

Wallum & Coastal Heathland  
Study Group

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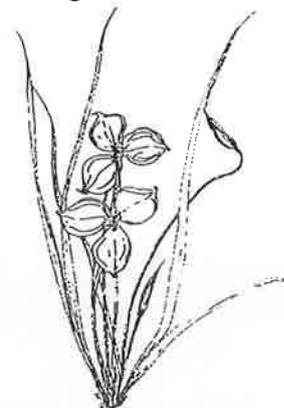
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Newsletter

26

JULY 2009

Native Iris



*Patersonia sericea*

Hello, members and other readers,

It's a bit late to welcome you to 2009, being that it is half over, but if it is possible, I have been busier than ever since the last newsletter, way back in August 2008. Last year's Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival was, according to Sunshine Coast Regional Council's Natural Areas Officer, Michael Gilles - a "bloomin' success", with 31 activities over the 2 weeks in late August. Instead of a written report, I've included a colour page with some scenes of the four activities I attended at Bribie Island; Beerwah; Mudjimba; Noosa area. Planning for this year's Festival got underway in February, and programmes are now ready to distribute. The usual popular walks at Bribie Island, the Beerwah Scientific Area, Marcus High Dunes, Emu Mountain, etc., are included, plus a few new venues. As usual, I am amazed that there are still places being added each year, despite constant development on the Sunshine Coast. This year, for the first time, we have some restrictions imposed by National Parks & Wildlife Service, on the numbers we can have on walks in National Park areas. I made enquiries, and was told that this is their policy, the same as exists in the Brisbane Forest Park, where walk groups are limited to 15, and must be accompanied by a National Parks officer. Needless to say, this ruling was not well received by the members of the various local groups who "host" and guide the walks, including our own Study Group. As the Beerwah Scientific Area 1 is now under the control of Q.N.P.W.S., that walk will now be affected, so in anticipation of maybe 25-30 persons for it, I'll be trialling 2 walks between 9.00a.m. & 12.30p.m. Our "guides" are not included in the 15, and I hope there can be 3 persons from the Study Group available to assist on both walks. Could you please let me know which time will be most suitable - 9 till 10.30a.m. or 11 till 12.30p.m.? The day of this walk will be Tuesday 18th August. You don't have to know every Wallum flower, as there is a wildflower brochure available for identification, and you can always refer to someone nearby. For a chance to learn or to refresh your memory prior to the Wildflower Festival, there will be an excursion to the Scientific Area 1 on Sunday 19th July, which is not far away, only next weekend.

While we usually meet at the Matthew Flinders Picnic Area, at Tibrogargan Creek north of Beerburrum for Beerwah outings such as the one on 19th July, on the day of the Festival walk, we will be using the Scientific Area track off Mawson Road. The meeting place that day, Tuesday 18th August, will be at the gate on the left-hand side of Mawson Road, which is straight ahead off Roys Road, east of Beerwah township. In the Sunshine Coast section of the Brisbane UBD, see Map 116 Ref. N5, where the walk will start at 9.00a.m. or 11.00a.m. The last "comfort stop" is either the Matthew Flinders Park, or near Beerwah Railway Station. If you would like to stay on after the walks and perhaps have another look at the local wildflowers, bring lunch, I won't be rushing off home straight away. I just hope the weather & flowers are as pleasant as they were in 2008. The Mawson Road track boasts a wide diversity of plant communities; and includes the endangered Eucalyptus conglomerata.

