territory members are showing interest and her time is freeing up, she is hoping to have an inaugural meet up in early 2023.

Kate's passion is growing smaller batches of aroids, begonias and terrarium plants with a focus on low tech hydroponic rigs that create great results indoors, and are easy to use. She uses hydroponic growing tents that work well in Melbourne and she also teaches plant care workshops. Kates favourite tip for aroid growing in any media is the addition of Kanuma, commonly used in bonsai growing, as it has a natural pH buffering of 5.5, so works perfectly as an aroid mix amendment. As our Victoria representative, Kate is able to share her knowledge of growing tropical aroids in indoor spaces.

Below - Kates expertly grown indoor jungle





Hi members, I'm Andy the SEQ rep and also the Vice-President!

I've been collecting Aroids for the past six years however my interest in plants dates back to my childhood where I used to venture to plant nurseries with my mother mainly to hide amongst the maze of plants :D

My plans for SEQ include the re-commitment of holding regular meetings at the fabulous Mt Cootha botanical gardens auditorium, along with the reintroduction of field trips to members' private collections and nurseries. Looking forward to seeing you all in 2023!

I joined the ASA in 2018 in search of information and more plants. I love growing all plants from the Araceae family. My first ever Araceae plant was a monstera then my passion spiralled, once I found *Amorphophallus*. I queued for hours to take a look and smell at one in bloom on display at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. I love to grow from seed and experiment with different methods. Forever learning.

I first joined the committee as SA State Rep then took on membership officer. I am now liaison officer and SA state rep. We have some exciting activities in the works for the new year,





such as a visit to the private greenhouse at Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens, a visit to a members greenhouse and we will have a stalls at both Festival of Flowers and the Royal Adelaide Show. As liaison officer I'm putting efforts into international speakers, both travelling to Australia for in person presentations and meet and greets as well as continued online presentations - which we upload to our YouTube page. I love habitat presentations and want to travel overseas to visit plants in situ. I enjoy going to

Cairns and having adventures with Wynne to see native aroids growing, by trekking up waterfalls and mountains. I've met many life long friends being in the Aroid Society. Sharing experiences, knowledge, plants and building friendships are just as enriching as growing plants and I treasure the friendships I've made through my love of plants.

Western Australia - Stu Taylor. info@aroids.net

I have been passionate about plants since childhood with both my grandmothers passing on their love for gardening. One of my favourite plants growing up was an enormous *Monstera deliciosa* growing in a neighbours yard.

Moving to the present, I've always owned common Aroids but a couple of years ago I suffered a severe injury and while recovering found amazing



varieties on Pinterest. I then tried to find the same plants for sale locally. The plants were part of my recovery giving me inspiration and purpose to get out of bed, while I was regaining the use of my legs.

I joined ASA May 2022 as a means to find more information from local people, about growing rare aroids in W.A and to associate with people sharing the same passion.

Left - Stu with his insprational plants

Australian Capital Territory - We need an ACT Rep. If you are able to represent the ASA we can help you with everything to create and host amazing events and sales. Please contact us on info@aroids.net

AROIDS IN FOCUS - in this edition we take a look at highly collectable *Aglaonema pictum*.

Growing deep in the moist tropical Sumatran rainforest, this exceptionally stunning aroid has captivated the hearts of collectors around the globe. Slow growing, delicate and a true tropical, it must be surrounded with warmth and constant humidity to grow at its best.

Known to show diversity in nature, this jungle plant comes in varieties with different and unique leaf markings. The variety commonly referred to as *Aglaonema pictum* bicolour has dappled shades of deep green and blue while the coveted *Aglaonema pictum* tricolour also has patches of lime green. The

pattern of three colours gives rise to its commonly known name of 'Camouflage Plant'.

Seed grown plants can produce a multitude of striking patterns and several hybrids are in circulation including *Aglaonema metallicum* x *pictum* tricolour and *Aglaonema rotundum* x *pictum* tricolour.

In Australia the plants have recently been released in tissue culture. The tissue culture produced plants are vigorous and there is variation amongst individual plants depending on the source of the tissue culture



Above, An early illustration commissioned by botanist William Roxburgh, who was the first to describe the species. Top right, Linden's *L'illustration Horticole "AGLAONEMA PICTUM"* Chromolithograph - 1882. Right *Aglaonema rotundum* x *pictum* tricolour. Far right - *Aglaonema metallicum* x *pictum* tricolour



Cultivation is not difficult provided the basic needs of the plant are met. They need abundant moisture but will develop rot issues should drainage be inadequate. A low light situation, similar to a forest floor is preferred and high, constant humidity is essential.

An ideal planting mix consists of enriched, organic compost mixed with 30% coarse perlite. Add to this, slow release fertiliser. Boost growth with regular applications of liquid fertiliser. Propagation is by seed or stem cuttings. As is the case with many aroids, female flowers mature before the male flowers so you will need ripe pollen from a male flower and a receptive female flower, available at the same time. Expose the floral chamber of the ripe female flower by gently cutting away the

spathe then apply the fresh pollen using a soft brush. Seeds will ripen over several months and are ready when the fruit is bright red. Sow the fresh seed immediately onto moist sphagnum moss and keep in a sealed container until germination occurs. Seed will not survive being dried.

You can also have a go at making some of your own interesting hybrids if you have other Aglaonemas in your collection.

Growing from cuttings is simple. Take a clean healthy tip and remove it from the mother plant with at least 8cm of stem. Trim back the leaves and remove any flowers to help the plant focus its energy on root production. You can use a rooting hormone to speed production. Place cuttings into a container of seed raising mix and keep in a sealed, warm humid environment. Roots will develop in under 6 weeks. Make sure your utensils and containers are sterile.

Aglaonema pictum is not difficult to acquire in Australia with premium specimens fetching high prices. Specialists plant and aroid nurseries carry the various cultivars and a guide to these nurseries can be found in our classifieds section of this magazine. Alternatively head along to your nearest ASA meeting and plant sale. *Story - Liz Showniruk*

Shipping live plants interstate



**ATTENTION QUARANTINE
!!! LIVE PLANTS !!!**



A Guide for plant lovers.

Before you consider purchasing plants from interstate it is crucial for you to check your state's specific regulations concerning the movement of plant material.

Some states enjoy a relative freedom of movement for most species while other states require that appropriate measures be taken to comply with quarantine regulations.

A nationally recognised system of compliance has been developed for the movement of all materials considered to be potential biohazards, including nursery plants. In order to comply, nursery plants must adhere to the requirements stipulated by the state which plants are entering. This includes a combination of treatments, inspections and conditions. Those businesses that can provide these treatments,

inspections and conditions are known as Interstate Providers. In order to become and maintain the Interstate Provider status, these businesses must undergo a strict audit process yearly as well as regular inspections for pests, such as invasive ants and diseases. The process of becoming and remaining certified is expensive and involves the use of multiple toxic chemicals.

The costs and conditions of maintaining an Interstate Provider status are suited to large businesses such as wholesale nurseries or businesses that move enough product to justify the costs and conditions involved.

In most cases, small retail nurseries and private plants sellers will not have this certification and risk heavy fines should they deliver nursery plants that do not adhere. Asking a seller to send plants without certification is asking them to break the law.

Fortunately there is an affordable and perfectly legal option for those aroid and plant lovers who wish to purchase directly from sellers interstate that do not have certification. That option is to use a Concierge Service.

A Concierge Service is a business that will receive delivery of your plant from the person you are

purchasing from, carefully unpack it, inspect it, treat with the approved chemicals for the state it is destined, carefully repack your plant and send it off to you with the appropriate paperwork. Essentially taking the hard work out of the equation.

And it is suprisingly affordable!

