



Top End

Native Plant Society

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## August 2015 Newsletter

### General Meeting Times

The next TENPS meeting will be held on *Thursday August 20<sup>th</sup> 2015*. Meetings are usually held at 7:30 pm on the third Thursday of each month at Marrara Christian College, on the corner of Amy Johnson Avenue and McMillans Road. The meeting is followed by a chance to meet with other members and access the TENPS reference Library over a cuppa. Bring your plants along to swap, sell or have identified. The guest speaker presentation commences around 8pm. All are welcome.

Field trips are usually on the weekend following the Meeting however this month TENPS is hosting and Top End Native Garden Opening event on July 19<sup>th</sup>. For details see the flyer in this newsletter.

### What's in Flower?



Corymbia ptychocarpa at Marrara Christian College photographed by Russell Dempster.

*Natives mean more!*

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

## Upcoming TENPS Speakers

### **August 20<sup>th</sup>: The flow of carbon in Top End savanna presented by Mitchel Rudge.**

Mitch recently completed an honours project CDU which sought to improve our understanding of the tropical savanna carbon cycle. Previous work had shown that high rainfall savanna acts as a sink for atmospheric carbon, which was thought to be stored mainly as biomass in trees. However, new research has shown that the movement of carbon from soil into groundwater can be important in tropical systems, and this pathway had not been directly measured in Australian savanna. The accumulation of carbon as tree biomass and the movement of carbon into groundwater were both measured in the Howard River catchment using vegetation surveys, groundwater sampling and isotopic analysis. The canopy trees *Eucalyptus miniata* and *E. tetradonta* were responsible for the majority of biomass increase, and isotope analysis suggests these trees were also the main source of groundwater carbon. Interestingly, the amount of carbon lost to groundwater was similar to that stored in trees, which shows an important link between the water and carbon cycles in Australia's high rainfall savannas.

*Mitch was awarded the 2015 TENPS scholarship.*

**September 17<sup>th</sup>:** Mike Clark - Plants of the Pilbara (TBC)

**October 15<sup>th</sup>:** TBA

**November 19<sup>th</sup>:** AGM followed by speaker Ian Morris - topic TBA

## Memberships were due July 1<sup>st</sup>.

If you recently renewed your membership, we thank you for your ongoing support. If you have yet to renew for the 2015/2016 financial year, a reminder that your membership is now overdue. If you do not wish to renew, we would love to know why you are leaving TENPS.

Email [topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com)

If you have joined our society in the past few months, welcome!

Members receive our informative newsletters and notices about upcoming events, information about field trips, details of other clubs activities, access our library (at meetings) and receive discounts on native plant purchases.

## TENPS Field Trip

**August 21<sup>st</sup>:** Join us for a special field trip this month. TENPS members have been invited to tour the gardens of Government House, 4pm until 7pm on Friday 21 as a special event to thanks friends and suppliers of the gardens.

*Refreshments will be provided on the Terrace and the Scouts will have a sausage sizzle. Please note that the House will not be open.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Mr Dave Liddle  
President  
Top End Native Plant Society  
PO Box 135  
PALMERSTON NT 0831

Dear Mr Liddle

Each year, the Administrator of the Northern Territory hosts open days at Government House for members of the public.

This year, we are hosting a special event for our horticultural partners, suppliers, contractors and friends who have supported and worked with us in maintaining the 1.3 hectares of tropical gardens that surround Government House and the offices of the Administrator.

This will take place on **Friday 21 August from 4pm - 7pm.**

We invite you, your colleagues, family and friends, to come along and tour the gardens. You can chat with our team of horticulturists, and enjoy what will no doubt be a beautiful Dry Season evening.

Refreshments will be provided on the Terrace, including a sausage sizzle from Scouts Australia Northern Territory Branch.

If you have any queries, please contact the office on 8999 7103. Please note that the house will not be open for this event.

We look forward to welcoming you to this exclusive event that showcases the gardens of Government House.