Vanilla Lily



*Sowerbaea juncea*

*Blandfordia grandiflora**Hibbertia stricta**Thelymitra pauciflora**Patersonia sericea**Styliidium graminifolium**Dampiera sylvestris*

There is some Melaleuca quinquenervia either side of the track, then it opens out into open wildflower areas after having Banksia robur and yellow pea-flowered Pultenaea myrtaoides. In the open, we should see the bright pink Boronia falcifolia, possibly Leptospermum semibaccatum, with a large variety of smaller "bits & pieces" on the edge of the track. The Wallum Banksia, B. aemula is found along the middle section, but first we'll pass a treed area with several Eucalyptus species, including the Beerwah form of E. curtisii, this particular group having had more than its fair share of fire over the years - I've never seen it in flower here. Dillwynia and Aotus, prickly Acacia ulicifolia, the Wedding Bush of white Ricinocarpos pinifolius are at this point, and there should be mauve Sowerbaea juncea, the perfumed Vanilla Lilies along the track's edge. Then we'll come to another swamp with red bottlebrushes of Melaleuca pachyphylla (no longer Callistemon), maybe some Melastoma malabathricum subsp. malabathricum (dreadful mouthful), Wallum ferns and sedges, until the rise leading into Scribbly Gum (Eucalyptus racemosa) forest with its diverse understorey of flowering shrubs. Near the intersection of the tracks there are a few Eucalyptus conglomerata, the endangered Swamp Stringybark, with its dark rough bark. My Geoff, when I showed these to him some years ago, remarked that they didn't look like a decent timber tree, an apt description from someone who learned about timber trees at the young age of 10. Also at this corner, there is Acacia complanata and Tetratheca thymifolia, the Flat-stemmed Wattle and Black-eyed Susan. As did all the plants along this track, they made a remarkable recovery from vandal-lit fires during 2006, quickly returning to flowering, helped by suitable rain at the right times.

Like all the tracks in the Scientific Area, this one will delight, even if the flowerings are less than expected. Beerwah is just magic!

On the first page of this issue, I've featured 2 well-known wildflowers of our Wallum, and many other woodland areas of Queensland, Patersonia sericea, our Native Iris, and Sowerbaea juncea, the beautiful scented Vanilla Lily of coastal Wallum wetlands, and the nearby high dunes. The Native Iris or Purple Flag has three delicate petals which can range from a lovely soft mauve to a startling purple, and can be almost round as well as the usual softly triangular shape. It is only when you compare photographs that you see the subtle variations in the colour and shape of the petals. Last year at Beerwah, there were a couple of plants with white flowers (this form has been noted before here), and never seen till then - a double purple with 6 petals. Patersonia plants can carry 20 or more flowers on them, and they have what we call "Patersonia Days", when every plant in an area flowers on the same day. Each bud has 2 or 3 flowers which seem to open at 2-3 day intervals, and a woodland or Wallum area on a "Patersonia Day" is a beautiful sight, with the grassy clumps showing off several open flowers at once. Such a sight is hard to beat, though the Wallum is the place for many wondrous sights. Sadly, with all the changes due to development of our coastal strip, these are becoming rare.

A field of Vanilla Lilies in full bloom, the heads of perfumed soft mauve flowers quivering and nodding in the breezes, was once a common part of the Wallum, something many of us oldies remember. Nowadays we say to each other - "Do you remember that patch of Sowerbaea that used to be at.....?" and we think of that place north of Beerwah, or Ninghi, or Marcoola, and feel blessed that we did see them, and enjoy the sight and their sweet scent. I was even able to introduce several of my grandchildren to them. Each flower-head of Sowerbaea juncea has around 12-15 star-like mauve flowers, each on its own very fine stem on a soft but strong fleshy stem, and like the Patersonias, they grow in a large grassy clump. Patersonias and Sowerbaea have bluey-green leaves and stems, the former like blades of grass, the latter rounded. You can identify Patersonia sericea by the dark, almost black bud or calyx covered with very fine hairs - sericea meaning "silky". It is a widespread species, occurring in wet and dry Wallum, the high dunes, coastal woodlands, and even the open forests of the sandstone

mountains and plateaus of central Queensland - I saw glorious purple Native Iris at Blackdown Tableland, west of Rockhampton. Patersonia sericea was one of the "P" items making last year's Wildflower Festival Beerwah walk a Perfect day, including People, Pimeleas, Pultenaeas, Pink Boronias, Tetratheca and Bauera, and the Peaceful atmosphere in a Pleasant, Pretty setting.

