

Top End



Native Plant Society

Top End Native Plant Society June 2019 Newsletter

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General Meeting Times

The next TENPS meeting is the AGM which will be held on *Thursday June 20th 2019* commencing at 7:30 pm. General 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?



Tephrosia photographed by Russell Dempster in April

Natives mean more!

www.topendnativeplants.org.au

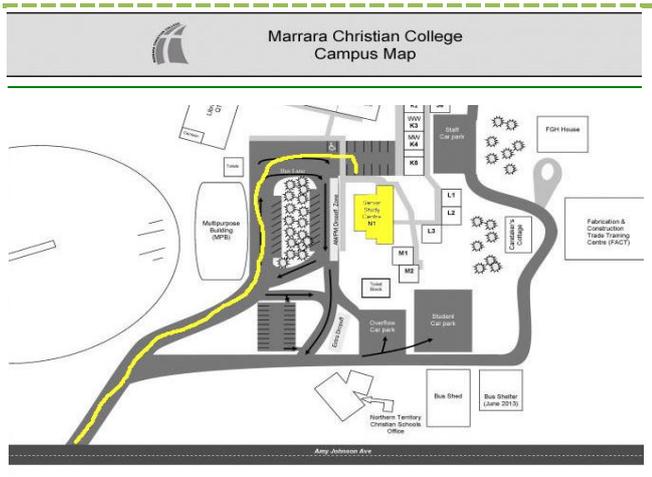
Upcoming TENPS guest speakers

Ryonen Butcher is a plant taxonomist based at the Western Australian Herbarium (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions). She is currently studying the pantropical, pea-flowered legume genus *Tephrosia*, which is widespread and species-rich across northern and central Australia.

There are 134 taxa (species and infraspecies) currently accepted in Australia: 77 named and 57 unnamed. That's a whopping 42.5% of taxa in the genus that are known only by an informal name and have no, or scant, descriptive information available for them. In addition to these 'known' undescribed taxa, some described species are poorly defined from others and some are highly variable in form and may represent more than one taxon.

Ryonen has been studying the *Tephrosia* specimen collection at the Northern Territory Herbarium in Palmerston for the last four months collecting data to aid in the description of the 24 unnamed new taxa known to occur in the Northern Territory, 18 of which also occur in Western Australia.

Come along to learn about the genus *Tephrosia* and the taxonomic process by which new taxa are discovered and described!



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)



TENPS Field Trips & other events

June field trip

A trip to Gunn Point to look for *Stylidium*: a threatened species.



Meet at Whitewood Road Shops at 9am.



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.

TENPS Committee Meeting

Committee meetings are held every second month and members are most welcome to attend. The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 10th July 2019.

TENPS May Field Trip Report:
by Dave Liddle and Zyg Madicki

A good dozen people from both Field Naturalists and TENPS enjoyed a half-day joint field trip on May 16th to sandsheet heath vegetation on the Howard River floodplain. The Sand sheet is a specialised community of small carnivorous and other flowering plants found in patches in the Darwin rural area from Howard Springs to Humpty Doo on the Howard River flood plain.

Sandsheet heath supports an amazing diversity of carnivorous plants with up to a dozen species of bladderworts (*Utricularia* species) occurring in an area the size of a basketball court; along with a few sundews (*Drosera* species) to add to the mix. The high species diversity of the Howard River catchment stands out on the international stage and reflects a landscape of sandy soils that vary from seasonally saturated to parched and dry before the arrival of early wet season storms. The low nutrient substrate and extremes of moisture provide a great environment for seasonal carnivorous plants. Seasonal conditions change rapidly on the sandsheets and the prime time for bladderworts is as the wet season turns to dry. The most diverse arrays of plants occur where groundwater seepage discharges from the surrounding slightly elevated lands onto the floodplain. Given the current wet season the duration of seepage was uncertain, however there were some fascinating plants to be seen, among them

Utricularia simmonsii
Utricularia chrysantha
Utricularia leptoplectra
Utricularia limosa
Drosera nana
Drosera aquatica
Drosera fragrans
Drosera fulva
Drosera burmanni
Byblis aquatica

One non-carnivore that got a mention was *Thysanotus chinensis*.

Thanks for this photos Tissa



Utricularia simmonsii habitat 1.



Utricularia dunstaniae
May, Howard Springs
Photo Dave Liddle