Yours sincerely

Dermot Wait  
Senior Horticulturist

23 July 2015



### NT Field Naturalist Club Events

Meetings are held at 7.45pm on the second Wednesday of each month except January in the Function Room, Level 3, Red Precinct 1 at Charles Darwin University Casuarina Campus.

**September 9<sup>th</sup>:** AGM plus speaker Peter Novak on Cherabin in the Daly River.

**October 14<sup>th</sup>:** John Zammit on Fig Wasps.

**Field Trips** are a great way to explore the best of Darwin area's nature spots in the company of like-minded people. These are usually held on the Sunday following the monthly meeting and often related to the topic of this meeting. Additional outings are held from time to time, and everyone is welcome.

**August 16<sup>th</sup> 12.30pm:** **The Art behind the Scientific Name.** Enjoy lunch at Cornucopia Café followed by a talk on biological classification and a floor talk on CopyCat the underwater mimicry exhibition with Richard Willan.

**September 13<sup>th</sup>:** Ludmilla Bay with Amanda Lilleyman.

### July meeting report – The City of Darwin Planting Program, Jamie Lewis.

**Jamie Lewis** kindly shared with TENPS the role of native plants in the City of Darwin planting program. Here is a transcript of his presentation which was in the form of a question and answer session:

#### *Which plants 'work' and which ones don't from the Council's perspective?*

For a plant to work in urban areas in Darwin it needs to fulfil a number of criteria. Firstly it needs to survive. Trees on verges commonly grow with little or no dry season water, have a restricted environment for roots to grow in, are subject to vandalism and damage from traffic and infrastructure maintenance. So trees with low water requirements that grow quite fast are favoured. Fast growing trees are essential as

slower growing trees tend to sustain damage from vandals before they reach maturity and are slower to recover if they are damaged.

Plants also need to contribute positively to the landscape. Trees that provide shade are a major asset in Darwin. This limits the appeal of some species due to the fact they either provide little shade or take a very long time to produce a shaded area. We also choose our planting to give each street a distinctive look and feel. We are favouring planting out streets with the same species now instead of random plantings. This tends to give streets a more formal look.

We have found that nearly all trees will work as long as they are chosen carefully to suit the environment they are used in and receive appropriate maintenance.

#### *What have you learned from past plantings?*

Probably the major lessons we have learnt have been around choosing appropriate trees for specific locations, the importance of selecting good nursery stock and the importance of providing the tree with improved care over the first two or three years. Most of our newly planted street trees are watered 3 times a week for the first two years and then once a year over the third year with liquid fertiliser applications at 6 month intervals and annual mulching. This has improved our success rate to around 95%. We investigated the causes of tree failure over a twelve month period and found that the major causes of tree death in our parks and streets was termite damage, root damage and poor planting stock/practices.

#### *How do you decide which plants to use?*

We always attempt to pick the right tree for a specific location based on site characteristics. First and foremost we take the environment the plant is being planted into account. In urban areas the area available for plant root systems is often restricted and can therefore influence our species selection. Some trees have been shown to be very damaging to nearby infrastructure so we

tend to avoid those when planting in proximity to underground services. We also consider the amenity value required at different sites. In most sites the provision of shade is the top priority so large spreading shade trees are favoured. Other sites are planted for mostly aesthetic reasons so flowering trees and trees with appealing foliage may be chosen. Conflict with infrastructure such as PAWA services, footpaths and roadways is also taken into account and has a strong influence over the size of the species we plant.

We do not specifically favour native plants yet the majority of our tree plantings are natives. This is due to their suitability to local conditions and in many cases superior performance over introduced species.

#### ***Do you have trial plots?***

Yes. We have some older trial plots located at Lake Alexander and Winnellie. The Winnellie plot was set up to assess plants for suitability for use under power lines. The most successful species from that trial were *Asteromyrtus arnhemica* and *symphocarpa*. We will be utilising these species more often as a result of that trial.