We have 3 species of Patersonia in south-east Queensland: fragilis; glabrata & sericea. P. fragilis grows in the coastal wet heaths and the high dunes, and is usually the smallest of the three, but occasionally you'll come across plants which are the same size as the others. Its flowers are always mauve, very rarely deeper purple, and the calyx is light brown and hairless. P. glabrata is the species which occurs away from the coast in the nearby hinterland hills. Its leaves don't grow directly out of the ground as in the other two species, but appear along the stem a few centimetres from the base. On one of our heathland rambles in the D'Aguilar region, west of Caboolture, we found P. sericea and P. glabrata almost side-by-side in the bushland, allowing us to compare the two. The latter species has greenish-brown to light brown smooth buds and calyces, as in P. fragilis, thereby assisting with identification.

Patersonias are found in all States, mostly along the coasts, but also in the nearby coastal mountains and tablelands, on sandstone, granite or rocky soils.

P. fragilis (Short Purple Flag) is found in all States except Western Australia, while while P. glabrata and P. sericea occur in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The former is known as Leafy Purple Flag, the latter as Silky Purple Flag. Patersonia sp. aff. fragilis is described in Les. Robinson's "Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney" as being on the N.S.W. coast; rare in the area; recorded at Deep Creek, Narrabeen - 2nd Edition published in 1994. Narrabeen is on the coast to the east of the southern boundary of Kuringai-Chase National Park. (Did you realise that researching Australian native plants provides excellent Geography lessons? Luckily, I loved that subject at school.)

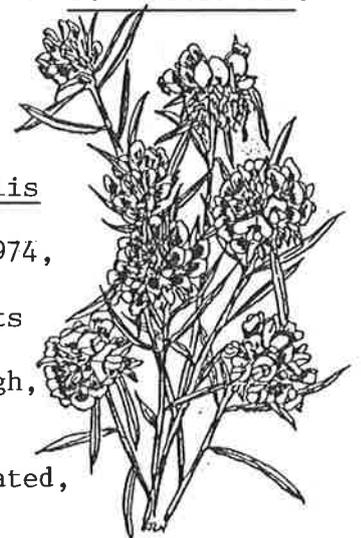
Robinson also describes P. longifolia, Dwarf Purple Flag, as uncommon, occurring only north of the Harbour, e.g. Muogamarra Nature Reserve. Its purple flowers are borne in a short woolly-hairy spathe. It obviously has long leaves.

I visited Muogamarra Nature Reserve back in 2007 whilst attending the A.S.G.A.P. Federal Conference at Newcastle that year, and would recommend a visit if you are ever in that area. It is a lovely place, with an excellent National Parks Centre, and I was lucky to catch Waratahs in flower.

Patersonia longiscapa is one of the 5 species described by Jean Galbraith in her 1977 "A Field Guide to the Wild Flowers of South-East Australia". It might have been produced over 30 years ago, but there are still many Australian plants enthusiasts who refer to "Galbraith". With a common name of Long Purple Flag, it is described as having flower stems longer than the flat leaves, and found in wet peaty places, in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria.

Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania have P. occidentalis, also having a common name of Long Purple Flag. In W.A., it is said to be a very wide-spread, variable species in shrubland and woodland. Also described in "Wildflowers of Southern Western Australia" published 1996, reprinted 1997, is Patersonia umbrosa var. xanthina, Yellow Flags, possibly the only yellow species, with P. umbrosa var. umbrosa having blue-violet flowers.

