

Top End



Native Plant Society

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April 2018 Newsletter

General Meeting Times

The next TENPS meeting is the AGM which will be held on *Thursday 19th of April 2018* commencing at 7:30 pm. Meetings are held 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 chat 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. Details of upcoming events are provided in the newsletter, or check the TENPS website.

What's in flower?



Grevillea pluricaulis photographed by Sarah Hirst on Melville Island.

Natives mean more!

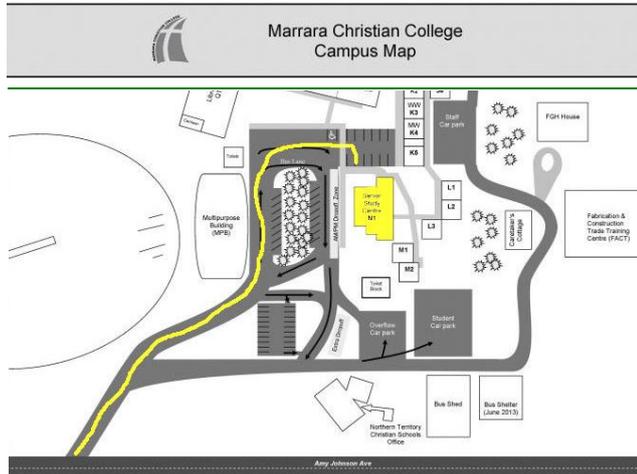
www.topendnativeplants.org.au

Upcoming TENPS guest speakers

April 19th: Sarah Hirst on Typhonium hunting on Melville Island.

May 17th: Dave Liddle on Typhonium of the Top End.

June 21st: TBA.



NT Field Naturalist Club Events

Meetings are held at 7.45pm on the second Wednesday of each month except January at Charles Darwin University, in Blue Building 2 (see map below)



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.

April Field Trip Saturday 14 Apr 6:30 pm - Light Trapping for Insects at Botanic Gardens with Graham Brown.

Meet at the Stuart Park entrance to the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens at the end of Geranium Street. Bring polarised sunglasses and broad brimmed hat a torch or headlamp.

TENPS Field Trips & other events

April Saturday 21th: TBA

May Sunday 20th: Threatened species walk near Elizabeth River – visit populations of *Utricularia singeriana* and *Atalaya brevialata* led by Dave Liddle. Meet at corner of Jenkins and Finn Road at 9.00am.

June Saturday 23rd: TBA

TENPS Committee Meeting

Committee meetings are held every second month and members are most welcome to attend. The next committee meeting will be on May 9th, 2018 from 7.15pm. Venue: Blain Electorate Office, next to Pizza Hut, Oasis Shopping Centre, Palmerston.



Striga curviflora photographed by Sarah Hirst on Melville Island in February 2018.

2017 Plant Sale at Coolalinga

The November pre-wet plant sale was held for the first time in the new Coolalinga Central shopping centre. It was another successful sales event, in terms of native plant sales and promotion, public awareness and education, and in gaining new members to the Top End Native Plant Society.

There was an impressive array of plants available for sale with about 50 species being on show. More than 70 plants were sold. Many species of native plants that were sold are not available at local nurseries and I believe we are doing a great job in promoting some unusual and beautiful plants to the public, and introducing some very worthy local native species into cultivation. The top sellers at the sale included:

Acrostichum speciosum
Aidia racemosa
Allosyncarpia ternata
Ganophyllum falctum
Glycosmis trifoliata
Leptospermum parviflorum
Millettia pinnata
Phaleria clerodendron
Phaleria octandra
Pittosporum moluccanum
Podocarpus grayae
Sterculia quadrifida
Suregada glomerulata
Terminalia erythrocarpa

Thanks to all who helped out at the plant sale, through growing and supplying plants, through helping with promotion and sales and through just being there.

Article by Russell Dempster.

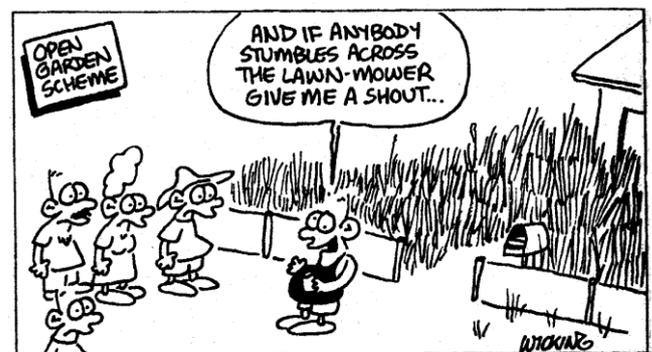
TENPS March Meeting Report: "Plan, Plan, Plant - creating wildlife friendly gardens" by David Liddle

Dave Liddle has lived in Darwin for 30 years and has created gardens that are a haven for wildlife using a variety of native plants. He shared his thoughts and experiences at the TENPS meeting in March.