Story by Liz Showniruk

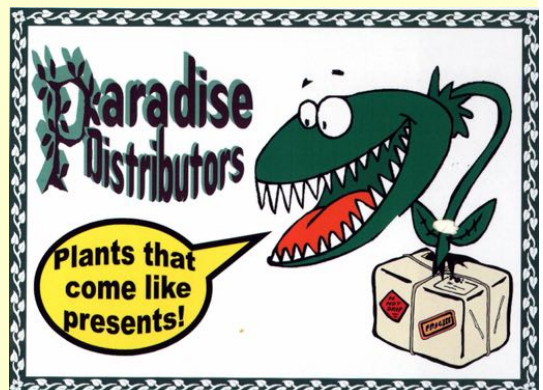
Bob Chalmers operates Paradise Distributors, Australia's leading Plant Quarantine Concierge

1. Paradise Distributors (rareplants.net.au) has been operating 38 years and we have a 3 weekly catalogue. New plants are added every 3 weeks and we offer many aroids and other unusual and popular plants. We send plants from our nursery direct to all the Quarantine States - WA, NT and Tasmania and yes we are authorised to do all the Quarantine requirements. To be notified when our next catalogue is out please register on our website to receive that email.

2. We also operate a 3 weekly Concierge Service for the Quarantine States. So if you cannot get the plant you want from our Nursery you can get it sent to us and we will do all the approvals, treatments, documents and packaging to get it to you on overnight freight. The details of the Concierge Service are listed in the Concierge Hub on our Website

www.rareplants.net.au.

Please note concierge costs are not applicable to plants sent direct from our Nursery to you....only plants sent to us from other nurseries.



Northern Territory Caladium Festival

Celebrated in style, on the 19th November 2022 with plant sales, competitions, entertainment for the whole family, great food and lots of fun. *Story and pictures by Caladiums NT*



The inaugural Northern Territory Caladium Festival was held at Foskey Pavilion, Darwin Show Grounds on Saturday 19 November 2022. The Festival went off with a bang, with almost 1000 people attending to view the amazing showcase of caladiums on display. The Festival had 16 categories of competition, with grown caladium categories, as well as art, photography and kids categories.





The Grand Champion, with a beautiful White Christmas, was won by Brian Harvey, with the Reserve Champion being taken out by Toni Boland with a lovely mixed pot of Harlequin grown with some Mrs Garfield hippeastrum. Art and photography was spectacular, with some fantastic paintings and photos, as well as the winner of the art category, a beautiful bouquet of crocheted caladium foliage! As well as the competition entries, there were demonstrations on pollination and hybridising as well as corm cutting.





There was also entertainment consisting of the very fun “Caladium Bingo”, as well as performances from the colourful Jamealah Darwin Bellydance troupe, who gave the caladiums a run for their money in terms of colourful performers! Plenty of activities for the kids’ too, with pot painting, face painting and kids’ colouring. Finally there were the plant sales – thousands upon thousands of beautiful caladiums for sale, along with orchids and other tropical plants, as well as stalls selling craft and jewellery, and information stalls including from NT Biosecurity and our very own Aroid Society of Australia!



We had a number of people travel from interstate for the Festival, including all of our judges who flew up here to be part of this fantastic inaugural event. The next NT Caladium Festival will be held over 2 days on 18-19 November 2023 at Foskey Pavilion, Darwin Show Grounds, so make sure you don't miss it!



Colombia called Bruce Dunstan back for intrepid travel and exploration! He shares his adventures and discoveries.

May 2022 saw me get back to the forest for the first time in three years due to Covid restrictions. Australia had some very strict exit and entry laws in this period of time which prevented most people from leaving the country for a couple of years. Carla Black and I had some thoughts on getting back to Nariño in southwestern Colombia. We hoped to explore the area south of the only road that runs east from the Interamerican highway down to the coast in Tumaco. This road runs parallel to the Ecuadorian border. We had been in the area in 2018 and also travelled in the far northwest of Ecuador in 2017, so knew what we were likely to find but also hoped we could explore the region a bit more. We have often found that a second look in an area can produce great results. I should add our real specialty is Heliconia and that was what we were hoping to see. As we both travel more we have added other plant groups to our repertoires and over time and having seen some amazing plants in habitat Aroids have piqued my interest and are a firm favourite, along with Bromeliads and Heliconias plus any other number of neotropical monocots that we encounter along the trail so it can make walking in a forest a very time consuming endeavor as we stop examine and photograph anything that takes our interest.

Last time we based our explorations from Reserva Natural La Planada at 1800m near Ricaurte. On the same trip we stayed at lodgings in Altaquer above a general store owned by the family that manages the Reserva Natural Río Nambí. This year we got back in touch with Cristian Paz from Río Nambí and he organized great accommodation at his family's farm right on the main road. This time we stayed for a full week, rather than just a few days.

Our plans to head south toward the Ecuadorian border on the back of motorbikes was quickly stymied. Our local hosts suggested it wasn't recommended to enter that region as it was a prime coca production area and security couldn't be guaranteed. In some planning meetings we mapped out localities with our local guides that suited us as well as them.

My first walk in the forest in three years took place at Reserva Natural Río

Ñambí - 1000 hectares and what a great place to get back into it. The reserve is primarily a birding destination. They have preserved the existing primary forest, and over time the disturbed forest has regrown. Starting at 1100m at the road, the trail takes you uphill and gets as high as 1600m. This area is very wet with an average rainfall of 7m per year. In May we were there in wet season, although it seems likely that most of the year is wet season as the moist air from the Pacific Ocean is blown up the first foothills of the Andes and dumps moisture as the humid air rises. The epiphyte growth is incredibly lush and Carla and I spent the morning slowly walking up the trail examining the amazing array of Heliconias, aroids, gesneriads, bromeliads, orchids, etc. growing alongside the manicured trail. The range of plants is huge. Easily spotted along the trail are *Anthurium draconopterum*, *A. esmeraldense*, *A. alluriquinense*, *A. protrudens*, *A. melampyrii* and close to the river were huge colonies of *A. rivulare*. Also spotted is one of the few *Pachyneurium* section common in these wet forests *Anthurium carchiense* named for the nearby province of Carchi in NW Ecuador. As far as *Pachyneuriums* go sadly *A. Carchiense*



is pretty plain and unremarkable. Another plant that really caught my eye four years ago is the recently described *Anthurium ortizii*. This is a fantastic plant with round pleated leaves that were 800mm across and as long. It is nothing like any *Anthurium* I've ever seen before. I searched in vain this year to find it in flower or fruit but was unsuccessful again. Amongst this profusion of *Anthuriums* were *Philodendron furcatum* scrambling along in the manicured chop zone alongside the trail as well as *P. fibrosum* *P. sparreorum*, and an undescribed species with very attractive patterned petioles that is also common

in NW Ecuador which is not far away. We also noticed plenty of Chlorospathas, Dieffenbachias, Xanthosomas, Stenospermations and some Rhodospathas. All in all an incredibly diverse forest.

By lunchtime we had reached the birding lodge built in an opening of the forest, and we ate a picnic from our backpacks of tinned tuna, local cheese and bread plus a can of semi-cold beer. What more could you ask for in paradise? During a leisurely lunch we were able to watch a Motmot on a nearby branch devour a saturniid larva - or to the layperson a big green spiky caterpillar. After lunch Carla and I explored around the reserve lodge and found a tiny little Philodendron climbing that has pink undersides and a cluster of scales or hairs on the petiole near where it joins to the leaf blade. A very attractive little plant for sure.