Patersonia descriptions have been taken from books I've bought over the years, and in some cases could be a bit out-of-date, but I have tried to take you around Australia a little way, rather than confining the information to the usual south-east Queensland Wallum. Two books with descriptions of P. occidentalis are "Wildflowers of South-eastern Australia" with paintings by Elizabeth Conabere, text by J. Ros Garnet, first published in 1974, then in 1987, and "Flora of Melbourne", first published 1991 by S.G.A.P. Maroondah Inc., 3rd edition in 2001 by Australian Plants Society Maroondah Inc. The former book contains beautiful work by Elizabeth Conabere, and is always a pleasure to browse through, while the latter is more botanical drawings, and is a guide to the indigenous plants of the Greater Melbourne Area. Any corrections or updates to information will be welcome & appreciated, but I hope readers will enjoy these all-too-brief descriptions.



As well as their delicate beauty, Sowerbaea juncea are one of the perfumed Wallum species found in the coastal wetlands, and also on some of the high dunes. Along with the white bell-like flowers of Epacris obtusifolia, and the open white, with pink stamens, Burchardia umbellata flowers, Milkmaids, Sowerbaea provide the sweet scents of the wet Wallum, with the crushed foliage of Boronia falcifolia, Wallum Boronia or Swamp Heather, adding its tangy perfume. Boronia flowers in south-east Queensland don't have the fragrance, it is in the leaves. Burchardia are always found only in the wet Wallum, they never mind having "wet feet". These four plants just described are not in general cultivation, although enthusiasts won't give up trying to grow them. Somehow I think they just want to be left in peace in their coastal heath habitat.



Sowerbaea juncea, Vanilla Lilies, are an integral part of eastern Australia's coastal heathlands, in parts of Victoria, the N.S.W. coast, Blue Mountains & southern tablelands, and south-east Queensland. They are not included in the "Flora of Melbourne", but according to J. Ros Garnet in "Wildflowers of South-eastern Australia", Sowerbaea juncea occurs at Wilson's Promontory. Robinson describes Sowerbaea as an endemic genus of 5 species found in swampy heathland in all States except South Australia. The species found in Western Australia is Sowerbaea laxiflora, known as Purple Tassels, with flower clusters containing more than 30 flowers. It is found in sand in near-coastal woodland and shrubland or in clay soil in woodland of the Darling Plateau. I've seen a lot of fields of Vanilla Lilies since my first sight of them way back in my childhood (60 years ago) in what was called "The Boronia Patch" at Bribie Island. I recall paddling in water with all these mauve flowers everywhere - we must have had late Winter rain that time. The expanses of them at Marcoola in the late 1990's are no more, since developers converted the wet heath into a housing development, but I have my (historic?) photographs. Ninghi, on the way to Bribie Island from Caboolture, once had its own "Boronia Patch" with masses of Sowerbaea in Spring along with the two beautiful Boronias - B. falcifolia & B. safrolifera. Very little now remains, new houses and roads are there instead. But this seems to be the story everywhere along our coastline - people want to live near the sea, while here I sit, 80 klms. as the crow flies, from my beloved Wallum. Can we ever manage to grow any of these precious Wallum plants? I think our chances are very slim, as their soil and other requirements are so specific. But good luck to anyone who is trying to discover the cultivation secrets of the Wallum species. Any information, comments or corrections about these plants, or any other aspects of Wallum & coastal heathland are always welcome, so don't be shy - write to me.

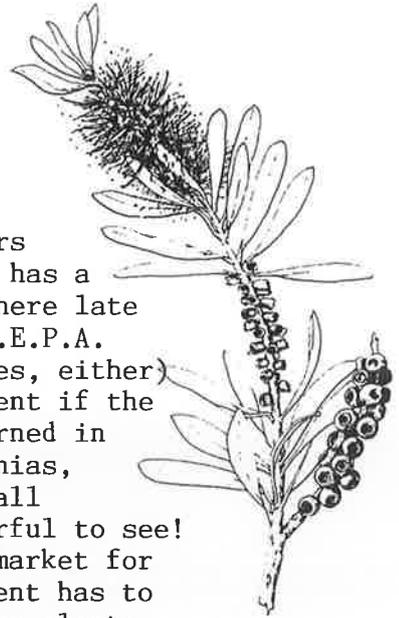
It's that time of year when annual membership subscriptions are due - still \$5. Please complete the enclosed form and return to me with your sub., to: Barbara Henderson, 36 Railway Terrace, Moore, 4306. Cash or cheque gratefully received.

