

# FLECKER BOTANIC GARDENS - CAIRNS

## Centenary Lakes - Saltwater

### Self-guided walk – tropical fruit orchard

The Centenary lakes precinct was established in 1975 with funds from the Regional Development Scheme. Prior to this time the area was colonised by native paperbark forest, mangroves and salt marsh communities. The Saltwater Lake park has three main vegetation themes: The 'Mangrove community', 'Coastal ridge plants' and 'Plants used by man'. The area is also home to over 130 species of birds and a myriad of fish, crustaceans and reptiles. Plant locations are indicated on the map found at the centre of this brochure, the plants themselves may be identified by a blue circle beneath the plant label.

#### 1. *Avicennia marina* **Grey mangrove**

Take a look along the boundaries of both the Saltwater creek and the lake itself, you will notice an abundance of Mangroves growing at various distances from the salty water. Each species can tolerate a certain level of salinity, the hardiest growing within the tidal zone. This Mangrove is found along the entire east coast of Australia, as far south as Victoria and is the dominant species around this lake. It often inhabits the seaward edge of mangrove communities.

#### 2. *Gastrococos crispera* **Cuban belly palm**

This palm is easily recognised by its strange swollen trunk. Belly palms have a surprisingly tough timber that is used extensively in its native Cuba. The fronds are used for roof thatch and for fibre. Beware of the sharp spines!

#### 3. *Spondias mombin* **Yellow mombin**

The genus *Spondias* contains a number of members with edible fruit. This species produces small acidic fruit that may be eaten fresh as a very refreshing thirst quencher. The fruit is also used in ice-cream and flavouring for drinks. It is native to a range extending from southern Mexico to Brazil and also the Caribbean.

#### 4. *Tamarindus indica* **Tamarind**

The pods of this tree yield a bitter-sweet pulp that is used extensively in traditional recipes of many countries. It is an important flavouring in dishes such as the Indian *Yindaloo* and in Worcester sauce. Tamarind fruit is extremely high in vitamin C and was used by early sailors as a prevention to Scurvy. The Tamarind is a native of Eastern Africa.

#### 5. *Planchonia careya* **Cocky apple**

The fruit of the Cocky Apple is edible, it has a yellow flesh and the taste of a quince when ripe, and was widely utilised by Aborigines. The bark was extensively used as a fish poison. It was pounded and thrown into pools of water, killing fish which could then be eaten without ill-effect. The bark is used as a soap and antiseptic. This plant is native to Top End Australia and Papua New Guinea.

#### 6. *Cycas media* **Nut palm - Poisonous**

This plant is a Cycad, not a palm as the common name suggests. The seeds have been extensively used by Aborigines as a valuable food resource, but only after extensive treatment. The seeds contain a toxin which can cause severe illness and have been linked to a brain disorder similar to Parkinson's disease. It is distributed along the Queensland coast from Rockhampton to Cape York. *Do not attempt to eat any part of this plant.*

7. *Pongamia pinnata*

**Karum tree or Poonga oil tree - Poisonous**

Although all parts of this tree are poisonous, extracts of the bark, seeds and leaves are widely used in indigenous medicine as a treatment for infected wounds. The roots and seeds are also used to stupefy fish. In late spring the tree produces a luxuriant display of copper-coloured new growth, followed by pinkish-white pea-like flowers. The Karum is widely distributed through tropical Asia to northern Australia.

8. *Elaeis guineensis*

**African oil palm**

The seeds of this palm yield a high quality oil that is used in cooking, lubricants and in the manufacture of margarine and soap. Waste products from the pressing process are an important stock feed in parts of its native western Africa.

9. *Dillenia alcata*

**Red beech**

The Red Beech is notable for its bright red/brown bark and showy yellow flowers, the petals of which may be eaten. Around the individual black seeds is a small white aril; this may also be eaten and tastes much like coconut. This tree is found in parts of coastal Northern Territory and north Queensland. It is particularly common in the Cairns area.

10. *Eugenia dambeyi*

**Grumichama**

Of all the edible fruits in the *Eugenia* genus, the Grumichama certainly has the best eating quality. The dark crimson cherry-like fruit are soft and slightly acid. The Grumichama is a native of Brazil.