Back out onto the main road we did a quick drive while the afternoon rains stayed away. Spotted alongside the road were *Anthurium aromaticum* (unpublished name) and *A. pendulispadix*. We had seen *A. pendulispadix* further up the hill at La Planada 4 years previously and it is an interesting plant with its scrambling habit, oval shaped leaves and incredibly long spadix commonly 35-40cm long. The *Anthurium aromaticum* is yet to be published by Tom Croat but I had it confused with *A. tertiocollectivum* which we had seen in NW Ecuador and they are both in Section *Digitinervium* with beautiful oval shaped leaves. There is a fabulous *A tertiocollectivum* plant growing in the Carins Botanic Garden. It turns out *A. tertiocollectivum* is quite caulescent with quite a gap between nodes up to 10-15cm whilst *A. aromaticum* tends to be less caulescent. Whilst wandering around another birding reserve just off the road at Reserva Bangsia at slightly lower elevation we came across another related *Anthurium* from section *Digitinervium*. Slightly different venation, a lower smaller growing habit than *A. Aromaticum* and *A ovatifolium* plus pinkish purple fruit confirmed we were looking at something different. I should mention *Anthurium ovatifolium* is a very common plant up at Reserva Natural La Planada. At 1800-2000m. No sign of it down here in lower elevations.

The next adventure came about because we met Adolfo Ortega at our luxurious accommodations where we were looked after by Cristian's sister and mother. Adolfo, a friend of the family, was also staying with us, as he had been engaged to help build a shade house for the Reserve. Chatting away at dinner Adolfo showed us an image on his phone of a heliconia that grows at his own farm and as soon as we saw it we knew it was a

new species. Straight away Carla and I contacted Cristian and told him we needed to include Adolfo's farm on our itinerary. This took us to Reserva Natural El Bosque. It is situated higher up the valley towards Ricaurte and next to Reserva Natural La Planada. Getting there involved jumping on the back of motorbikes and being driven along a swift flowing river then up a narrow steep track to get to the main buildings of the family farm/reserve. Adolfo's family has owned the area for a long time and has farmed it but the steep terrain and his father's appreciation of the forest means most of the forest cover has remained. Now various members of the family are looking to bring in tourists, mainly birders to take advantage of the beautiful habitat. While we were having lunch one of the endemic Plate-billed Mountain Toucans (*Andigena laminirostris*) flew into a tree close by and called out to his mates off in the forest. An amazing sight even for those of us who aren't obsessed by birds.

We wandered the hills along easy trails and due to the higher elevation we came across *Anthurium pulvernulentum*, *A. membranaceum*, *A. ovatifolium* and huge individuals of *A. melampyrii*. Sadly there was no sign of the plant we were hoping to see until Adolfo took us out into his garden and there it was – gloriously happy in cultivation. Sadly the clump had finished flowering but it was making a few seeds. Plans were hatched for us to return on another day and walk right to the top of the hill at around 2000m to where Adolfo had found it growing. When we returned later in the week we set off to get to the ridge line where the family's cattle graze on the semi flat land. We took foot trails up some pretty steep slopes to get up to the top but sadly no new heliconias were spotted. There were plenty of other plants to keep us happy though, as the place is full of interesting stuff due to the regular high rainfall. Right at the top of the ridge we came across an interesting little *Rhodospatha* with corrugated leaves as well as *Chlorospatha bogneri* a species with very dark and minutely rugose leaves. Adolfo was also cultivating an *Anthurium* from this higher elevation at his home that had a dark purple black spathe with lighter stripes. An amazing little plant but certainly likely to be very difficult to cultivate in lower elevations

Further down the main road Cristian took us on a day trip to Barbacoas. This town was settled by the Spanish in the 1600s and before then it was an area that provided gold for the local indigenous peoples. It sits on the Río Patia at about 30m elevation, so for us this was quite different after hanging around way up the hill in cool, wet conditions. The day we visited,

the rain stayed away and the sun shone bright and hot. In the four years since our last visit the road has been paved and carries large numbers of people and goods. Sadly, settlement along the road has pushed the forest back as people farm the surrounding lands; we noticed a big loss of forest in just a few years. As we turned off the Tumaco road at Junin at 1000m, we quickly started to lose elevation. Stops along the way started with a large *Philodendron* related to *serpens* or *squamicaule* but much much larger than the *P. squamicaule* I have seen previously in Panama and further north in Choco. Further along as we lost more elevation we noticed *A. aromaticum* growing out in full sun as it was a sunny day but I remembered our trip 4 years ago when we drove this road and it was completely clouded over and I recalled laughing at a town we stopped for coffee in being called Buenavista with total cloud cover seeming like a pea soup fog at the time. Also spotted were *Philodendron esmeraldense* growing on steep banks next to the road.

Further down the hill toward Barbacoas The lower elevation and much hotter temperatures made wandering around hard, sweaty work. And I think it reinforced in my mind that the lowlands are for someone else - I much prefer being up the mountain in the cooler air. We had a great lunch in town and wandered down to the river to look at all the boat traffic and people as the river is its own highway for the lowland population in the surrounding area as well as providing access to the Pacific Ocean and coastal towns. Cristian pointed out all the petrol stations floating in the river safely away on the far side just in case they have an accident.

Our next adventure was back alongside the main road near El Diviso. This road has been here for a long time - I saw that a few bromeliads I have an interest in were described along the road in the 1870s. Down at around 700m this area is quite wet and we were visiting a reserve run by the local Awa people. Reserva Natural La Nutria is named for the river otter in Spanish. By a stroke of luck our local guide Wilmer also was with us four years ago although then he was assisted by his uncle and local shaman. The forest here is one of steep slopes that occasionally end in a cliff so having Wilmer along was a great idea. The forest within this reserve is incredibly rich, hosting a huge range of plant groups. I spotted two undescribed bromeliads in just two visits, which to me highlights the diversity, especially when we take into account that this area has been pretty heavily botanized starting in the 1800s. As we were wandering around we saw more *Philodendron furcatum* but as we got deeper into the

forest alongside the many small creeks we started to see *Philodendron lynnhanoniae*. It seems to prefer growing alongside the creek in these very humid conditions. Wandering around I noticed more *Philodendron* species and less *Anthuriums* at this lower elevation, although quite a standout for me was seeing *Anthurium peltigerum* growing epiphytically up a palm trunk rather than terrestrially as I have seen them in other areas in Colombia. This particular forest is incredibly rich with a large range of interesting *Chlorospatha*, *Stenospermatum*, *Philodendrons*, *Bromeliads*, *Cyclanths* etc. etc. Unfortunately none of the plants in the forest have tags on them so we have no idea at what most of the things are as we find them and the best we can do is take a photo for future reference

While we were happily spending our time out and about in Nariño, a bridge along the Interamerican highway was damaged by flood waters and a long detour was the only way to make our way back up to Cali. This meant we had to take a back country route through Cauca, adding an extra five hours to our drive.

Thankfully the truck traffic had been made to flow in only one direction each day and fortuitously for us, they were coming in the opposite direction. Carla just had to avoid any crazy truckies coming at us on the wrong side of the road on the narrow backcountry bridges. But apart from that we were lucky we weren't caught behind the slow-moving lines



of trucks carrying everything that the population needs in the southern cities and regions.

