

### ***Hard Quandong (Elaeocarpus obovatus)***

The Hard Quandong, the beautiful large tree in the garden below the end of the Mangrove Room, has been in full blossom for the last couple of weeks. It belongs to the same genus as the Blueberry Ash (*E. reticulatus*) and the Blue Quandong (*E. grandis*), and has that tiny but magnificent “ballerina” type of flower with a strong scent.

The insects have been attracted to the tree and the blossoms have been covered with the little native Sugarbag Bees, feral bees, several types of wasps, tiny beetles, hover flies, butterflies, and various other species all gaining sustenance from the nectar and pollen. Naturally, although the flowers are too tiny to be of value as a nectar source for the birds, they are attracted by the smorgasbord of insects, and Ailsa was entertained on the cruise day whilst awaiting customers for the Mangrove Room.

The Hard Quandong is endemic from North Queensland to the central coast of NSW. In the north, it grows only as a shrub, but here and further south, it grows into quite a large tree. It has grown naturally on site and probably originated from a seed deposited by a bird. There are no other specimens nearby to my knowledge, so is unlikely to be a wind-borne dispersal.