Welcome to new members: A phone call in June resulted in 2 new members for the Study Group, Peter & Leith Woodall, from the Brisbane suburb of Moorooka. Peter remarked that we seem to visit places which few others seem to go to. Welcome to Peter & Leith, and I hope we meet soon.

Referring back to this year's Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival, the Bribie Island Environment Protection Association Inc. will have its annual wildflower walk on Sunday 23rd August, with walkers and guides to meet at 9.00a.m. at the Arts Centre and Gardens at Sunderland Drive (near Pacific Harbour). The organisers will, as always appreciate any assistance members of the Wallum Study Group can give them. Whether we will be greeted by the enormous number (near 100) waiting there last year, I don't know. But don't let that put you off, it is always a pleasant outing, with John Ward from the Community striding off in the lead, and yours faithfully dawdling and bringing up the rear. Please come along and help, and enjoy Bribie Island's glorious wildflowers as the bonus. I'm not sure exactly where the walk will be, there are at least two choices.

## SOME CULTIVATION NOTES

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that I had found someone who was growing a LARGE number of Wallum plants, rescued from the site of the development at Ninghi, between Caboolture and Bribie Island. An S.G.A.P. member, he had a nursery many years ago at Greenbank, but is now relocated to Beachmere, where he has a nursery growing various orchids, native & exotic. I called there late in July, on my way to Bribie Island to give a talk at the B.I.E.P.A. meeting. The sight of all these Wallum plants (not little ones, either) flowering prolifically in pots, was mind-blowing. I asked Brent if the Study Group could visit and share the experience, and we returned in late September, before the flowers finished. There were *Boronias*, yellow pea flowers, *Leptospermum*, *Tetratheca*, *Pimelea*, the small *Jacksonia*, *Stylidium*s, *Goodenia*s - you name it - it was wonderful to see! Since that visit, though, there have been some changes. The market for Wallum plants isn't quite there yet, and due to economics, Brent has to concentrate on the more marketable orchids. Most of his Wallum plants have gone to another local nursery, with which I still have to make contact regarding some sort of interaction with us. However, we returned to Beachmere in March this year, for what was supposed to be a short visit, just to check on what was happening. Some of us purchased plants from what Brent had retained, and, armed with advice from Brent, went home with plans to do our own trials of growing Wallum plants in pots. So far, a couple of members have had some small successes, while I have to confess that I haven't managed to do anything at all yet. At least, only one plant has died on me, *Goodenia bellidifolia*, while a couple are flowering, one being *Dillwynia floribunda*. Hopefully, in the next newsletter, I'll have something to report.



*Wallum bottlebrush*

Going through past issues of our S.G.A.P. Qld. Region Bulletin, I found an "UPDATE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST WALLUM" dated September 1993, about a year after I started the Study Group. At the end of the article are these 2 paragraphs: "Members of the Wallum (Coastal Heathland) Study Group have been experimenting with plants rescued from Motorway roadworks last November (with permission from the Transport Department). To date, most of these little "treasures" have survived and are now coming into flower, much to our delight. But it is early days yet, and we may still suffer losses, as these species are notorious for their dislike of the ordinary garden situation.

