

Cairns Garden Club Inc Newsletter



Volume 10. No 1 April 2014

Edited by Sheena Phillips and Carolyn Emslie

General Meeting — 15 February 2014 held in the Meeting Room of the Stratford Library

Our first meeting of the year was interesting and well attended. It was nice to see some old friends returning as well as welcoming some new faces.

The program for the year was distributed and also a current list of the books in our Reference Library which has been updated by the committee during the Christmas break. Averil Cadogan has offered to take over the Librarian position vacated by Lyn due to her other commitments – thank you Averil!

To order a library book phone 4059 0600.

Our guests Carmelina and Al Dredge presented a very attractive display of their Stack-a Pots. These versatile pots are self watering and can be used in many ways to create an interesting display of plants, particularly for a small garden or balcony. There are also fittings available to create a very effective vertical garden, as well as potting medium and plant nutrients.



Some of the competition entries

The competition this month was a potted plant and the number and quality of the entries was quite outstanding. Cherie McKay was the winner with Gloria Melvin second, congratulations to all members who entered plants.



More of the awesome entries in the monthly competition at the February meeting



“Flying Ants!” by courtesy of David Warmington

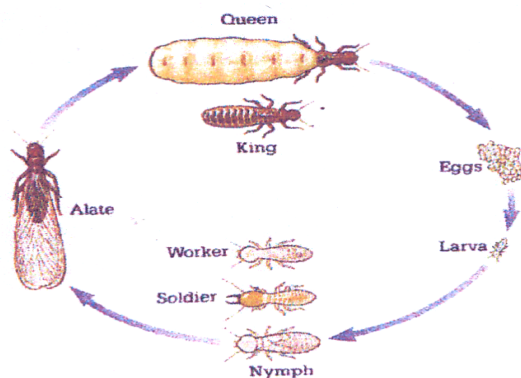
With rain falling, the “flying ants” have appeared and this has brought the usual enquiries. Some of these flying critters are termites on the move, and the following article was originally printed in the Australian Geographic - Issue 13, Jan-Mar 1989

The Flight of the Colonisers

The colonising flight of alates, the only termite caste with wings, is one of the world’s most spectacular events. In tropical areas it usually happens in the wet season, but in temperate zones it can begin around dusk on a warm humid spring day (and occasionally again in autumn). Scientists don’t know what exactly triggers the flight, but when the time is right, workers make holes in the mound and hundreds of alates crawl out and spread their wings, joining countless others from neighbouring mounds. As aeronauts, these colonists lack strength, so unless the wind carries them further, they land within a kilometre of the mound. On the ground they shed their wings and the females secrete a hormone that attracts a mate.

The alates sole duty in a colony is to leave it and start a new one. Since they must survive in the outside world, they are quite different from other castes, having functional eyes, wings and hard, brown skin. They appear in the colony only after it is well established and can afford the luxury of colonisation.

Sexually inactive while in the home colony, alates become sexually active after starting their colonising flight. Exactly when this happens depends on the species. Out in the open they must run the gauntlet of birds, lizards, spiders, ants, dragonflies and virtually every other insect-eater. Possibly only about one in a million survives to start a new colony.



Once a male and a female pair up they are a potential queen and king and immediately search for a place to establish their kingdom. A crevice in the ground is sufficient. There they excavate a chamber, make and lay the first eggs.

After a few weeks the eggs hatch into larvae, all of which develop into workers. Soldiers soon follow but it usually takes several years for a new colony to build a recognisable mound. Only then is the colony mature enough to produce alates.

A Garden Glimpse

from Carolyn



On a recent ramble through Eva and Frank Bastowski's beautiful garden we came across the Panama Orchid, a sweet-smelling native of Panama, and also it's national flower. We also saw a lovely mauve hibiscus, a white bat plant and some beautiful caladiums. Sexy Yellow Lady was also flowering, creating a striking display against the background bromeliads. The garden was also full of flowering cordylines, bromeliads, orchids and numerous other plants, creating a vibrant and colorful showpiece.



Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.

Carolyn's Panama Canal Trip



In October 2013, my husband Barry and I flew to San Diego to start a 3 week cruise down the coast of Mexico, through the Panama Canal, across to Cartagena in Columbia and up through the Caribbean to Fort Lauderdale.

