

# Beware the Stinging Tree

A common and dangerous plant in the Kuranda area is the Stinging Tree (*Dendrocnide moroides*) which is found in clearings or on the edges of rainforest. Its giant, somewhat heart-shaped leaves usually grow horizontally and can be difficult to see edge on. Leaves and stems are covered with fine stinging hairs which can inflict pain for many months. While it is sometimes found as a small tree, more usually stings are caused by small plants, which are less likely to be noticed. Even a dead leaf can cause a sting, and while the raspberry-like fruit are edible, they too can carry the odd stinging hair and are best left alone.

The sting is intensely painful and often the lymph nodes will swell almost immediately. Intense pain can last a few days. One treatment for the pain is to remove the stinging hairs by applying artificial skin or a similar film, then tearing it off. Painkillers are not usually effective and folk remedies such as the sap of Cunjevoi plants that often grow in the same area are practically useless.

It is wise to learn to identify stinging trees if you are going to spend time in the rainforest. They are common on tracks in some areas. They can be confused with other trees and shrubs with heart-shaped leaves, such as the Bleeding Heart (*Omalanthus nova-guinsis*) which has shiny leaves, some of which turn bright orange or scarlet red, and the introduced raspberry, a scrambling weed with somewhat similar leaves but a very different growth habit, that also infests rainforest margins.



**STINGING TREE**

Photographs by Helen



**BLEEDING HEART**



**INTRODUCED RASPBERRY**



**kuranda.**  
**envirocare inc.**

*Caring for Kuranda's Environment*

*"by standing on the shoulders of those who've gone before"*

Nursery: 284 Myola Road, Mon & Thu 9am-1pm, Sat 1-4pm, ph: 4093 8989 / 4093 9926

## UNSEASONAL SPRING RAIN

With falls of up to 100mm our revegetation volunteers are jumping for joy as this means our latest plantings will have a good start to sustain them through the dry months. Plantings on the Queens Creek site have been on some very steep slopes which do not retain moisture, so it's been a godsend!

## NEW NURSERY SITE

With our new site situated on Myola Road the exposure has placed us in the "Public Domain"! We are experiencing increased plant sales from people who just "happened to be passing by". Our volunteers are available to give advice on appropriate species selection relevant to your situation. Residents in the Green Corridor (contact Margaret if you are unsure) can receive trees for FREE!! **IF YOU ARE PASSING BY CALL IN AND SAY HI, OUR VOLUNTEERS WILL PROUDLY SHOW YOU OUR OPERATION.** Our nursery opening times are as follows:-

Monday 9am – 1pm

Thursday 9am – 1pm

Other times by appointment Phone Mike 4093 9728 or Margaret 4093 8393

## SEED COLLECTING

"Should you go down in the woods today". A couple of our volunteers set off to collect seeds from a particular species which they felt sure would be fruiting. Unfortunately the tree had dropped its not so abundant fruit into a very cold rainforest stream approximately 3 metres deep! Not to be thwarted, clothes were shed down to the essentials and a very tedious retrieval of the fruit commenced.

Each treasured seed was being thrown to the side-kick on the creek bank who was taking photos and bagging the bounty, when a haunting call was heard from upstream - "Did you hear that! It's a Cassowary isn't it?" Another call confirmed they were not alone! So it was with nervous excitement our intrepid seed collectors watched and 5 minutes later an adult Cassowary and juvenile cautiously made their way to them. The situation was somewhat difficult – one seed collector immersed up to shoulders in creek – side-kick on bank STILL

taking photos and only a metre away a very inquisitive young cassowary nosing through discarded clothes while being guarded by protective father – the seed collectors had no easy way for an escape should the situation turn nasty. So a still life tableau was conducted for another 5 minutes until junior satisfied his curiosity and ambled away to forage further downstream.

Just maybe then, if you go into the woods seed collecting you maybe in for a wonderful surprise!! Our nursery volunteers rely on seeds from many sources. If you have a tree which is fruiting and you are unsure of its species and possible value to us, give us a call and we can either come and identify it or you can bring a specimen with seeds and leaves intact into the nursery for identification.



*Father and child*

## DANGER IN THE OPERA HOUSE CAMPAIGN

Wildlife Queensland is currently running a campaign to ban opera house traps and other enclosed yabby traps in public waters of Queensland due to the impact they have on wildlife such as platypus and water birds (see [www.wildlife.org.au/news/2010/platypustraps.html](http://www.wildlife.org.au/news/2010/platypustraps.html)). While legal in Queensland, these traps have been banned in all public waters of Tasmania, Victoria the ACT and east of the Newell Highway in NSW. Wildlife Queensland is requesting assistance from environmental organisations to petition Government on this issue. Further details can be obtained from the above web site.

**SATURDAY MORNING REVEGETATION PLANTING WE ARE ON THE LAST LEG OF THE QUEENS CREEK SITE**  
**8am – 9.30am**  
**Followed by morning tea**  
**Ring 4093 8989 for directions.**

MONTHLY MEETING Wednesday 6th October Time 7.00pm

Sports & Recreation Centre Fallon Road Kuranda

An informal business and social evening to talk about our progress and future plans.

Followed by supper.

ALL WELCOME

*Offset your carbon footprint through our local Grow Project*

[www.envirocare.org.au](http://www.envirocare.org.au)

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