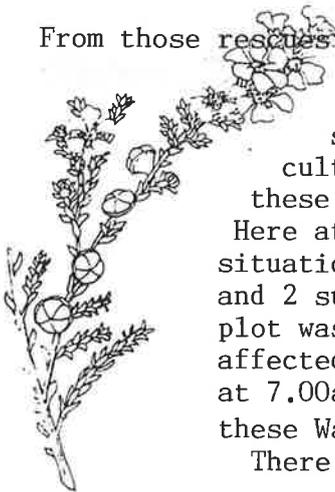
We have found that the Wallum plants like being grown in close company with one another, dislike mulch and weed sprays, and are very happy with low nutrient situations. Seeds and cuttings can be taken from these plants in our own gardens, and attempts made to propagate and grow on these delightful treasures from the Wallum. Just give us time for more trials, and meantime, enjoyment."

From those rescues back in late 1992, I have *Banksia robur*, *Melaleuca thymifolia* (two forms), *Melaleuca pachyphylla* (formerly *Callistemon*), a tiny remnant of *Hibbertia vestita* and a small *Lomandra* still surviving. However, the first 3 of these have been in cultivation for some time now, well before 1992, so I don't regard these results as any great success.

Here at Moore, in a very modified (Wallum sand replacing the local dirt) situation, I have a *Hakea actites* coming into flower for the second time, and 2 surviving (from 5) *Pultenaea myrtooides* full of buds. This tiny plot was prepared in mid-2007, and, slightly sheltered, the plants weren't affected by a severe frost on 12th June when the temp. inside the house at 7.00a.m. was 2°. Quite a lot of other garden plants suffered, but these Wallum plants and 3 others in pots with them, never wilted.

There is a lot to learn about the cultivation of our Wallum plants.

Those of you who are trying, don't give up yet.



*Wallum lemon-scented tea-tree*  
*Leptospermum liversidgei*



*Boronia falcifolia*

ACTIVITIES past and future: Following the 2008 B.I.E.P.A. walk at Bribie Island, we returned to the Community Nursery for our annual Wallum Day, but it wasn't the usual routine, and I was suffering from a flu bug. Several of those present, including a very keen Wallum-er from the Gold Coast, went for a walk to McMahon Street, one of our favourite places. We didn't have our usual discussion, but it was still a satisfying day for most. Later that week, we had the Wildflower Festival Beerwah walk, a most pleasant day for all who came. We had visitors from Warwick, Mackay, the Sunshine and Gold Coasts, as well as locals. September was the visit to the Vieritz nursery at Beachmere, while only 4 visited the Ewen Maddock

Wetlands walk in October. Due to the hot weather, and poor member response, the final outing for the year, to the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, was cancelled. We had planned to look at the D'Aguilar bushland in February, but it was rather wet start to 2009, so we all stayed home instead. March saw us again at Beachmere, then in late April, we did a bit of special surveying in the Beerwah Scientific Area 1, checking out exactly where to locate plants of Grevillea leiophylla or G. humilis subsp. lucens. The Grevillea Study Group south-east Qld. members are checking Grevillea species around the region over the weekend of 25-26 July, see Page 10 June 2009 Bulletin. I offered to check locations of Grev. leiophylla and others, see Page 30 of the Bulletin "Heathland Ramble", and our April Beerwah visit saw a large interested group helping find the Grevillea humilis subsp. lucens plants. It was one of our largest attendances with people from Pine Rivers, Sandgate & Caboolture turning up. And we found quite a lot of plants, all where I remembered them from earlier visits. We were to have had the annual Bribie Island Wallum Day in late May, but things were just a wee bit wet, weren't they? So that day will be later in the year.

A second day checking Grevilleas found a group of 8 at Freshwater National Park on Sunday 28th June, searching in fairly wet conditions (at ground level) for Grevillea leiophylla. This Park is at the northern end of Deception Bay, and it is some time since our last visit there, so the vegetation had grown a bit. At first, I couldn't find any plants, then found 2 very poor specimens, so we decided to go to where a track gives access. A proper gate now graces the entrance, and we followed the car tracks a little way, and suddenly started to see a plant or two. Soon, we were all seeing G. leiophylla, thank goodness, as this site is our first stop on July 25th. If any member is interested in participating in this Grevillea "crawl", please do as advised, and phone Denis Cox on 55468590. You could also let me know.