We commonly trial new plants “in situ” by using small amounts of different species in our tree planting programs. We have had a few failures. *Diospyros compacta*, *Horsefeldia australiana* and *Aidia recemosa* all under performed. We found the *Aidia* and *Diospyros* did not establish well in full sun and the *Horsefeldia* had too high a water requirement. We are currently trialling a number of species including *Celtis phillipensis* and *Xanthostemon paradoxus* and we would like to start trialling some of the local *Eucalyptus*, *Denhamia* and *Lophostemon*. We would be happy to take recommendations for trial species from TENPS.

#### ***Do you ask Councils in other parts of the country?***

Yes. We often consult with staff from Cairns and we have sought horticultural advice from Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne. Darwin is however

rather unique in terms of climate and advice from other parts of the country is sometimes not suited to Darwin.

#### ***How do you engineer urban sites to keep trees healthy as they mature or do you plant and hope for the best?***

Often we focus on getting the tree planted “right” and hope for the best. By “right” we mean a correctly proportioned planting hole and proper after planting care such as mulching, watering and fertilising. We have also found that the quality of planting stock, particularly of the root systems has a profound impact on the success or failure of our planting. We are now fussier with the quality of nursery stock we will accept than we have been in the past and we also grow quite a few of our own trees in special ‘Rocket Pots’ to assist with the development of good root structure.

In areas such as the CBD where root space can be severely restricted we use underground plant cells to provide additional area for root systems. These cells are load bearing and can be filled with growing media and then roads and pathways are constructed over the top. We also build bigger tree pits now than we ever have before to allow for better root growth. We also drill holes in our gutters connected to agricultural drains in the tree pits to direct storm water to the trees root systems. This allows trees planted in concrete to collect a greater volume of water from wet season rains than would otherwise be available.

We also provide trees in high traffic areas with tree cages. These are primarily to protect the trees from vandalism and have proven very successful. These can be seen throughout the CBD and in many suburban shopping centres.

#### ***Does Darwin's wet and windy Xmas weather influence the plants you choose to use in parks and streets?***

Yes to a small extent. We have found shallow rooted species such as *Grevillea pteridifolia* and

some of the Acacias such as *A. latescens* are very prone to blowing over in wet weather. Most species, when planted and maintained correctly are capable of standing up well to most wet season weather. However the past few cyclones and severe weather event have shown us that African Mahogany, *Acacia auriculiformis* and *Peltophorum pterocarpum* are particularly prone to failure.

*Frangipanis say 'tropical', Jacarandas say 'Grafton', Bougainvillea's used to say Darwin. Are there new signature plants that you have identified as really saying 'Darwin'?*

Not really. We are more focussed on providing a diverse urban forest than cultivating a distinctive look for the city. That being said *Allosyncarpia ternata* is being planted widely due to its excellent shade, hardiness and aesthetics so we may well inadvertently end up with a signature species. *Mimusops elengi* is another tree that has been widely planted.

*If you have selected signature species are they local, native or introduced?*

As above. *Allosyncarpia* is native but the *Mimusops* commonly used in cultivation is most likely not.

*Article supplied by Jamie Lewis.*



*Syzygium suborbiculare*, new growth photographed by Russell Dempster in Litchfield in June 2015.



## GREENING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

### A LITTLE NOTE OF THANKS

At Lesley Alford's open native garden on July 19, TENPS very kindly allowed Ingrid on behalf of Calma Gardens Community Project to set up a little table selling home-made preserves as part of on-going fund-raising activities for the Project.

Various preserves were offered including lime pickles, pink grapefruit marmalade and preserved lemons, all sold well with people enjoying the "try before you buy" tastings.



Ingrid & brother John at the Calma stall photographed by Jacinda Brown.

