

FRUITY TALK

MACKAY BRANCH R.F.A. inc.

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NEWSLETTER.
November 2012

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Via Mackay. Qld. 4740

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Next Meeting: Sunday 2nd December 2012.

Venue: Dumbleton Rural Fire Brigade Shed, 627 Sugarshed Road, Dumbleton.

Schedule: BYO picnic lunch from 11.30am followed by General Meeting at 1pm;
Fruit Tasting; Raffle and tree auction.

There will be a **lucky door prize (RFA membership for 2013)** and **extra raffle prizes**. This is our **last meeting for 2012** so please come along and bring a **plate of goodies** to share with fellow members & friends and let's **celebrate Christmas**. There was a rumour at the October meeting that jolly old Saint Nick might be there.

Directions: Sugarshed Road starts at the roundabout on Glenella Road and ends on the Bruce Highway at Farleigh, 150 metres north of the catholic church. The shed is **6.27 km from Glenella Road and 800 metres from the highway**. Look for the rural address no 627, the branch sign and the big green shed.

Please Note

New website address for past RFCAs magazines <http://rfcarchives.org.au/>



On behalf of the Mackay Branch RFA management committee
I would like to wish all readers

**a Safe, Happy & Healthy Christmas
and a very fruitful 2013.**

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank anyone who has contributed to Fruity Talk during 2012. I really appreciate all the articles, photos and reports. **Thank You. Editor.**

The Fruit and Prepared Food Competition.

Prize winners for October 2012 Meeting: Judge, Stacey Lyons.

Most interesting rare fruit: 1 Peanut tree - Percy Abela

2 Tigazo - Jeremy Robinson

3 Black & Red Pepper - Percy Abela

Best tasting fruit: 1 White mulberry - Percy Abela

2 Star Apple - Percy Abela

3 Canistel - Paul Andrew

Best prepared food: 1 Mixed Fruit Paste & Cheese Platter - Kay Cronan

**2 Citrus Coconut Cookies- Angela Natoli
Hamilton**

3 Strawberry Cheesecake - Carol

PRIZE WINNING RECIPES

t/s = teaspoon

D/S = dessertspoon

T/S = tablespoon

cm = centimetre

S R = self raising

lt = litre

ml = millilitre

oz = ounce

kg = kilogram

g = gram

pkt = packet

Mixed Fruit Paste

A delicious way to use small amounts of tart flavoured fruit such as acerola cherry, governor's plum, loquats, pink lime and various lillypilly fruit. However fruit paste can be made with most fruit.

Put clean fruit in a saucepan and just cover with water. Boil gently for 10 minutes; add lemon juice (use half a lemon for a small pot, or a full one for a large pot and try not to include the bitter lemon pips). Using a potato masher, squash the fruit down and simmer for a further 10 minutes. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve. Return to saucepan, add half as much sugar as you have juice, plus 1 tablespoon of gelatine per 100 ml of juice, simmer until all is dissolved. Pour into wet moulds, cool and refrigerate.

You can adjust the lemon juice and sugar quantities according to taste and the sweetness of the fruit. Paste can be frozen until required.

Serve with soft cheese and biscuits and your favourite tipple.

Ricotta Cheese

A food thermometer and a fine strainer are needed.

2 litres of full cream milk Salt 100 ml of white vinegar

If using powdered milk, make it up a few hours ahead or the day before required.
Do not use UHT (ultra heat treated) milk.

Insert a medium saucepan into a larger one, fill the larger one 2/3 full with hot water, and put the milk into the medium pot. Heat the milk to 65 deg Celsius, add 2 tsp salt and gently and slowly move your spoon through the milk a couple of times to mix it in. Keep heating the milk until 85 deg Celsius, (the water in the outer pot will boil). Very slowly mix in the vinegar as you did with the salt. Take the pot off the heat and let stand for 5 minutes for the curds to form.

Using a fine strainer ladle, lift the curds into your sieve, allow to drain for approx 15 minutes. Using a knife or metal spoon, mix in more salt to taste. (Adding the salt makes the curds and whey separate better.) Store cheese in refrigerator, and pour off any excess whey as it forms. A creamier cheese can be obtained by mixing it with a stick mix.

The whey is very nutritious and can be used in baking instead of milk or buttermilk, or fed to poultry or pets. I use the whey to make our bread.

Kaye Cronan

Lime & Coconut Cookies

125g butter	1 cup coconut	2 t/s grated lime rind
1 cup sugar	2 cups S R flour	2 T/S lime juice
1 egg	pinch salt	

Method

Beat butter & sugar then add the egg. Add coconut, flour, salt, rind & juice. Spoon onto trays then bake in a moderate oven for 12 minutes.