Dave identified 8 things that are important to plan when creating habitat for wildlife in Darwin gardens:

1. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder
2. Perceptions
3. Be considerate of others... and yourself
4. Ecosystem services
5. Provision of features
6. Enjoy being experimental
7. Transitions - garden evolution
8. Do you need a grand vision?

What counts as desirable animals and plants in your garden depends on your perspective and so beauty is in the eye of the beholder. For example fruit bats are an important pollinating species in both woodland and monsoon forest but they have a reputation for making a mess too. If you want to attract fruit bats plant or as Dave has done retain *Carpentaria* palms and *Melaleucas* in your garden.



Dave shared Wicking's cartoon on the Open Garden Scheme (*above*) but he pointed out that despite this common perception, a native garden doesn't mean it is a neglected or feral garden. It simply means you are using plants that are local to the area and therefore even more valuable to the local wildlife.

Being considerate of others includes a range of things such not planting trees to obscure views, not planting figs that may damage drains or other infrastructure. This is even more relevant after Darwin's recent encounter with Cyclone Marcus. Trees near power lines or overhanging buildings or parking areas may create problems during storms. Being considerate of yourself means you should think about how much time you can or want to spend in your garden; lawns need regular mowing so do you want to be a slave to the mower? Do you irrigate or not and how much maintenance will be required for your system? Will you plant short lived species such as *Grevillea* and *Acacia* that will need to be replaced in a few years?

Think about the creation of an ecosystem too. What will the wildlife you are trying to attract need in order to use your garden? What do you need for your comfort and enjoyment of the garden? Wildlife such as birds and terrestrial mammals need shelter, have you got low shrubs and dense grasses they can use to hide from predators. Microbats need flyways for access, and birds love water so put in a birdbath or other water features. Wildlife will also appreciate food so if you are trying to grow fruit or vegetables for food you may need to grow more than you need in order to share! Of course we humans also want shade, airflow and tranquillity so these requirements actually match the needs of wildlife. Plant trees to the east and west to provide shade in the morning and afternoon and leave space close to the house for airflow - and this works as a flyway for the microbats as well. Having wildlife around contributes to tranquillity in your garden and the birdbath makes a great focal point for enjoying wildlife.

Add structural complexity by providing a variety of features within your garden or neighbourhood. Lawns are frequented by bandicoots or ducks, flowering shrubs such as *Grevilleas* provide food (nectar) and shelter for honeyeaters, rainforest patches may attract rainbow pittas and other forest birds.



Rockeries (*above*) are great shelter for small reptiles such as skinks and lizards. Dead or deciduous trees are favoured by birds for perching. If a tree dies in your garden consider keeping them for the birds - if safe to do so. Bird baths and water features will be appreciated by all wildlife. Think about your location too, what wildlife might be in your area? Dave had rails visit his garden in Leanyer and has bandicoots hiding in the lemongrass tussock at Brinkin. The

more features, strata or layers in your garden the more likely you are to attract a diverse array of wildlife to your garden.

Experimenting is what gardening is about, but even more so when using natives. Some species may grow differently in your garden but that is part of the experiment, will they be bigger or smaller? Try local trees such as *Drypetes deplanchei*, *Celtis phillipensis*, *Litsea glutinosa*, *Pittosporum mollucanum* and *Croton habrophyllus*. The last 3 here are host plants for the endangered Atlas Moth, so maybe if you plant it they will come to visit your garden at some point in the future? Don't be afraid to try new things if you can source them, many natives have great potential but are simply untried.

If gardening is an experiment then you must expect it to change and evolve over time. Transition will bring more diversity as different needs of wildlife are met. Allow others - family or friends to be involved in the evolution of the garden.

So do you need a grand vision?

For Dave the answer is no. You do need some idea of what you think is beautiful or desirable, how much time and effort you want to put in to the garden in both the short term and long term. And you do need to be considerate of the potential impact of your ideas on your neighbours. You also need to decide if you are going to let the garden evolve slowly or if you are going to take up the chainsaw initially and then replant. Dave has tried both ways and he advocates the quick transition by way of the chainsaw for achieving his vision.

Thank you Dave for sharing your ideas and experience with us!

Article by Sarah Hirst.



Habenaria elongata photographed by Sarah Hirst on Melville Island in February 2018.

