

Top End



Native Plant Society

October 2016 Newsletter

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General Meeting Times

The next TENPS meeting will be held on *Thursday October 20th 2016*. 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 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?



Wrightia saligna photographed at Darwin River by Sarah Hirst.

Natives mean more!

www.topendnativeplants.org.au

Upcoming TENPS guest speakers

October 20th: Zig Madycki - Wildflowers at Lesueur National Park, Western Australia.

November 17th: AGM - Ian Morris - TBA

TENPS Field Trips & other events

October, Saturday 29th: Wangi walk with Russell Dempster. Meet at Coolalinga at 8.30 or Wangi kiosk at 10am.

November, Sunday 22nd: Darwin River Dam. Meet near toilet block at Dam picnic area at 9.00am

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.

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.

November Field Trip. Sun 13. Birds of East Point with Amanda Lilleyman.

December Meeting: Wed 14. Donna Lewis (NT Herbarium) Overview of the new electronic Flora NT.

Thank you for renewing your membership.

Thank you to those members who have renewed, we appreciate your ongoing support. For anyone who has not yet renewed for 2016/17, memberships are now overdue. Payment details are shown on the membership form on the back of this newsletter if you would like to pay by electronic transfer.

If you will not be continuing your TENPS membership, please let us know so we don't send further reminders. If you think we could improve the society for you, we would also love to hear your feedback. Email us at topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com

Corrections and Apology

Sincere apologies to Zig Madycki for errors made in the of the September newsletter. Most significantly his father was not, as stated, at Kokoda and this and other inaccuracies were entirely due to mistaken note taking on my part - Sarah Hirst.

Please note that errors have since been rectified in a subsequent version of the newsletter on the website, but for those who downloaded the earlier version please be aware that it contained errors and it is recommended that members download or print the corrected version.

Notice of Annual General Meeting:

The Annual General Meeting of The Top End Native Plant Society Incorporated will be held at 7.45 pm on **Thursday 17th November 2016** at Marrara Christian College, on the corner of Amy Johnson Avenue and McMillans Road.

The agenda for the AGM is:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of Previous AGM
 - Business arising from minutes of previous AGM
3. Committee Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Auditor's Report
6. Election of Management Committee
 - PRESIDENT
 - VICE PRESIDENT
 - SECRETARY
 - TREASURER
 - PUBLICITY OFFICER
 - PUBLICATIONS OFFICER
 - LIBRARIAN
 - TWO COMMITTEE MEMBERS
7. Other Business
 - Appointment of Public Officer
 - Membership Subscription Fee

We ask all members to make a special effort to attend the AGM. This is very important for the continued running of the society. Reports will be tabled and all committee positions will be declared vacant before a new committee is elected.

Several members are not re-nominating this year so please consider if you can contribute to TENPS by nominating yourself or getting someone to nominate you for a position on the committee.

If you would like to know more about the role of any of the above committee positions please email topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com

TENPS Committee Meeting

Committee meetings are held every second month and members are most welcome to attend. The next committee meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday 5th December, at the Nightcliff Electorate Office in Palmerston.

TENPS Planning Meeting

If you have ideas or suggestions for a talk topic, a speaker or field trip destination, please consider attending the **new TENPS Planning Meeting** at 3.30pm on Saturday December 10th at 6 Hibernia Crescent Brinkin. All members welcome or email your suggestions to topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com before December 8th.

Immediately after this session there will be a Xmas get together at Dripstone Cliffs from 5.30pm.

September Meeting Report – A tale of two deserts by David Liddle.

David Liddle introduced us to some amazingly beautiful landscapes in his talk of recent travels in the Tanami and Simpson deserts with Robyn Liddle, and catching up with their daughter Nerida to help support field work for her Bachelor of Science (Honours) project investigating the elusive bilby.

First was an exploration of the Tanami desert, where we were introduced to an amazing variety of witchetty grubs. Dave noted that the Tanami desert was very flat with few longitudinal dunes. Indeed a photo of the Tanami landscape showed the tallest object visible to be a 3-4 m high termite mound with endless hummock grass. Tanami was well vegetated by *Triodia* hummock grasses and tough shrubby *Acacia*.

