

November 26, 2015

Gardens' curator discovers new plant species



Tondoon Gardens' Curator Brent Braddick (centre) with Herbarium volunteers Doug Tighe, Margaret Worthington, Peter Marsh and Clive Rouse at the discovery site.

The discovery of a new plant species in the Agnes Water area could help to enhance the Gladstone Tondoon Botanic Gardens' scientific reputation.

Gardens' Curator Brent Braddick first saw the *Mischocarpus* species three years ago, but the official plant count was only completed in early November.

Brent and some Tondoon Herbarium volunteers counted more than 100 plants of the species, which could become threatened.

After its initial discovery, a pressed specimen was sent to the Queensland Herbarium in Brisbane for identification.

It was misidentified originally, but after visiting the site, the retired Queensland Herbarium botanist

Dr Bill McDonald couldn't believe what he'd seen.

"He came out of the bush shaking his head," Brent Braddick said.

"He couldn't believe the species hadn't been seen before."

The shrub, a member of the Sapindaceae family, grows up to four metres tall and has an enormous leaf.

The plants will now be monitored until they flower and produce seed.

Gladstone Region Mayor Gail Sellers praised the work of the Gardens' team, saying it was an exciting discovery worthy of recognition.

Parks and Conservation Senior Co-ordinator Barry Meiring hopes the discovery will lead to an academic research paper and appropriate recognition for Brent Braddick and the Botanic Gardens.

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