It was lots of fun and raised approximately \$57.00. We at Calma Gardens appreciate the opportunity to find new markets at these types of events (having saturated TENPS members with preserves from time to time) and accordingly, just want to send this little note of thanks to the committee and members of TENPS.

Thanks again  
Ingrid

### Thanks Sylvia

A big thank you to Sylvia Hurse who recently resigned from the TENPS committee due to other commitments. Your contribution was appreciated.



## “Riyala” Open Day



**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**2pm – 5 pm**

The Board of “Riyala” warmly invite you to share in God’s faithfulness to Riyala over the last 30(+) years. The ablution blocks have been completely refurbished, largely through a crowd funding campaign and we have plans to aircondition some of the accommodation units as well as upgrade the kitchen and dining area.

- Guided walks through the rainforest (led by Ian Morris)
- Afternoon Tea
- A short presentation on the future plans for Riyala 2:30 pm
- Top End Native Plants for Sale
- A small collection of Ian’s photo prints for sale

**Lamentations 3:22-23** The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

## NT Field Naturalists Club Inc. Nature Territory Photographic Competition

The Northern Territory Field Naturalists’ Club is looking for the best photographs of our Northern Territory’s natural world.

There are five categories and while the prizes may be small the bragging rights for 12 months will be huge.

All photographs submitted will be placed on display at the Northern Territory Library at Parliament House in Darwin from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2015.

Judging will be carried out by two local professional photographers and a dedicated amateur photographer.

### HOW TO ENTER

Send as many photographs as you like for each of the categories; there is NO entry fee. See the entry form on the back for details.

### CATEGORIES

Landscape    Flora    Fauna    Best Junior  
Human Impact on Nature

### PRIZES

Each category carries prizes of:  
First: \$50, Second: \$25, Third: \$10

All entries by anyone under 17 years old will receive a certificate of participation. The judges will also award a special prize of \$100 for the Best Overall photograph that shows the NT in the best possible light; and for the Best Photograph by a junior.

## Land for sale 160 acres, Darwin River area

Owners of past 17 years reluctantly offer their 160 acre property for sale, seeking new owner/s willing to continue with existing TNRM Conservation Agreement.

Features include:

- \* 160 acres of mixed wet & dry (some flooding)
- \* dry acreage suitable for house site,
- \* firebreaks maintained annually, some fencing
- \* abundance of birds & wildlife
- \* large permanent lagoon & seasonal swamp with wet season creek
- \* diverse plant communities including locally significant sandsheet heath vegetation

Potential house sites include views over picturesque swamp with magnetic termite mounds and abundant wildlife. Gravel road adjoins eastern boundary, power nearby.

Value estimates in range of \$450,000; right owner is important, offers welcome.

For further information, please contact Abbie Spiers at [ramblers.song@gmail.com](mailto:ramblers.song@gmail.com)

## TENGO 2015 Report

The 2015 Top End Native Garden Openings program though limited to 2 events was very successful.

The inaugural TENGO event was hosted by Colliwobble Farm on Burdens Creek Road at Virginia on 19 June 2015. This event included craft stalls and the ever-popular Wildcare refreshments stall with lots of shady tables and chairs, plus pony rides and face painting for the kids.

The garden was visited by 497 paying adults with total attendance estimated at around 650 as there were lots of kids throughout the day.

After handing over 35% of gate takings to the owners (most of which was subsequently donated to Wildcare), TENPS made \$1617.00 and



\$271.00 from the plant stall (25% of plant sales) which, along with all the great conversations, could only be classified as an outstanding success!



*Colliwobble TENGO entry*



*TENPS plant stall at Colliwobble*



*Great conversations about native plants...  
Photographs by Dave Liddle.*

The second TENGO event was on 21 July at 11 Cheong Crescent Millner where Lesley and Michael have a completely native garden. Highlights on the day including the scrub fowl mound, the plant cemetery, the Rapid Creek

Landcare Group Café that did a roaring trade in 'real coffee' and of course the Calma Gardens preserves stall.