11. *Evia tuberosa*

**Imbu or Umbu**

This Brazilian native produces a very palatable large yellow fruit that is somewhat reminiscent in taste of a sweet Orange. It is eaten as a fresh fruit and also used to make preserves and drinks. The tuberous roots are also edible.

12. *Flacourtia inermis*

**Lovi lovi**

The red, cherry-sized fruit may look attractive but don't be fooled, they are exceedingly sour. Lovi lovi make excellent preserves or jellies, but only after the addition of much sugar. This plant is a native of India and S.E. Asia.

13. *Citrus grandis*

**Pummelo**

This is the largest of all citrus fruits. The rind is very thick, but soft and easy to peel away. The resulting fruit has light yellow to coral-pink flesh and can vary from juicy to slightly dry, and from spicy-sweet to tangy and tart. A native of Malaysia and Thailand,

14. *Litchi chinensis*

**Lychee**

The Lychee is widely grown in many tropical and sub-tropical areas of the world. The fruits are red in colour, with a coarsely textured skin and a sweet translucent pulp. Lychee may be eaten fresh but are also canned or frozen for use in deserts and drinks. Native to China and S.E. Asia.

15. *Diospyros digyna*

**Chocolate pudding fruit**

This plant is also known as the Black Persimmon. It is a relative of the Persimmon of more temperate areas, but differs in that it has a sweet chocolate brown flesh when ripe. The flesh is used to make various deserts, including mousses and ice-cream. This tree is native to Mexico.

## Coastal Ridge Vegetation

From where you are, look in an Easterly direction across the bicycle path. This is a small pocket of coastal scrub, once common in the Cairns area. This type of vegetation grew only on the more elevated sandy areas of the coastal fringe.

In the lower areas between the ridges, the vegetation was much like the swamp forest found along the Rainforest Boardwalk and also in the Cairns Central Swamp. Much of the swamp forest was drained during WW2 in an attempt to reduce Mosquito-borne disease. The drier areas were consumed by housing and industry as the city expanded.

### 16. *Couroupita guianensis*

#### **Cannon-ball tree**

The large round fruit of the Cannon-ball tree consists of a hard thin shell filled with an unpleasant smelling soft pulp that contains many seeds. The fruit pulp is inedible but is fed to poultry in its native range in tropical America as a vaccine against respiratory and other diseases. The flowers are Bat pollinated.

### 17. *Sandoricum hoetjape*

#### **Santol**

The large yellow fruit of this tree contain a slightly acidic white pulp that has a most refreshing flavour. It is also known as Lolly Fruit as the fruit adheres to the seed and must be sucked to obtain the best flavour. Native to Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

### 18. *Diospyros blancoi*

#### **Mabolo**

The Mabolo is another member of the Persimmon family. The oval shaped fruit are covered in a layer of golden brown hairs which are usually removed prior to eating. The soft flesh is creamy white and sweet, the aroma resembling that of cheese. A native of the Philippines.

### 19. *Chrysophyllum caimito*

#### **Star apple**

The Star apple's graceful form and two-toned foliage make this tree a worthy garden specimen; the fact that it produces a luscious tropical fruit is simply a bonus. The round to oval fruit is about the size of a large plum, smooth-skinned, and can vary in colour from coppery-green to purple. Slicing the fruit horizontally reveals a star shaped pattern at the centre, hence the common name. The white flesh is soft and sweet. This species' native range extends from Central America to the West Indies.

### 20. *Myciaria cauliflora*

#### **Jaboticaba**

This attractive tree produces heavy crops of delicious purple~black fruits that look very much like cherries. The skin is rather tough, but the flesh is extremely sweet and refreshing. The fruit is produced on the trunk, a habit known as Cauliflory. Jaboticaba is a native of southern Brazil.

### 21. *Artocarpus heterophyllus*

#### **Jackfruit**

The fruit of this tree is the worlds largest, the heaviest of them weighing over 46 kilograms. The yellow skin is covered with short hard spines. Around each of the many large seeds is an envelope of very strongly flavoured flesh. Although it is very sweet and aromatic, the flesh is, to many, an acquired taste. The seeds may be boiled or roasted, and have been likened to Chestnuts. Jackfruit originates in India.