After getting back to Cali we had a few extra days to poke around the surrounding area. We had a look on the ridge above Cali which is easily accessible if you know where the turnoff is and thankfully Carla remembered. We spotted *Anthurium angustisectum* with its 5 lobed leaves and four winged petioles, luckily in flower this visit along with plenty of *Anthurium sanguineum*. This is a fantastic plant with large 1.2m+ velvety leaves and a bright red spathe as the name suggests. It is a shame we have an unrelated hybrid in cultivation in Australia with the same name adding to the confusion. We also spotted another large velvet species with dark velvety leaves and deeply ridged or sulcate petioles. I have seen images of this plant posted by a Colombian wildlife guide who is based in Cali and takes clients to the Farrillione de Cali probably not far away to the south of where we were along the Cali - Buenaventura rd. We got off the main road and headed down to El Queremal. This little town has been developed over the past 11 years since our first visit, becoming a nice little weekend town for the people escaping the heat of Cali. Beyond El Queremal is the old Cali - Buenaventura Road. This is still an amazing place with tremendous plant diversity. We first visited in 2011 and had another go in 2014. The area is much more peaceful now, so has seen a bit more development and farming. But in amongst all this there still remain an amazing array of plants from all plant groups. Just below El Queremal we quickly spotted *Anthurium queremalense* with its large 1m+ velvet patterned leaves growing on steep banks or epiphytically on trees. Growing near it were *A. aromaticum* or something that looks very like it. *A. jesusii* another species from section *Digitinervium* with lovely brownish oval leaves to 20-30cm. In the areas where farming is difficult the forest diversity is mind blowing. Having visited a couple of times previously still doesn't make it any quicker to make your way down the hill as there is so much to stop and look at. Heliconias, Pentagoniums, Bromeliads, Ericaceae, Calatheas and Peperomias on top of a plethora of Aroids make it a slow descent. I wanted a better look at *Anthurium debilis* this trip so Carla and I wandered off up a steep creek that crossed the road. Every creek along this road is steep because it is incredibly mountainous so we carefully rockhopped up and were rewarded by seeing *A. debilis* in its habitat. This is another plant that prefers to grow right alongside a creek getting constant splash and humidity from the water. After taking a few too many photos of it and some other Philodendrons that look a little like *P.*



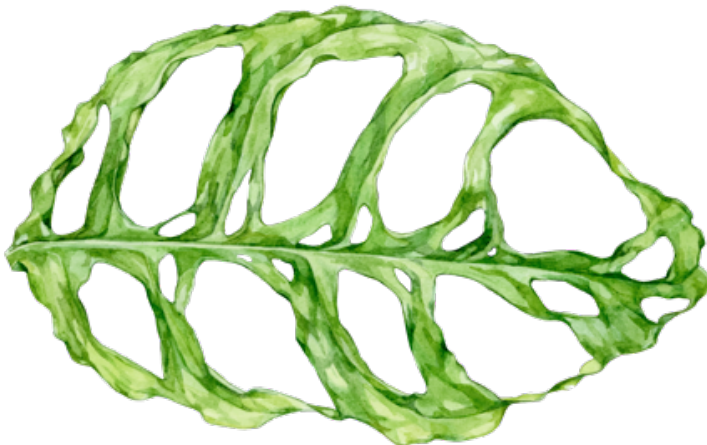
lynnhannoniae and some black Peperomias it was time to head for civilization.

We enjoyed our last day making a second visit - the previous was in 2011 on our first visit to Colombia - to Reserva Natural Nirvana. This small reserve is nestled into the

Cordillera Central just above Palmira near the airport that services Cali. Sergio Botero and his family have developed the reserve over the years and set up a tremendous place where people from Cali come to have an amazing lunch and wander through the landscaped grounds which contain an stunning collection of Colombian native plants with a wide array of heliconia, aroids, bromeliads and other ornamentals. Sergio's brother Jaime does amazing woodwork with salvaged local hardwoods and his showroom is well worth a look after you have eaten lunch.

Story and Pictures by Bruce Dunstan

AROID FACT Colombia is the most species rich area for Araceae on the planet with well over 900 described species and many more yet to be discovered.



Exciting New Hybrids

Kathryn Edwards mixes it up with *Anthurium Veitchii* and *Anthurium moodeanum* 'red beauty', producing spectacular results.



Mature unknown hybrid

During a recent meet up of aroid and cordyline enthusiasts, Michael Pascal asked me to write a bit of a story about a 'new' hybrid that I have accidentally produced.

Quite a surprise to me, Michael told me that my hybrid of *Anthurium veitchii* and *Anthurium moodeanum*/red beauty is a little unusual. He believes that my hybrid has not previously been produced.

My seedlings, which are now 18 months old, were produced using *A. veitchii* as the seed parent and *A. moodeanum* as the pollen parent. More usually, I am told that the hybrid would be produced with opposite parentage.... With the pollen parent as *veitchii* and the seed parent as *moodeanum*.

I do have an anthurium, purchased a few years ago, that looks like a mature example of this hybrid (see pic left).

However, I have no further information on its parentage, it could be *A. veitchii*/*moodeanum* or *A. moodeanum*/*veitchii*.

There are quite a few mature plants around which have resulted from the *moodeanum* as the seed parent, and they are superb plants. I have two of these and they represent the very best of both parents. They have large, long,

corrugated leaves like the *A. veitchii* but with a leaf shape more like the *moodeanum*. The new leaves are dark red, like the *moodeanum*, with the red colour persisting for several months until gradually turning green. The inflorescence is like the *moodeanum*, large, erect, with a bright pink spathe.

Whilst I have had a small variety of anthuriums for many years, I have



Mature hybrid



A. moodeanum



A. veitchii 30 + years being repotted



A veitchii with a new red leaf

A moodeanum inflorescence

not attempted breeding them until very recently. I owe this interest to a gentleman nurseryman from Cairns and Kuranda named Bob Niven (Niven's Nursery) who gently mentored both me and husband, John in all things gardening after Bob retired to live in Kuranda. My veitchii and moodeanum both came from Bob's collection about 30 years ago. The original veitchii leaves are now about 1400mm long and the moodeanum stem currently over 1000 high. Although Bob is no longer with us, a quick trip around the Cairns region will produce many people with good stories about Bob. I hope he is still overseeing from above and enjoying all these gardening efforts that he nurtured.

lots of reading both online, from FB group help pages and some good old-fashioned books from the cupboard. I was careful to prevent pollination from other varieties in the fernery by using a dedicated pollen brush for the moodeanum pollen and covering the veitchii spadix with some finely woven fabric bags, tied tightly at the base. I tied a plastic plant tag to the petiole with the inflorescence. I wrote the pollination dates on a plant tag attached to the petiole and know that the subsequent seeds took about 13 months to mature.

I have shared some of the seedlings around the local aroid community and it will be an interesting wait to see how they mature. *Story and pictures by Kathryn Edwards*

My efforts at hybridising started with



Veitchii-moodeanum
hybrid at 18mths



Anthurium cv *Red Beauty* - ID Kerry Scholl



New Ecuadorian Aroid Researcher

by Thomas B. Croat, P.A. Schulze Curator of Botany Missouri Botanical Garden

The Araceae of Ecuador is second in size of all South American countries and only Colombia, a country substantially larger is likely to have more species. While new species are being discovered and described in both countries and at times the total known species for Ecuador has actually been greater for Ecuador than Colombia it is largely the result of more intensive work in Ecuador than in Colombia because of the many years of restrictive measures and the perceived dangers of working in Colombia for the past 25 - 30 years. Much of my time during this period was devoted to the discovery of plants in Ecuador.

Despite Ecuador's rich aroid flora there are few current active persons working with aroids with the possible exception of Carlos Cerón at the National University's Department of Pharmacy who is probably the leading Ecuadorian plant collector with considerable interest in the family Araceae. His mostly unmounted collection has only recently been incorporated into the herbarium of the Departamento de Biología which

hopefully will allow the collection to be more easily studied and which may result the ability to borrow specimens for study.