Angela Natoli

Strawberry Cheesecake

Base

1 pkt chocolate ripple biscuits, crushed	125g butter, melted
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Method Base

Mix biscuit crumbs and butter then line the base of a large cheesecake pan with the mix. Refrigerate.

Filling

85g pkt strawberry jelly crystals	750ml evaporated milk, chilled	½ cup strawberries, pureed
2 t/s gelatine	250g pkt cream cheese	1 cup strawberries, sliced
1 cup boiling water	2/3 cup sugar	(for decoration) optional

Method Filling

Combine jelly crystals, gelatine and boiling water and mix well then refrigerate. Beat cream cheese & sugar until smooth then add pureed strawberries & jelly mixture and mix well. In a clean bowl beat evaporated milk until thick then add the jelly & cream cheese mix. Mix well then pour into biscuit base and refrigerate. When firm, top with sliced strawberries.

Carol Hamilton

Report on the previous meeting; Sunday 5th October 2012.

The October meeting was held at Vic and Alyth's property at Finch Hatton Gorge. It's always nice to revisit a property, as the last time we had a meeting here was on 3rd June 2007. Driving into this property is a mini adventure in itself as you drive on dirt roads through the rain forest and across a causeway with cold running water that felt like it just came out of the fridge (I know cause I stopped and put my feet in – soooo refreshing). Running water is almost a rarity back on the coast at this time of the year. There was a big roll up of members and visitors including Vic and Alyth's local friends from the forest, Vic's mum and dad came from England for the meeting (sounds good anyway), Bill Fox brought along his brother and there was Percy and Mary's grandson who is always a willing worker during the auction and Jeremy's wife and boys.

Photo below by Paul Andrew: Lots of happy members & visitors enjoying a break in the shade.



Last time we were here people were able to sit in the shade under 4 large trees beside the house. Thanks to cyclone Ului the trees are no more, so Vic erected tarps to make some shade.

The fruit and food tables were overflowing with goodness. Fruit – good for the time of the year and Food – good for your belly.

After the meeting and tasting was another “mammoth auction” conducted by the boss man Nick. With all the formalities done and dusted Alyth donned the PA system and led everybody on a tour of the property. There is a small orchard on one side of the house that contains citrus, custard apple, peach, mulberry, avocado trees and bananas. On the other side of the house is a larger orchard with a raised vegie garden at the start of it that was full of goodies.

This orchard contains 100 lychee trees, mangos, jackfruit, grumichama, Brazilian cherry, pecan, damson plum, native mulberry and native peanut . In the bushes beside the orchard there was a fresh water mangrove, I didn't know there was such a thing, the botanic gardens are collecting seed from it. Along the way I saw a black sapote that Alyth had purchased at an auction and I approach grafted my Bernecker (seedless) variety on to it.

Past the trees, on the bank of a creek, was a tank that Vic said is filled by syphoning water from further up the creek, how good is that. A little further on there was a set of steps going down into the creek. I just had to go down, cause if there was a fresh water mangrove I was hoping there was a fresh water mermaid. No such luck, but I did get to put my feet in the cold water again, and have a drink of water as mother nature intended it (with no chemicals in it).

Looking back down on the big orchard from this slightly elevated position was as pretty as a picture because most of the trees were well pruned, including having the tops cut off. Not only does this look good but it makes harvesting and managing the trees a whole lot easier.

Being the start of October the weather should have been a little warmer, but thanks to Vic and Alyth ordering such beautiful weather everybody enjoyed the day, especially the orchard tours. A **big thank you** guys for letting us into your piece of paradise.

Photo and report contributed by Paul Andrew.



The winning photo for the October 2012 meeting by Kevin Whitten.

A bee pollinating the flowers of a "Ruby Red" plum and Kevin said they did a good job as there was good fruit set. It certainly is a lovely photo.

RARE FRUIT AUSTRALIA WEEKEND AT MOSSMAN
PART 2
Sunday 20th May 2012

We were up early and headed off through the Daintree to Cape Tribulation to visit Alison and Digby Gotts at Cape Trib Exotic Fruit Farm.

Captain Cook named Cape Tribulation in 1770, after his ship “Endeavour” was badly damaged when it hit a nearby reef. He named the cape “Tribulation”, because according to his diary, “here began all our troubles”. He also named the mountain behind the Cape “Mt Sorrow”.

Captain Cook was so beset with his troubles, he did not see or appreciate that he was observing one of the world’s oldest living rainforests, enriched by the basalt lava flow from the nearby tablelands, and nourished by warm ocean breezes, frequent tropical rainfall and good drainage. We now know that the Daintree includes more families of primitive flowering species of plants, than anywhere else in the world. The Daintree National Park was protected by World Heritage Listing in 1988.

