

VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOTS

Brian Davison and **Nigel Waistell** at work on the new “wave” bridge, the start of the next section in the Sooty Owl Trail.



Colin Wilson (above) has joined us and is really enjoying working at our Gardens.
Welcome Colin, you have been a huge help already!

Michael Hiew and **Jason Glasson** are pictured working on new paths in the Sooty Owl Trail. *An exciting new part of the trail you were working on lads! ...Ed*



TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN BOTANIC GARDENS NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015

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THE YEAR THAT WAS: An Overview by our Works Manager Eddie Fenton

This last year has been full on. We have had some major projects on, needless to say, too many all at once given that everybody is a Volunteer and have private lives to live as well.

Potty Potters with Bobby at the helm have been very busy, as always, propagating plants for Springtime on the Mountain, which is the main event of the year and which also takes Margaret Pile and a team all of the year to organise.

Other main projects have been the development of the Succulent Garden (an idea from Roger Lenahan), and of course the Sooty Owl Trail. This has taken a lot of thought from Brian, who has worried and had sleepless nights worrying about it, as when he started the Sooty Owl Trail it was just a jungle. It is just about two thirds done with the aid of all the people we can get to help him and Sandy in charge of all the plantings. The public are now allowed in to what is near completed, and I have heard nothing but praise from the people I talk to. This has all been and continues to be all “Brian’s Vision”. Thanks to him.

The Orchid House is beautiful this year after all of Nanette’s and Sonia’s work and there are plans to extend this as both ladies have made a study of Orchids and are keen to expand their venture.

We had a dead tree carved by a professional, who knows what he is doing, with an owl on top looking backwards and smaller inset owls. This also has been a great attraction.

The rest of the crew have been very busy as always with maintenance, which is and must be an ongoing job — watering, loosening soil, mulching, fertilising and of course weeding.

For three months we were lucky enough to have had Allan, an experienced builder, who taught us a lot and aided and abetted us in the building of a few constructions—mainly in the Sooty Owl Trail.

We have had the Tamborine Mountain Little Theatre in the Gardens putting on Mid Summer Nights Dream—all concerned with that are very enthusiastic about putting on plays in the Gardens, day and night. A beautiful setting and a great job done by all. A coffee stall there added atmosphere to the whole scene. As much maintenance as possible was done by all the volunteers to aid and help to make their play successful.

From all aspects it has ended up being a good year and we look forward to perhaps not too many major projects next year.

We must not forget the people behind the scenes who do all the organising and paper work for Springtime on the Mountain - secretary, president, treasurer, grants etc. I think as long as we all pull together and *Festina lente* —“make haste slowly” we shall once again come out of it well next year.

Many thanks once again to all that are concerned with the Garden Club and Botanic Gardens.

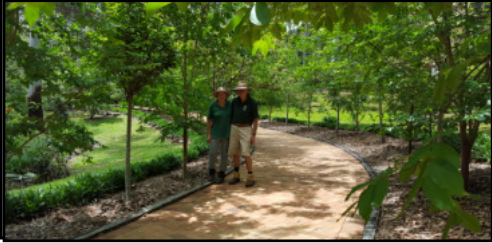
Eddie Fenton

(We could not have done it all without the amazing dedication of Eddie Fenton.....Ed)



CHERRY TREE WALK

Bob and Sue Stewart (below) are the caretakers of this Gardens feature, (having taken over from the McGarricks), and are doing a great job of “nurturing” as they did previously with the Camellia garden. Only half of the 40 cherry trees have survived, due to borer and fungus but Bob and Sue are vigilant in their care and maintenance of the remainder. Inter-plantings of a white flowering ‘India Summer’ Crepe myrtle, *Lagerstroemia natchez*, are ‘powering ahead’ according to Sue and her vision is to see an avenue formed when their canopies meet. ***This lovely Gardens feature is in very good hands!.....Ed***



GOOD SPOTTING in the Gardens by Jason Glasson. The Red-Triangle Slug (*Triboniophorus graeffei*), is common in eastern coastal forests and is one of Australia’s largest native slugs, growing to a length of 14 cm. The hole inside the red triangle is the animal’s respiratory opening known as a pneumostome, or breathing pore. This is a feature of all air-breathing land slugs and snails.

They graze on lichen and algae which grows on the surface of the smooth bark of some eucalyptus trees.

They are entirely harmless and should be encouraged as little behind-the-scenes invertebrates that are important in the ecosystem.

(Photo by Sandy Silabon)



VISITORS TO THE GARDENS

The local branch of **Probus** enjoyed a guided walk-through of the newly opened Sooty Owl Trail and said - “amazing”.

All are coming back with their grandchildren!



THE BIRDWING BUTTERFLY VINE *Pararistolochia praevenosa*

We are fortunate to have in our Gardens a large mature specimen winding its way up the native trees on the side of the Japanese Garden, with more being planted several years back in the rainforest regeneration areas on the edge of the Gardens. Thanks go to **Richard Bull** (pictured at right), garden club member and entomologist, who has donated and planted many more around the Gardens including the Sooty Owl Trail.

The Richmond birdwing butterfly, (*Ornithoptera richmondia*), once a common sight in SE Queensland, is now a rare species being extinct in two thirds of their former range. There are two main reasons for this. The destruction of natural forest has removed their only host plant, the Birdwing butterfly vine (*Pararistolochia praevenosa*, formerly *Aristolochia praevenosa*). The other reason is that an introduced plant of the same genus, Dutchman’s pipe vine (*Aristolochia elegans*) attracts the female butterfly to lay eggs but the plant is toxic to the emerging larvae! This plant is now prohibited from sale in Qld but it is still around. It has the capacity to not only kill off the Birdwing population but also strangle the very rain forest it is growing on.

Although sometimes difficult to source, *Pararistolochia praevenosa* is a plant that we all could consider growing over a back fence or up a rain forest tree. It is an attractive vine with a very unusual flower and could well make all the difference in keeping a population of Birdwing butterflies on the Mountain.

Interestingly: For the last 4 years the Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network has been running a research program which found fragmentation of the birdwing butterfly populations through habitat loss had resulted in population decline from ‘in-breeding depression’ causing low egg fertility and adult deformities. Populations have rapidly increased on Tamborine Mountain in the last couple of years following release into Palm Grove Nat. Park and Tamborine Rainforest Skywalk of about 80 cross-bred larvae and pupae resulting from mating a male butterfly from John & Chris Youngman’s property with a female from Beerwah. The program is being run by Dr Ian Gynther, Snr. Conservation Officer, Dept of Environment & Heritage Protection in conjunction with David Fleay Wildlife Park. This project and the planting of large numbers of birdwing vines should ensure the survival of this presently threatened species. ***Thank you to Richard Bull for this update.....Ed***



Caterpillar of the Richmond birdwing butterfly *Troides ichmondus*



The small trumpet-shaped flower of the Birdwing vine