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Ricardo Zambrano with another forest specimen

In the past, two additional Ecuadorians focused on studies with aroids but neither are presently actively engaged in aroid studies. Jimena Rodríguez, the student at the Universidad Católica worked on the Araceae at the ENDESA Reserve in western Pichincha Province (Rodríguez, 1987) (Croat & Rodríguez, 1995). Gladys Benevides, working at the Universidad Central under the tutelage of Carlos Cerón made comparative studies of aroids in



Ricardo Zambrano finding a specimen on a wall

three different areas of Ecuador (Benevides & Ordoñez. 1993) but a final publication of this work was never completed.

Presently another Ecuadorian, Ricardo Zambrano Cevallos, is anxious to fill the gap in making aroids a career. Ricardo, who is Director Técnico at the Jardín Botánico de Quito, is in an excellent position to study aroids since he has been charged with collecting them for the botanical garden. Despite its high elevation in central Quito, the Quito Botanical Garden has facilities for growing species over a broad range of elevations. Having aroids in cultivation that allows for detailed observations is

unquestionably going to facilitate aroid studies in Ecuador. Ricardo received his undergraduate degree at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE) where he worked as curatorial assistant for many of his years as a student did with much of his free time spent in the field and in the herbarium. Later he worked as a research technician at the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences of the PUCE on projects such as the permanent study plot of 50 hectares in the Yasuní National Park as well as another project studying plant diversity patterns in Neotropical dry forests along with their implications for conservation. Since 2019 he has been working at the and has also served as the President of the Ecuadorian Society of Biology (SEB) since 2019. In 2021, he became only the second Ecuadorian to be certified as an arboriculturist by the ISA (International Society of Arboriculture). Recently he was appointed as a Voluntary Research Assistant to the Aroid Research Group at the Missouri Botanical Garden. His willingness to work on Ecuadorian aroids comes at an important time with much of the important role of publishing the results of about 5 decades of fieldwork done in Ecuador.

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Ricardo Zambrano with red - spathed Anthurium

This article first appeared in the August 2022 issue of the International Aroid Society newsletter. Reproduced with permission from the IAS and Thomas B. Croat.



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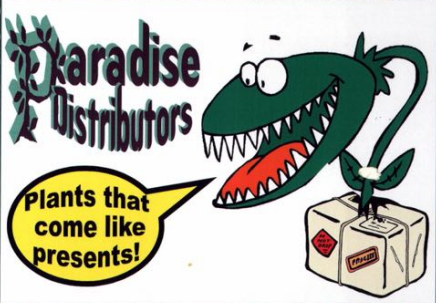
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Moving Adult Meconostigma Stems, Quite a Job!

By Joep Moonen, French Guiana, South America
973ejv@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

These free standing Philodendron are placed in the sub family “Meconostigma” and have some very special features. Most of the species are really big, adult plant reaching 2 meters (7 feet) high or more. Only one species has been commonly grown indoors: the famous Philodendron xanadu Croat, Mayo & Boos.

In general they have attractive entire, or pinnately leaves, two species (P. goeldii and lea costa) even have palmately compound leaves. In French Guiana we have two species, P. solimoense and P. goeldii.

Philodendron solimoense grows over a big area that includes the Amazon basin, three Guianas and parts of Venezuela. In eastern (Amazonian) French Guiana we have a second species, the beautiful P.

goeldii. Natural hybrids of P. solimoense and P. goeldii occur, here and in the State of Para, Brazil. This hybrid is called Philodendron × marijke and has a very attractive leaf form.

Left: As a result of their strong stems Meconostigma are also called “self standers”.



MECONOSTIGMA CUTTING IN BRAZIL

In 1995 I visited Belem not far from the old big market, Vero Peso.

On the river side of the Market they sell plants, and I found a few small Aroids that I wanted to take home. Walking to go back, across the market I passed a Bank de Brasil. Around the bank entrance was a little gardens, with very large Meconostigma with beautiful pedate leaves.

I believe it was *Philodendron adamantinum*. What a beauty, and they had some smaller off spring. I went back to my plant sales person in the market and asked him to come with me to the bank.

I showed him the large *Philodendron* adding I would love to buy some small cuttings.

He thought a minute, then asked me to wait while he got into the bank. After 10 minutes he came back with the manager and explained that his friend the gringo was an American botanist (not true at all but who was I to say anything) and needed some cuttings for his research. “No problem”, said the manager. He instructed a heavily armed guard to get a machete and cut off some offsets. When 5 pieces were cut off (stem and roots as cables) and binded together with tape from the bank I said

at least ten times “Muito Obrigado” to the people from the bank. I was so happy with my cuttings. We went back to my new friend’s plant boot at the market. There, we cut off most of the leaves to make my cuttings ready to carry to my lodging adress. I gave my new plant friend a really good tip. I was truly happy.



Left: Marijke Moonen in front of adult Philodendron × marijke. This natural hybrid between P. solimoense and P. goeldii is found in French Guyana (Crique Cavalet). Dr. Andre Cordoso found it south in State of Para, Brazil.’

A week later I was back home planting my new cuttings. Roots and leaves had been cut off. I expected the stem pieces to start without problems - as do other Philodendron stems. Indeed, after some weeks, new leaves developed and unfolded. After that the stems stood still, and then died, one after another.

I was deeply disappointed. How was this possible?

On a visit to Miami in 1998 I explained the problem to my friend Ron Weeks. His advice was simple: never cut off Meconostigma roots. If you cut the roots, there is a good chance the cutting will die. That proved to be simple and true. I learned about Meconostigma the hard way.

GROWING OUT OF HAND

At our lodge I started putting Meconostigma outside the fence because of its predicted size. I planted them on the edge of the forest. They receive morning and part of the afternoon direct sun light (assuming it does not rain of course).

I planted a few selloum, stenolobum, goeldii, solimoense and × marijke - the latter I produced from seeds.

They all do well, with the heavy rain fall, even the species from dryer subtropical southern Brazil. Meconostigma stems get taller and taller, and after they are two meters or higher require some support. I use thick walaba posts. Walaba (fam. Ceacalpinia- ceae) is a wood producing an oil that is termite-resistant. So the Meco-stem grows bigger and make side stems. It is becoming a forest of Meconostigma. Since 2008 it is harder for me to handle the big plants, so I simply allow them flop over when they get too tall. Stems keep growing in all directions, covering many square meters of ground. The soil is a fat, sticky clay, but that has proved to be no problem for the Meconostigma. They send their roots into the clay finding the food they want.



Left: The attractive leaf of P. × marijke from Para. (Photo Dr. Andre Cordoso).

The Meconostagma grow close to the fence, a big 30-year-old P. stenolobum even leans onto the fence. I had to do something. The simplest would be to take a sharp machete and trim stems, leaves and roots back. But what Aroider can slaughter these beautiful plants?

So, I asked two friends with large properties to remove some big Megonostigma. Xavier Poirier came first, with Franck Songni. Both are young and strong and they managed to obtain 5 big plants. Frank's special job was to dig the sensitive roots out of the clay. It rained that day: no photos.

Early in June, Pierre Olivier Albano came with his gardener Bernard. They managed to free 5 more plants, again complete with roots in perfect condition.

They planted the Meconostagma, keeping the stem above the earth by mounting them on a supporting post. The roots are carefully hidden under a bed of dead leaves and other humus.. Xanier reports that his plants easily took off.



Xanier reports that his plants easily took off.

(This year's rain helped, of course.)



Above: Pierre Olivier Albano and his gardener Bernard freeing the roots of a large cutting of P. x marijke.

Left: The roots of this cutting are carefully dug out.



Thanks to Dr. Andre Cordoso from Museo Goeldi at Belem for reporting the occurrence of *Philodendron x marijke* in the State of Para.

I thank Xavier Poirier, Franck Sonsoni, Pierre Olivier and Bernard for doing the difficult and dirty work of collecting the *Meconostigma* plants with the roots in tact!