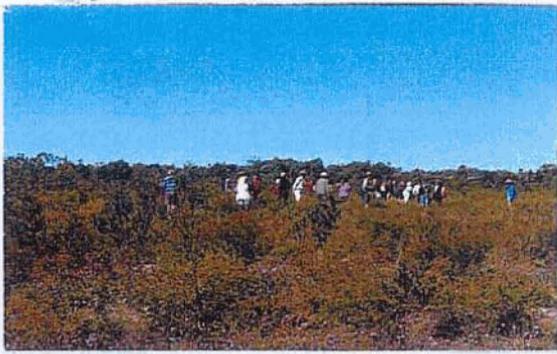
The latter half of August is occupied by the Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival, but on Sunday 3rd August, there will be the annual "What's Cooking in the Gardens?" at the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens in George Street, Redcliffe. Don Perrin uses this day to focus on and educate/promote our Acacias/Wattles, but there is no Wallum Study Group involvement.

After I guest-spoke in April to the Blackbutt Garden Club, they asked if I would be interested in having a display stall at the "Bloomin' Beautiful Blackbutt Festival" over the weekend of 12/13 of September. I applied and was accepted, so now I have to work out what to do - it is to focus on the Sunshine Coast wildflowers, I just hope there are some more Australian native plants there.

Our S.G.A.P. Spring Flower Show is over the weekend of 19/20 September at Mt. Coot-tha. Lawrie Smith is the new Displays Officer, and asked if I would be doing a display, with this year's Show focussing on people who have played a part in Queensland's botanical history. Well, I suggested that on behalf of the Wallum Study Group, I feature Kathleen McArthur in a mainly pictorial display. He agreed, so I'll have another busy weekend.

That brings us to October and November, and the end of this newsletter. I have to make some decisions this month for the September Bulletin, so watch for the calendar of events in it. We still have to have our annual Bribie Island Wallum Day, and I have a few more things in mind. Sorry about the long gap between newsletters, it has been a busy time. Distractions included our 70th birthdays, for him there was a weekend of celebration here at Moore, while I returned to my birthplace and early childhood home, both in Western Queensland, both our celebrations were fantastic.

Barbara H.



BRIBIE ISLAND  
and  
BEERWAH SCIENTIFIC  
AREA 1

Wallum & Coastal  
Heathland

2008.



The Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association Inc. annual wildflower walk.

A profusion of glorious wildflowers greets the crowd in an Island whose Wallum areas are under constant threat from human intrusion.



The Beerwah Scientific Area 1, in the Glasshouse Mts. Region, south-east Qld.

On a "PATERSONIA DAY", all plants of *Patersonia sericea* (Native Iris/Purple Flag) display their lovely flowers, which sometimes include occasional white blooms among the usual purple.



A day of "P s" with *Patersonia sericea*, *Pimelea linifolia*, its white clusters at perfection in the Beerwah woodland, and the yellow pea flowers of *Pultenaea* among the profusion of the plants of the pretty understory. Plus perfect weather and company.



As beachfront Marcoola & Mudjimba Wallum areas were developed into high-rise tourist units, a plant "rescue" relocated loads of plants & soil to a Mudjimba foreshore open space where it is now the "Mudjimba Wallum Wildflower Rescue Garden" cared for by volunteers.



"Girraween" is the area of Wallum wetland to the left on the approach to Noosa Junction at Sunshine beach. Yellow Christmas Bells are seen here following a fire, plus other wildflowers, but roadworks have intruded, one more example of the human impact on the natural beauty of the Sunshine Coast.



Nature's "sculpture" of an upended tree root in the Beerwah Scientific Area 1. *Eucalyptus racemosa*, Scribbly Gum, and understory of Grass Trees, *Banksia robur* and *Pimelea linifolia* & *Pultenaea myrtoides* in a peaceful picture,