San Diego is a beautiful city, an ideal place to spend two days before boarding the cruise ship "Westerdam " for our trip. Balboa Park in the centre of the city has an amazing number of museums, a craft village, numerous shops and the world famous San Diego Zoo. There was also a small cactus and succulent garden, where I saw this tree with the large pink flowers. The cactus I saw was in the zoo, in full flower in the sun, unlike ours which flower at night. The Angels Trumpet was in another section of the park, and looked spectacular as it was so large and full of flower.



After leaving San Diego we sailed down the coast of Mexico, stopping at a few different towns and buying the usual bits and pieces that you do, then on to the Panama, which my husband was eagerly anticipating.



The water in the Pacific Ocean is a lot higher than the Atlantic Ocean so we went up 2 locks (Miraflores Locks) to Miraflores Lake, then up Pedro Miguel Lock to Gatun Lake, which is 26m above sea level. We sailed across the lake and went down the Gatun Locks into the Caribbean and then on to Cartagena. The whole crossing took 9 hours, with each lock taking about half an hour. Each time the ship went through a lock it had to be centralized in the lock by mules (small locomotives attached to the ship with steel cables). The mules had bells which signaled their movements to the operators, so there was constant clanging throughout the transit of the locks.

Continued>

Carolyn's Panama Trip continued

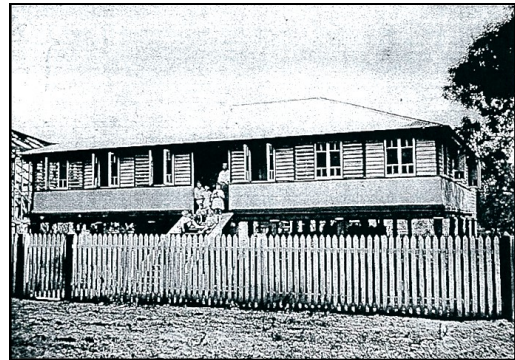
Cartagena is a beautiful city but very hot and humid, much like here. When we left the ship we walked through a small zoo which had rainforest vegetation and was full of monkeys, macaws, iguanas and flamingoes. A lot of the plants were similar to ones we have here.



We spent a week cruising the Caribbean, our favourite islands being Puerto Rico and Half Moon Cay. After disembarking the ship we had two days in Fort Lauderdale before flying to Dallas for two days, then home to Brisbane and Cairns.

General Meeting Saturday 15 March at the Stratford Library Meeting Room

At this meeting our historian Rosalie Shephard gave a presentation on "The Evolution of the Cairns Domestic Garden". This interesting timeline took us from the 1880's when gardens consisted of an ornamental front garden with the fruit trees, vegetables and chook pen out the back to the less formal, landscaped gardens of the 2000's. Cairns was originally a working class town and this was reflected in peoples' gardens which were designed for productivity.



Typical early Cairns homes and gardens

Gradually these gardens changed as the city became more prosperous and the people grew plants more suited to the tropics. The 1980's saw the revival of native gardens and an emphasis on conservation and mulching. Houses changed to more open plan living and gardens became less formal.



PATRON: Kim Morris
 PRESIDENT: Travis Teske
 4056 1761
 VICE PRESIDENT:
 Fran Lindsay
 SECRETARY (Minutes):
 Carolyn Emslie
 4056 6501
 SECRETARY (Correspondence):
 Fran Lindsay
 0407 695 891
 TREASURER: Susan Bennetts
 4033 7885
 COMMITTEE:
 Gloria Melvin
 4051 6774
 Sheena Phillips
 4039 2447
 Joy Laird
 4056 2358
 Lennette Townson
 4056 1562
 LIBRARIAN:
 Averil Cadogan
 4059 0600
 PUBLICITY
 Vacant
 CATERING CO-ORDINATOR
 June Donnelly 4055 5088

Mail: PO Box 503
 Cairns Qld 4870
 Internet:
www.cairnsgardenclub.org.au
 Email: Fran Lindsay
frantastic10@bigpond.com

Continued >

Right: A typical garden of the 1970's, blocks are now following the contours of the land and front fences have disappeared.



Outdoor living became popular and new tropical plants which emphasized form, shape, colour and texture were important. Resort style gardens with backyard pools became popular and gardens changed from being productive, to having aesthetic appeal and being for pleasure and leisure.



A modern Cairns backyard

Once again the competition was keenly contested. There were a number of good quality entries and it was decided to give two awards — one for flowering cut shrubs or vines and a separate award for foliage cuts .

The flowering section was won by Eva Bastowski with Gloria Melvin second, and Sue Mills took out the award for foliage with Cherie McKay second.



Competition entries at the March meeting