Then we were introduced to the witchetty grubs and four species were present. A big white grub was about 7 cm long and 1.5 cm in diameter. Then some pictures of another species, skinny

yellow grubs with a shield like pattern. They ate into the base of *Acacia macradinia* and the scattered *Eucalyptus leucophloia*. Even eight months after the plant had been killed by fire some of the grubs were still in the *Acacia* surviving on the dead wood.

The flora is surprisingly dynamic in response to season and fire. *Senna notabilis* grows quickly and disappears within a few years of fire. As well as the effects of fire we got to experience a desert storm. Normally it is very dry with a rainfall of less than 250 mm but while in the Tanami they were deluged by rain. The ground turned to mud and the tracks turned into streams.

Fauna included dingoes who liked to use parked mining vehicles for shade. Also some snakes including a black headed python. We saw evidence of bilbies too, scats, camera trap photos, and foot prints. Dave showed a photo of the bilby tracks in the sand with two small hand prints and large hind foot prints to the outside.

Next they competed and completed the World Rogaining event in the East MacDonnell Ranges near Alice Springs, then on to the Simpson Desert.

In contrast to the Tanami desert, both the Simpson and the Great Sandy deserts have hundreds of sand dunes. They traveled through the Simpson Desert from west to east initially along the French line but also deviating along tracks further to the south to get off the main route. This desert had hundreds of parallel dunes in the western portion and then many salt lakes to the east. The red undulating sand dunes were generally 7 – 15 metres high but some were 25 – 30 metres high.

An early rest stop was Dalhousie Springs in Witjira National Park on the western fringe of the Simpson Desert. These are hot springs and by moving closer or further from the springs you can achieve a nice relaxing temperature.

Further to the east one of the flat salt lakes was also with shallow water about 3 km x 0.5 km and there were around 500 banded stilts taking advantage of the water. Most of the other salt lakes were dry and surrounded by samphire vegetation. Other places were very green, again to recent rainfall in the area. This brought out lots of daisies and other flowers plus lots of

birds. Further west they saw large *Acacia peuce* trees, a rare species with three separated populations. Here the tall trees dominated the flat landscape. One had a massive 15 cm diameter trunk, amazing considering the small stature of the rest of the vegetation!

A brief stop at Poepel's corner where the borders of SA, NT and Queensland meet and then on to finish the exploration of the Simpson desert with a glass of red wine on top of the 40m high "Big Red" dune on the eastern side of the desert about 40 km west of Birdsville.

Article by Sean Bellairs.



Spermacoce sp. photographed at Darwin River by Sarah Hirst.

PULP FICTION

EDO NT FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER
DECKCHAIR CINEMA

6.30 FOR 7.30 SCREENING
CATERED BY HANUMAN
RAFFLES, CAKES AND
BEST COSTUME PRIZE

WWW.DECKCHAIRCINEMA.COM

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Darwin River aquatic weed control
CABOMBA ERADICATION PROGRAM

The Weed Management Branch is eradicating the only known infestation of cabomba in the Territory



WARNING!
Aquatic herbicide applications in progress

Don't Risk it!

- Cabomba threatens our waterways, drinking water quality, recreational fishing and outdoor lifestyle
- The quarantine zone is still in place and fines do apply
- A bund wall has been constructed to protect Darwin Harbour
- Environmental monitoring is occurring
- If you see it - report it!



DON'T SPREAD CABOMBA
Protect our Top End Waterways!



For more information call 8999 4567
or go to www.nt.gov.au/cabomba



TENPS Christmas Get Together

Saturday December 10th 5.30pm - Casuarina Coastal Reserve. BYO plate to share.

This will be immediately after the 3.30pm TENPS program planning meeting to identify 2017 topics, talks, and walks. Please come along and share your ideas or email suggestions prior to the meeting.



Hybanthus enneaspermus photographed at Darwin River by Sarah Hirst.

**Prepare for the wet, get your native
plants now!**

Plant Sale



Where: Coolalinga, out the front of
Woolworths

When: Saturday 26th November 2016

Time: 8am-12noon

Prepare for the wet, get your native plants now!

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