Artical reproduced with permission from the ISA and Joep Moonen

*Above left: Bernard carrying a *P x marijke* to the car. Look at the size of the cutting! Left: With five cuttings of *Meconostagma* the load deck of the Toyota Hilux is more than full. Below: A cutting of *P. selloum* carefully planted in the Botanical Gardens of Aurelien Sambin in Tonate.*



*The thick stem of a *Meconostigma**



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HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER! (PLANT)



The Long Distance Romance that Gave us #Verrux313

By Alicia C Qian

Over 5,000 kilometres, 10 months, 3 states, 1 pandemic—this is a story of long-distance romance between 2 philodendrons, which happened after their human growers first crossed paths on the internet.

The story began in 2018 BC (Before Corona) in Canberra. Where winter nights dived below -1°C/30°F degrees, and summer days soared past 43°C/110°F degrees, grew a rather peculiar *Philodendron verrucosum*. *Philodendron verrucosum* is naturally found in the wet tropic biome of Central and South America. In contrast, our national capital Canberra's climate could best be described as dry, and 'rather hostile' to tropical plants.

Curiously, this *Philodendron verrucosum* thrived in a windowless lounge room devoid of natural light. Its limbs clambered awkwardly out of a disproportionately small bucket, filled to the brim with what seemed to be dry rocks. Apparently it was grown soil-free, in clay balls. Clay balls are an inert hydroponic media, which the plant's curious grower, Nige Rannard was experimenting with.

With care, Nige nurtured this plant. He cobbled together an array of environmental modification specifically to meet its every need. DIY humidifier from hardware store parts, temperature control sensors, lights controlled by mobile phone... he even fed it ionic liquid nutrients and monitored electrical conductivity and pH each week. For those who didn't immediately grasp the science happening (or perhaps, just yours truly here, who mistook clay balls for a bucket of dog biscuits), it seemed rather like magic!

Apparently, Nige fell in love with *verrucosum*, and bought it off a Queensland eBay seller some 2000km away. Charmed by its hairy alien-like petioles and its red-and-green velvet texture, he was determined to grow it. Over time, the hydroponic system became increasingly complex. Each new environmental obstacle demanded solutions for where there was no guidebook. Ambient natural humidity sometimes hovered just above 30% in summer (and occasionally, 0% when bushfire season came). To boot, Nige had a couple of surgeries and one arm was in a sling for some of this time.

While family and friends were amused that logic and common sense flew out of the window, Nige's passionate devotion was rewarded with lush growth. Perhaps, love, especially plant love, is a little crazy like that.

Through trial and error he persisted, documenting his experiments and sharing firsthand experience online. Nige wandered the internet to connect worldwide with other plant-lovers who lived outside the tropics. From Norway to Canada, from Korea to Dubai, as it turned out, there was a sizable number of folks sharing a dream of their own indoor tropical paradise. A vibrant digital community formed on the plant-loving corners of social media - collectively exploring how to expand the habitat of many Araceae well beyond their natural tropical habitats. Yours truly happened to be one such individual. Before long, our two small urban jungles from two different cities, merged to become a single, albeit very cramped, joint aroid collection.

Two years later, the pot-bucket was still disproportionately small,



Nige's environmental modification system



A customised trolley to help move this beast around

but the entire plant's weight required a customised trolley to wheel it around for pest inspection and management. If ceilings were of infinite height, the verrucosum would have been allowed to stretch its limbs with some 9metres/29.5 feet of growth. But alas, ceilings were not. So each time the plant bumped its head against the ceiling, we cut the air-layered tip, then lowered it to be added back into the base of the pot. Repotting each 'vine' took 2-3 people, a task that vaguely resembled us awkwardly dancing around a rather hairy maypole.

By late 2020, we carefully packaged this verrucosum in a giant envelope of cling-wrap, folding its limbs up like an umbrella. Then we drove some 300km from Canberra to Sydney in a November heat wave to our new home. It



A new Home

arrived soundly, and soon sprang its shady canopy above our sofa. No doubt happy with its own windowed space, plus an improved temperate Sydney climate, it rewarded us by rapidly manspreading over the entire living room.

'We must chop it up to reclaim our living space!' Nige insisted one day. The horror of that thought! I had also fallen in love with the verrucosum and searched for an excuse to avoid beheading the velvet giant. Surely, we can't chop a 'pregnant' philodendron right? I wondered wistfully, hoping we could find it a plant suitor.

In early January 2022, the verrucosum opened its first bloom of the year. To my dismay, all our other philodendrons had already finished up blooming weeks ago in December 2021. Conventional wisdom was that philodendron pollen must be fresh 'to work'. With nothing fresh on hand, I took a packet of frozen pollen collected weeks earlier, and gave it a shot.

It came from one of my cherished philodendrons, a crawling type, high-silver Philodendron pastazanum aff we nicknamed 'Gendry'.

Years earlier, I had purchased this unusual specimen when I learnt it



Philodendron pastazanum x sodiroi. The pollen parent



Success!

was hybridised by the late Howard Simpson, in 80s Kuranda Australia, as a *pastazanum* x *sodiroi* cross. Apart from its silver markings especially prominent when young, its inflorescence appears to be a blend of both *pastazanum* and *sodiroi*-like features.

The odds were against us - frozen pollen, the romance between a crawling complex hybrid, trying to romance a climbing species, could it be? We couldn't find any information on seeding on *verrucosum*, it was a mystery. Information on other existing *verrucosum* hybrids such as *Philodendron* 'Majestic' and *Philodendron* 'Splendid' were also scant, apart from the intriguing fact that most were made by Australians.

As fate would have it, this match worked. By April 2022 the inflorescence swelled visibility into an infructescence. Usually by this time, 3 months since pollination meant harvest. Yet how wrong we were!

By July 2022, our excitement turned into confusion as 6 months whooshed past. It was now double the normal 3 months and the green infructescence was still rock-solid firm. There was no sign of ripening, indicated by the lower spathe 'popping open' revealing soft fruit. We needed to move house again.

This time with a 'pregnant motherplant', swollen inflorescence and all, almost 2500 km away in Far North Queensland.

With extreme trepidation, we wrapped the swollen infructescence in bubble wrap and triangulated it to every nook we could tether. We crossed our fingers, toes and eyes and hit the rocky road. We traversed through the hinterlands of regional New South Wales, where the cold temperature of our metal trailer acted like a giant refrigerator in Australian winter. The plant was probably not too enthused to



experience the -2 C degree cold nights either.

On that bumpy drive, our van windows did not survive unscathed. Yet miraculously, the verrucosum infructescence survived intact! We sighed with relief, then resumed waiting. More months flew by, and in September 2022 (pictured), I took a picture with our local Kuranda newspaper dated

SEED PARENT

POLLEN PARENT



P. verrucosum

HYBRID CROSS



P. pastazanum × *sodiroi*

in the background to double check I hadn't lost all sense of time and place.

Stormy days came and the verrucosum fell over in the yard almost snapping off its limbs. But it held on to that infructescence like a torch. It wasn't until the very end of October (a total of over 10 months later), the infructescence finally 'popped'! The mesocarp pulp had a fruity fragrance, resembling pineapples. The seeds were tiny compared to any other philodendron seed we made and grew.

