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## The botany of Jaagi Island, Santa Isabel

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This brief account of the island is a record for future comparison. I visited it for a short time with Morton in 1964 and I spent the whole day, 30 September, there in 1965. The island is in a sense 'tambu', or forbidden, and bears no sign of recent human intervention, unless for the digging of megapode eggs. It is, therefore, a natural reserve which, it is to be hoped, will be maintained. The south side, however, is being eroded though there is some building of a sandy beach at the west end.

Jaagi is situated about 2 miles from the south entrance to Tatamba Bay. It is an elliptical sand-bank, roughly  $700 \times 250$  yards ( $640 \times 230$  m) with the long axis east and west. It is raised about 1 m above high tide and is surrounded by a fringing reef broadest towards the eastern, seaward end; to judge from the aerial photograph, this reef measures, over-all,  $1 \text{ mi} \times \frac{1}{2} \text{ mi}$ . The island is covered almost entirely by high forest, many trees reaching 30 m or more. At the east end there is an eroding sand-spit with dead fallen trunks, mainly *Casuarina*, behind which a small area has been planted with coconuts. The west end has a higher and growing sand-bank without, at the time of my visit, *Casuarina* seedlings. The south side is undercut and its trees, living and dead, are falling into the sea. The north side consists of typical strand-forest of *Barringtonia*, *Calophyllum*, *Hernandia*, *Terminalia* and so on, with a narrow beach in front. In 1964 we found a 5 ft. shark stranded on this steep beach, very recently dead. The interior of the island is flat sandy soil, moist, and with a thin layer of humus, but with many fallen trunks and branches, many seedlings and saplings, and in places dense undergrowth. There are also a large number of mounds and hollows excavated by the megapodes near the edge of the forest, mainly at the north-east. There is no growing spit with young plants of *Casuarina equisetifolia*, but there are small trees of it among the coconuts at the east end, and there are many large, old trees in the forest, as well as dead fallen trunks and stumps. The early *Casuarina* phase seems to be over. It can be seen on Nalignago Island, 4 miles east of Jaagi where, in 1964, young *Casuarina* was in great abundance, some saplings up to 5 m high, with seedlings of the *Barringtonia-Terminalia* association sprouting beneath. Nalignago was used for target practice, I am told, during the war by American bombers.

At the west end there is a thicket of *Cordia subcordata* in front of the tall forest. It is difficult to see how this has happened unless a freak wave threw up its very buoyant fruits as the new sandbank had been started. The general impression is that the forest on the island is becoming stabilized, that the initial *Casuarina* forest has been replaced by the *Barringtonia-Terminalia* forest, and that this in turn is being replaced by inland trees, climbers, and herbs brought by wind, birds, and bats from the mainland. The white cockatoo is very abundant.

*List of plants on Jaagi, 1965*

- Allophyllus cobbe* L., abundant.  
 Apocynaceous climber, scattered (not collected, sterile).  
 Araliaceae, pinnate leaf, sterile, frequent in the forest.  
*Archidendron* sp., sterile, locally common, many saplings; small leaflets.  
*Asplenium nidus* L., common, epiphytic and on the ground.  
*Barringtonia asiatica* (L.) Kurz, common on the shore, especially along the south coast where many are falling into the sea.  
*Boerlagiodendron* sp., frequent in the forest.  
*Brassaia* sp.?, one plant with four stems in the forest.  
*Calophyllum inophyllum* L., common, with the usual coastal epiphytes (*Ophioglossum* and other ferns, *Dendrobium*, *Sarcanthus*, *Grammatophyllum*, *Dischidia*).  
*Canavalia* sp., scattered coastal climber.  
*Caryota rumphiana* Bl., few, 4 to 5 m high in the forest, as the only palm except for the coconuts.  
*Casuarina equisetifolia* Forst., big trees all over the island and some young ones among the coconuts at the east end.  
*Celtis* sp., a few large trees.  
*Cerbera manghas* L., mainly on the north shore.  
*Colubrina asiatica* (L.) Brongn., frequent on the coast.  
*Cordia subcordata* Lamk., peripheral, common at the west end and on the north shore.  
*Cycas rumphii* Miq., few.  
*Dendrocnide* sp., frequent, up to 13 m high.  
*Diospyros* spp., two kinds (large and small leaf), up to 20 m, common.  
*Dracaena* sp., common, sterile, in the forest.  
*Dysoxylum* sp., common in the forest, up to 20 m, with many saplings.  
*Elaeocarpus* sp., a frequent tree with broad-toothed leaf.  
*Eugenia* sp., cauliflorous, frequent.  
*Eugenia* spp., two to three other kinds, one as a frequent tree up to 30 m.  
*Ficus austrina* Corner, common.  
*F. drupacea* Thunb., frequent.  
*F. glandifera* Summerh., frequent.  
*F. obliqua* Forst., few.  
*F. polyantha* Warb., one tree 23 m, towards the east end.  
*F. subulata* Bl., common.  
*F. virens* Ait., few, coastal.  
*Flagellaria indica* L., common.  
*Gnetum* sp., common large climber.  
*Guettarda speciosa* L., very common all over the island, up to 13 m.  
*Guioa* sp. (RSS 2822). scattered small tree.  
*Hernandia peltata* Meissn., common, trees up to 20 m or more in the forest.  
*Horsfieldia* sp., common in the forest.  
*Hoya* spp., a few kinds, not common.

*Inocarpus fagiferus* (Park.) Fosb., frequent.

*Intsia bijuga* (Colebr.) O.K., frequent large tree up to 30 m.

*Ipomaea* sp., scattered climber, white flower.

*Messerschmidia argentea* (L.) Johnst., scarce.

*Micromelum minutum* (Forst. f.) W. et A. few, small trees.

*Morinda citrifolia* L., scattered on the shore.

*Ochrosia* sp., common.

*Pandanus dubius* Spr. the common coastal kind with big green compound nuts, up to 13 m, common.

*Pandanus* sp., 'nyehe', scattered.

*Pandanus capitellatus* Merr. et Perry, 'poporro', frequent; the narrow-leafed, tufted, coastal species.

*Phaseolus* sp. ?. frequent climber.

*Piper* spp., two common kinds of climber in the forest.

*Planchonella* spp., two kinds (large and small leaf), common, up to 30 m, with many seedlings.

*Pongamia pinnata* (L.) Pierre, common, up to 25 m.

*Pometia pinnata* Forst., common, up to 33 m, many seedlings.

*Premna corymbosa* (Burm. f.) R. v. W., common small tree.

Rubiaceae, scattered small tree with red fruit.

Sapindaceae, tree up to 15 m, doubly pinnate leaf, many saplings and seedlings.

*Scaevola sericea* (Mill.) Krause, common sea-shore bush.

*Smilax* sp., common climber (thorny stem, leaf oblong, 3-veined).

*Sterculia* sp., frequent tree up to 20 m, large leaf.

*Tacca leontopetaloides* (L.) O.K., common on east and south shores.

*Terminalia catappa* L., few.

*Thespesia populnea* (L.) Sol., common (no *Hibiscus tiliaceus*).

Zingiberaceae, the common 'torch ginger'.

Unidentified, RSS.2827.