Since 2002 when the last section of the road from Cairns to Cape Trib was sealed, the area has become a popular destination for tourists and backpackers. Digby and Alison, have established their tropical orchard to offer these visitors a tasting of the many unusual fruits which can be grown in the area. They are able to offer their visitors at least ten different varieties of fruit per tasting.

Following a delicious morning tea, our host Digby escorted us on an orchard walk. In his casual laid back North Queensland style he gave us much information about all the trees and understorey plants. As we walked on a carpet of pinto peanut ground cover, we saw at the lower level, costus, sweet leaf bush, vanilla vine, galangal, turmeric, pepper vine and many more. At the next level were the fruit trees, including sapodilla, coffee, allspice, curry, cassava, camellia, Davidson plum, Fiji longan and dwarf sugar bananas. We were impressed with a tropical mandarin which ripens in a green skin, and the galip nut (canarium indicum) which originated in Papua New Guinea.

There were the better known tropical fruit trees such as carambola, soursops, abiu, mamey sapote, Davidson plum, breadfruit, star apple, rambutan, canistel and durian. One of the tallest trees was a Ylang Ylang, supported by a black bean, star apple and durian growing close together as they would naturally occur in the rainforest. Ylang Ylang is grown for its beautiful perfume.



Picture left: over ripe Matisia fruit and seedlings.

Right: Matisia cordata tree

Among the more unusual trees were okari nut, marang, betel nut palm, a green star apple and Matisia cordata, also known as chupa chupa.



The fruit has a taste similar to rockmelon and hails from the Andes lowlands in South America. A few of us salvaged some sprouted seeds from the over ripe matisia fruit on the ground.

Digby explained that he has several different varieties of jackfruit, all flowering around the same time to ensure successful pollination by the rainforest bats.

We returned to the house for a relaxing sausage sizzle lunch, which included bread fruit chips and other tropical fruit delights.

In the afternoon we moved on to Colin and Dawn Gray's nearby property; where Colin greeted us under one of his massive Borrasic palms. The tree originated in central Africa and has male and female trees with edible seeds.

As we walked around, Colin explained how much of his orchard suffers from feral pig damage and also how the pigs are a serious threat to the National Park as they undermine the tree root systems causing erosion and weakening the trees resistance to severe weather events.

There were abius, mamey sapote, yellow mangosteen and miracle fruit. Alan explained how eating miracle fruit first, makes the tart yellow sapote taste quite sweet.



Above: Borrasic Palm



It was interesting to view the Indonesian duku tree, as the fruit had been a feature of our lunch on the previous day at the Carle's Botanical Ark.



Duku tree (Aglaia domesticum)

Duku fruit

At Colin's severely pruned breadfruit orchard; he explained that the pruning was necessary, after considerable damage from recent cyclones. Colin and Mossman club member Les Drew gave us a demonstration on how to operate a cherry picker, before we returned to the house for afternoon tea and a tree auction.

After thanking the Mossman (now called Far North Queensland club) members for their wonderful hospitality and friendship, we departed for our homes. All agreed it was a most enjoyable weekend.

Photos and text contributed by Nick & Kaye Cronan.

I would like to **thank Paul** for the meeting report and **Nick & Kaye** for the second part of the report on their Mosman trip. **Thanks also to Kevin** for the winning photo.

I would like to apologise for the lateness of this edition of Fruity Talk. I have had a visitor for the past 3 weeks (a friend I hadn't seen for 10 years) so time just slipped away and I suddenly realised that I have to compile the newsletter. I ended up with a blank back page and after chatting to Paul about my predicament we decided to use an article from a previous newsletter. I thought the following article was still relevant so I got permission from Tony Buckeridge to use it again. It previously appeared in the September 1998 Fruity Talk.

I will **definitely need an article** for the next newsletter so please consider contributing to Fruity Talk.

HANDY HINT

How to stop banana trees from breaking in half and falling over, when heavy with fruit.

First allow 80mm of stalk to grow below the fruit, cut the flowers off at this point and break any small bananas off from the bottom of the bunch. Put a banana bag over the bunch and fix out of the way.

Apply ducting tape, three turns around the stalk to prevent chaffing on the metal ring. Attach a coolite block under the bottom hand of bananas, for protection, then put the stalk through the ring and push the post (star picket) up to take the load; place the bottom of the post in the best position to support the tree then push the point into the ground.

If you have trouble doing it this way, undo the ring bolts and bang the picket in separately, then bolt it back on with the stalk inside. Tie the banana bag at the top and let it hang open at the bottom. If you have a very windy situation, you can use two posts, usually one is sufficient.

Contributed by Tony Buckeridge