We were overwhelmed with joy to add a new philodendron hybrid to the world, and continue the tradition

of Australians breeding verrucosum hybrids. Unsure what genetic mystery they will reveal as their parental traits battle for dominance, for identification purposes we gave it the placeholder Batch ID# VerruX313 – an affectionate tribute to our former address where the 2 parental philodendrons met and romanced.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm of aroid collectors who followed our verrucosum's journey (which we documented and shared online), we partnered up with some brave folks we never met. After navigating the maze of permits and export processes with much help from friends and the online plant

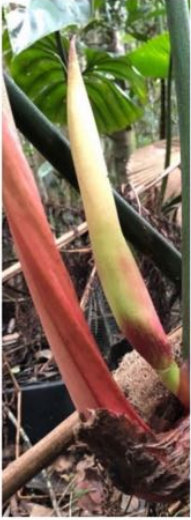


found their way to Asia, Europe, USA. We are so grateful Sandy Soh of Terrascapes Nursery (Singapore), Jos Vanden Abeele of BestBuds (Belgium) who made the infographic and Tyler Cichonski of Rousseau Plant Care (USA) who all stepped up to help distribute these tiny seeds and help people in their region to rediscover the lost art of growing philodendron from seed.

At the writing of this article, many Australian growers, some of whom have never encountered a philodendron seed before, are racing towards 3rd leaves on our Batch ID #Verrux313. Wonderful news also came of first signs of germinations in Asia and the Americas.

documented and shared online), we partnered up with some brave folks we never met. After navigating the maze of permits and export processes with much help from friends and the online plant community, the seeds eventually

This is particularly remarkable, as seeds had to be freighted between Melbourne and Cairns for phytosanitary inspection, then passed through an unseasonably cold snap of -8 degrees C/18F on route to the States! Plants are really



1) *Philo Colombian sp*
(El Guapo)



2) *Philo pastazanum*
(Pic credit Jardin Botanique)



3) *Philo sodiroi*
(Private collection
Far North Queensland)

Canberra to Canberra (15km). Canberra to Sydney (288 km). Sydney to Queensland (2475km)...it was no surprise that its offspring seeds would, too, also take a leaf out of their motherplant's books and be off to see the world.

The next chapter? It is yet to be written. Perhaps if the further 5,000km to Europe, 5000km to Singapore and 14,900km to the USA is anything to go by, the 21st century is a very brave new world for plants to traverse the world.



1) *Philo pastazanum*
x sodiroi
(Pollen donor for
Hybrid #Verrucosus18)



2) *Philo 'Dean McDowell'*
(*pastazanum*
x gloriosum) private collection



3) *Philo pastazanum*
private collection
Sydney

In the era of urban development and shrinking plant habitats, it's an oddly comforting antidote. Of a global community bound by curiosity, connected by the love of plants. Of ordinary folks meeting, learning, sharing, striving, to carve out niche and unusual new habitats in urban spheres for their beloved little tropical paradise. It's a story of modern love (or perhaps

the living embodiment of resilience! Looking back at how far our verrucosum has come - Queensland to Canberra (Nige) (2000km)

madness, depending on who you ask) between people, between plants, between people and plants. Update - The European seeds have now sprouted. Follow the adventure as it unfolds on our instagram account. Wild.About.Plants.

How cold is too cold?

By Robyn Everist

I have always wondered just how cold is too cold for tropical plants here in Hobart?

The excellent news is that it all depends on the plant. *Philodendron panduriforme* totally lost the plot when the overnight temperature in the hot house went below 10°C.

Right - Front deck jungle Sept 2021



Left - Philodendron panduriforme Sept 2021



My *panduriforme* was growing well on a moss pole then began to lose the intense green as the night stand days became cooler.

Steadily the leaves began to drop off, the smaller leaves dropping more rapidly.

I brought it indoors to see if it would recover.. The average temperature indoors was 16°C, thanks to the heat pump, and average humidity 75% thanks to having a well-sealed, double glazed house. It was positioned by a west facing glass door, so it was getting as much light as it had been on the deck.

Left - Philodendron panduriforme June 2022



After a week inside it stopped dropping leaves but the stem turned black.

AROID FACT Robyn Everist is the Tasmanian representative for the Aroid Society of Australia. She is happy to pass on her advice and experience. Please contact her robyn@aroids.net. For more great articles and inspiration then please check out Robyns website - houseplantjungle.com.au



It was in a clear pot, so I could see the roots weren't rotten and the mix wasn't soaking wet, so I'm putting its death down to the cold.

Left - Philodendron panduriforme July 2022

Now I can hear you ask. What about the other plants in the hot house? Did they suffer too? Remember I said it all depends on the plant? Well, here is a truly marvellous plant – *Philodendron erubescens* Imperial Green. (pictured below)



It had been in the hot house sitting beside the above-mentioned *Philodendron panduriforme*. It was thriving in the middle of winter, putting on new growth – where the temperature range has been 2°C overnight and 18°C in the day.



There is plenty of bright light here, but no direct sun hits the hot house in winter.

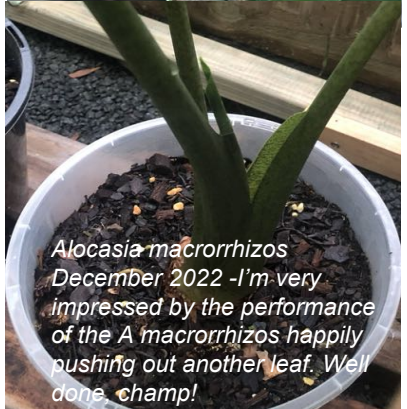
The *Alocasia macrorrhizos* 'Mammoth' (Right) were doing well in the same conditions, even putting out new growth. There are some signs of cold stress on the edges of the larger, mature leaves, but it's nothing fatal. These leaves first started to go pale at the edges in early autumn when outdoors on the covered deck.

This *Rhaphidophora tetrasperma* and *Scindapsus pictus* Argyraeus came in from the cold last of all. Note that the cold damage occurred first on the youngest leaves, the older leaves are hardier.

(Pictured Right and below right)

Now that you know what to look for in a tropical plant exposed to cold conditions, don't be afraid to experiment a bit and see how your plants cope. Every situation is different of course – all these plants had been outside on the covered, south facing deck since October 2021, so had a long summer of good growth before the cold weather hit. Of the hundreds of tropical plants in my collection, to have just a few show real signs of cold stress is remarkable and must cast doubt on the idea that tropical plants can't be grown in Hobart. Most will be perfectly fine. A couple will lose the plot (and I'm talking to you here, *Philodendron Micans*. It just melted when it got below 12 degrees C. Pathetic!)

I think if I hadn't been keen to see how low we can go, I would have brought the *P. panduriforme* inside sooner – but I reckon it's been a worthwhile experiment.



Alocasia macrorrhizos
December 2022 - I'm very impressed by the performance of the *A macrorrhizos* happily pushing out another leaf. Well done, champ!

The alarm went off
it was still pitch black
I was in a filthy mood
I heard myself attack

this strange young man who
jumped right out of bed
“it’s plant time, Rach,
I want to be first!” he said.

So we drove into the dark
up the highway, North
stopping at a servo for coffee
a bribe that filled me with warmth.

Alas, it was not enough to get me going
as we waited, two hours, first in line
my love was being put to the test
(I wish I’d brought a bottle of wine).

At 8am the gates opened
I heard a ‘hoorah!’ from the crowd
as everyone scrambled toward the stalls
and I said ‘fuck this’ out loud.

Plant people are clinically insane
they make my stress levels soar
spending \$800 on a small tassel fern
then buying eleven more.

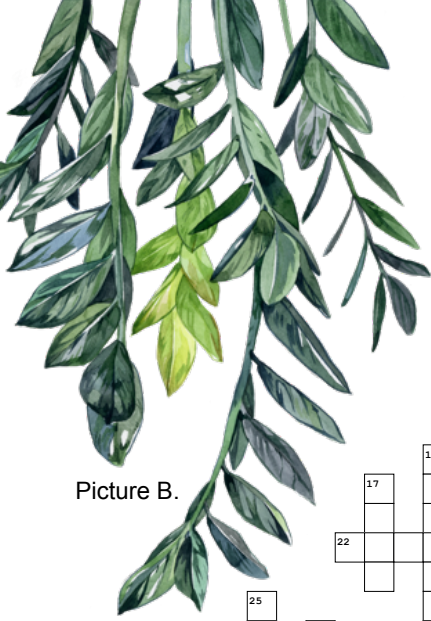
At least he isn’t shooting up heroin
my parents always say
when he comes home with another anthurium,
and two seedling philodendron trays.