### 22. *Stelechocarpus burahol*

#### **Kepel fruit**

The Kepel fruit is a rare and endangered tree from S.E Asia. The small brown fruit are borne on the lower trunk and have a spicy; mango-like flavour. Ancient Indonesians believed that eating the fruit would cause body secretions to take on a perfume similar to that of Violets, and was reserved for only the highest classes. An attractive feature of this tree is the flush of pink new growth that occurs twice a year.

23. *Terminalia catappa*

**Beach almond**

This is an unusual form of Beach almond, having a lightly variegated leaf. Indigenous people over its native range of tropical Asia and Australia value the small edible kernel for its pleasant nutty flavour. The tree is commonly seen along many of our local beaches.

24. *Dillenia indica*

**Elephant apple**

The huge fruits of this tree are edible only when immature, and are commonly used in curries. The fleshy bracts that appear on the top of the fruit are also used for cooking purposes. The strong and durable timber is utilised for boat building, dugout canoes and in construction. The Elephant apple originates in a range from India to Indonesia.

25. *Elletaria cardamom*

**Cardamom**

Cardamom, sometimes called Grains of Paradise, is a pungent, aromatic herb first used around the eighth century, and is a native of India. The spice known as Cardamom is the fruit of several plants of the genera *Elletaria* belonging to the family Zingiberaceae. Cardamom is used in a variety of cuisines today, particularly in and around the Indian subcontinent and in Scandinavia.

26. *Castanospermum australe*

**Black bean**

This large rainforest tree is endemic to an area from north eastern N.S.W to north Queensland. During the early Wet season it produces a profusion of orange and yellow pea-like flowers which are followed by large canoe-shaped pods. The seeds were eaten by Aborigines during times of poor food availability, but only after extensive treatment as the seeds are quite toxic. The timber is greatly valued for its rich dark colour and durability.

27. *Pouteria sapota*

**Mamey sapote**

This tree is widely cultivated in the Caribbean and Central America. The fruit is brown skinned and oval in shape. In certain varieties the fruit can be over 30cm in length, although the most common varieties measure about 15cm. The flesh is orange and has a firm, grainy texture and the taste reminiscent of pumpkin. It is generally eaten fresh or in drinks and deserts. The Mamey Sapote is native to Central America.

28. *Euphoria longan syn Dimocarpus longan* **Longan**

The small brown fruits of the Longan have a sweet translucent flesh which is similar in texture to that of the Lychee. The flavour is quite musky and perhaps a little spicy, but this varies greatly with varieties. The fruit is eaten fresh or used in deserts, drinks and in a variety of recipes. It is believed that Longan originated in south China and Burma.

29. *Malpighia glabra*

**Acerola** ,

The small red fruit of the Acerola are extremely high in Vitamin C, containing 20 to 50 times that of the orange. The soft yellow pulp varies in flavour from quite acid to sweet, depending on the variety. Although the Acerola may be eaten fresh, it is more commonly used in drinks or made into very tasty jams and preserves. Acerola is a native of tropical south America.

30. *Morus alba*

**Indian or White mulberry**

The tree in front of you is the variety `Red Shatoot'. It produces red pendulous fruit which may be as long as 20cm. The fruit is pleasantly sweet and is used mostly in deserts and preserves. The tree at the rear is variety `White Shatoot'. This tree has smaller fruit which are almost white in colour. Both trees are a host plant for Silkworms. The White Mulberry has its origins in northern India.

31. *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*

### **Ceylon cinnamon**

Cinnamon is an ancient spice mentioned several times in the Old Testament. There are other species of Cinnamon but Ceylon Cinnamon has a more delicate aroma and is the most dominant variety in today's markets. The spice comes from the dried bark and, to a lesser extent, from dried immature fruit. Cinnamon is a native to Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon.

32. *Syzygium samarangense*

### **Wax jambu**

The white bell-shaped fruit of the Wax jambu is often *juicy*, with a subtle sweet taste somewhat resembling a common apple. It is most often eaten fresh or in desserts. Originally this tree came from Malaysia and Indonesia.

33. *Pandanus tectorius*

### **Screw palm or Pandanus**

This native tree is one of the most valuable species to indigenous Australians. The leaves are woven or plaited into mats, baskets, hats and many other items. The leaf fibre also is also used to manufacture strong twine for various purposes. The large composite fruits contain several wedge-shaped woody segments which must be split open to extract the edible seeds, which were roasted or eaten raw.