This unique garden inspired a great deal of discussion on using native plants in suburban gardens and was visited by 201 paying adults with \$652.00 profit for TENPS from the gate. The percentage of people taking home native plants from the plant stall was greater than at Colliwobble Farm with \$254.00 raised by the plant stall (25% of sales).

Total funds raised by TENPS from 2015 program totalled \$2794.00, an excellent result so watch this space for details of the 2016 TENGO program!



*TENGO entrance at 11 Cheong Crescent*



*Native plant conversation...*



*...and coffee at the plant stall  
Photographs by Jacinda Brown.*





Vigorous *Alphitonia excelsa* growth after fire, photographed by Russell Dempster in Litchfield in June 2015.

## ANPSA

CANBERRA 2015

15 - 20 NOVEMBER

Bush Capital

Garden City



**Australian Native Plants Society  
(Australia)**

**Biennial Conference 2015**

**AIS Canberra, Bruce ACT**

### Keynote speakers

**Angus Stewart—Swaby Lecture**

**Ian Fraser—Conference Dinner**

**David Heaton**

**Penny Olsen**

**David Lindenmayer**

### Field trips

**NSW South Coast—pre-conference**

**Sub-alpine areas in Perisher Valley,**

**Kosciusko National Park—post  
conference**

**Brindabella Range—optional extra**

**Australian National Botanic Gardens**

**National Arboretum**

**Local nature parks**

**Private gardens**

## ANPSA 2015 Conference

Every two years ANPSA hosts a Conference and Seminar program featuring lectures, workshops and field trips highlighting the diversity of Australia's native flora. Each Conference is organised by one of ANPSA's seven regional branches, on a rotating basis.

In 2015, the Conference will be held in Australia's National Capital, Canberra from Sunday 15 to Friday 20 November.

Registration for the Conference is now open with details available on the Conference website if you are interested in attending.  
[anpsa.org.au/conference2015](http://anpsa.org.au/conference2015)



## Program

### Saturday, 14 November

Excursion to Brindabella Range—optional

### Sunday, 15 November

ANPSA Delegates meeting

Free bus service to National Museum, National Portrait Gallery, National Gallery, War Memorial

### Monday, 16 November

Morning presentations; afternoon excursions

### Tuesday, 17 November

Morning presentations; afternoon excursions

### Wednesday, 18 November

Morning presentations; afternoon excursions

7.30 pm Awards and Swaby Lecture

### Thursday, 19 November

Morning presentations; afternoon excursions

7.00 pm Conference dinner

### Friday, 20 November

Morning excursions; afternoon presentation

### Saturday, 21 November

Excursion to Brindabella Range—optional

**For more information and expressions of interest:**

Email: [conference2015@anpsa.org.au](mailto:conference2015@anpsa.org.au)

Website: <http://conference2015.anpsa.org.au>

Post: ANPSA Conference 2015 P.O. Box 187  
Deakin West, ACT 2600



## SUBSCRIPTION FORM – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (DUE 1 JULY)

Please accept my subscription/renewal for membership of the Top End Native Plant Society

☐ New membership ☐ Renewal

Name/s.....

Email address .....

**Please Note: The electronic edition of the newsletter will be uploaded to the member's page of the website each month and members will be notified by email (Acrobat Reader is required).**

If you DO NOT have email access and would like to receive the newsletter (black & white available only) by post please tick the box. ☐

Postal Address .....

Post Code.....

Payment Due \$..... (\$20.00 per member/family, \$15.00 unwaged)

**TO PAY ONLINE:** Bank: People's Choice Credit Union

BSB: 805050

Account Name: Top End Native Plant Society

Account Number: 61225276

*Please include your name in the transfer reference.*

**Or MAIL TO:** TENPS Secretary, PO Box 135, Palmerston NT 0831

Signature ..... Date ..... / ..... / .....

**TO:**

**Sender:**



PO Box 135  
Palmerston NT 0831