A heroin addiction would probably be cheaper
but at least he’s got robust mental health.
I love that he’s got a green thumb.
There’s more to life than wealth.

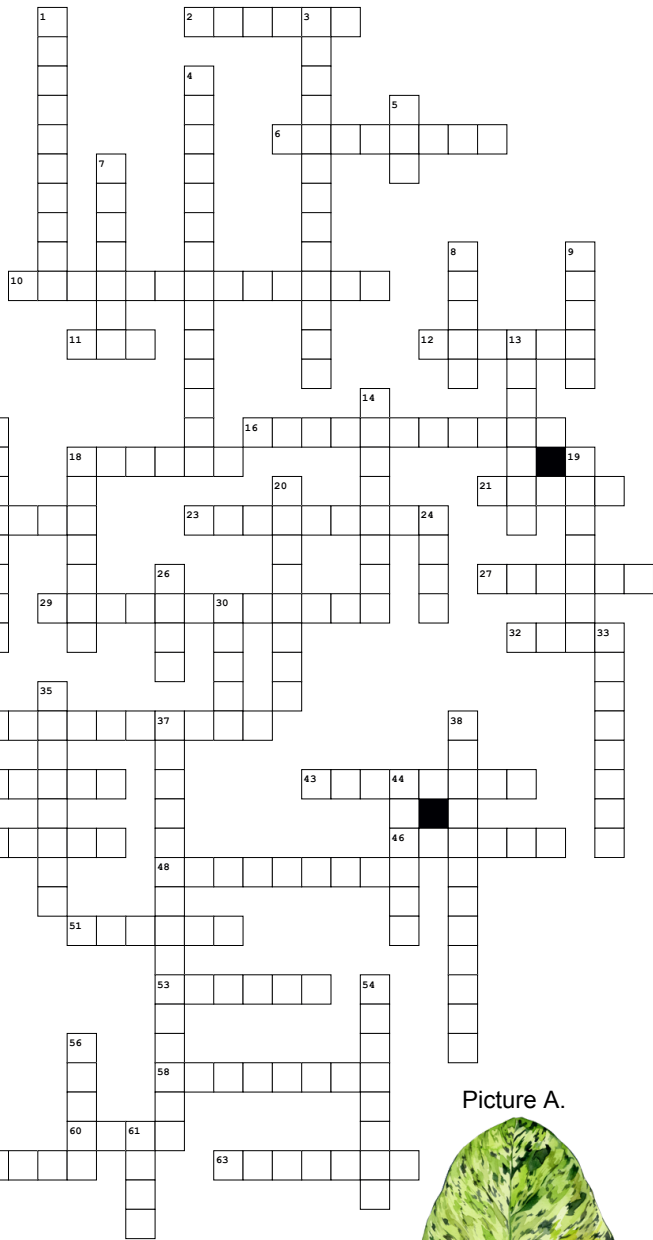
Finally, we found something for me:
a stall full of second-hand books!
he laughed as my face lit up
and held my hand as I had a look.

I drank more coffee,
and ate some vanilla slice
and soon I was alive again.
I kissed my plant boy (twice).

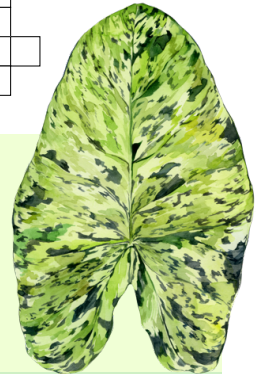
A little bit about the poem: I am a non-plant person in a relationship with a major plant person. The relationship works just fine, but I am constantly baffled regarding his obsession with plants. This poem was written about the Queensland Garden Expo. Andy wanted to be first in line, so we had to get up at the crack of dawn and to my bewilderment, people starting lining up soon after! There was a line snaking all the way down the road BEFORE the show even started at 8am! I think plant people are amusing and crazy, in the nicest possible way. I wouldn’t change anything about Andy. I love that he loves plants, and that he has a whole plant community that fosters his intense interest. *Rachels inspirational poetry book ‘Maranta’, a story of self-discovery, despair, love and hope, is available at all good book sellers.*



Picture B.



Picture A.



Aroida Australis

Across

- 2. Feature of Montane Rainforest
- 6. Plant scientist
- 10. Habitat loss
- 11. Rainy season
- 12. Large rainforest
- 16. All around the tropics
- 18. Nile Cabbage etc
- 21. Philodendron fruit
- 22. Cordillo de Cutucu home
- 23. Plant hormone
- 27. Air root
- 29. African aroid genus
- 31. Collection of plants
- 32. Unwanted invader

- 34. Colombian president
- 36. Chlorophyll mutation
- 41. Largest amorphophallus
- 42. The green fairy
- 43. Andraeanum flower
- 45. 58 across genus
- 46. German botanist _____ Bogner
- 47. Clay balls
- 48. Adanson's monstera
- 49. Plant tissue type
- 51. Other plant tissue type
- 52. Tree grower
- 53. Intergenous love child
- 55. Edible xanthosoma
- 57. Aroid inflorescence
- 58. Wasp waisted aussie native
- 60. Petiole
- 62. Unusual ability to make plants grow 5, 6
- 63. Aquatic aroid

Down

- 1. Costa Rican reserve
 - 3. Brazillian swamp plant
 - 4. Philo - In nomine patris et filii et
 - 5. Tolkien's tree man
 - 7. Product of photosynthesis
 - 8. Biological community
- 9. Duck weed
 - 13. Picture B.
 - 14. Leaf faced spirit 5, 3.
 - 15. Angel Wings
 - 17. Borneo river dweller
 - 18. Expanded granite for growers
 - 19. Attractively slender anthurium
 - 20. Blocked nose anthurium
 - 24. Growth point
 - 25. Micro climate display
 - 26. Plant anchor
 - 28. Edible colocasia
 - 30. Pertaining to water
 - 33. Author of Aroids 4, 4
 - 35. King anthurium
 - 37. Formerly Philodendron subg. Meconostigma
 - 38. Rain window
 - 39. Former ASA boss man
 - 40. Funeral lily
 - 42. Aroid Family
 - 44. Picture A.
 - 50. Mite killer
 - 54. Mediterranean genus
 - 56. Type of cheese plant
 - 59. Warocqueanum
 - 61. Popular plant marketplace



Amorphophallus hybrid



Amorphophallus paeoniifolius

Spring has Sprung with Not so sweetly smelling Blooms...

AROID FACT

The foul smell and 'fleshy meat' coloured bloom, resembles carrion - which attracts pollinators such as flies and beetles.

Amorphophallus paeoniifolius is edible and also an Australian native aroid. It is also known as Elephant foot yam.



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cairnsshow.com.au

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Vale Steven Best
Steven passed away in
December of 2022

Steve, a syngonium enthusiast and art lover was the ASA secretary from 6.8.2018, for 3 yrs then he was president for 6 months. He will be missed by all.



Rear cover - Kate Scanlon. Kate is an expert on recreating tropical jungles in chilly Melbourne, using hydro tents, lighting and heating. Her aroids are thriving in this simulated wet tropical climate. Kate is our state representative for Victoria and is happy to offer advice.

AROID FACT

Over 90% of Aroids are from tropical and subtropical climates. Most are rainforest plants.

