

Top End



Native Plant Society



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Vice President:

position vacant

Secretary:

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position vacant

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August 2009 Newsletter

General Meeting Times

We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. Following the TENPS general meeting, the speaker will commence at 8pm. Tea & coffee is available during the meeting. The venue for the meeting is Marrara Christian College, on the corner of Amy Johnson Avenue and McMillans Road. All are welcome. Bring plants to swap, sell or have identified.

Field trips are usually conducted on the weekend following the General Meeting, with details provided either in the newsletter or at the meeting.

Committee Meetings are held on the Tuesday following the general meeting, at 7.30. In August the venue will be Kezia Purick's electorate office at Coolalinga Shopping Centre. Members are very welcome to attend committee meetings if they wish so to do.



Brachychiton paradoxus

Natives mean more!

www.topendnativeplants.org.au



Upcoming Speakers

For the August meeting (on the 20th), the Lord Mayor of Darwin, Graeme Sawyer will speak on his vision for Darwin, including streetscapes, the mall and East Point amongst other things. Graeme will also be seeking input from TENPS members.

In September Denise Goodfellow will be giving a talk on her recent trip to the United States.

Field Naturalists Diary

The Field Naturalists meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:45 PM. The venue is building Blue 1.03 (Business building) at Charles Darwin University. Anyone is welcome to attend.

September 9th: Jarrad Holmes: Fire and carbon projects in the Top End.

October 14th: Arturo Izurieta: Galapagos - The Enchanted Islands: management issues, successes and challenges to preserve them for future generations.

November 11th: Clive McMahon: Buffalo management.

December 9th: Peter Phillips: Wildlife management issues in the NT.

Newsletter Contributions

We are seeking photographs of flowers, plants, and vegetation for the "What's in Flower" section of the newsletter. Also welcome are any news stories, articles, announcements, jokes or anything else that you think would be of interest to TENPS members. Please send contributions to the Publications Officer at c.gellert@hotmail.com

Committee Members Needed

The important committee positions of Vice President and Treasurer have been unfilled since the last AGM. Having people who are willing to serve in the committee is vital if we are to keep TENPS running, so please consider volunteering your time and abilities.

Notes from the July Meeting

Report by Brigid Oulsnam...

The speaker at the July meeting was Tida Nou from the Threatened Species Network (TSN).

TSN is a partnership between WWFAustralia and the Australian Government. It commenced in 1990 and is funded through the Government's Caring for our Country initiative. Through the TSN, WWF works to conserve Australia's biodiversity by ending land clearing, addressing climate change, and preserving and protecting fresh water, marine and terrestrial environments.

TSN's main aim is to involve the general public in effective conservation action to protect Australia's threatened plant and animal species and ecological communities. TSN is engaged in activities on a range of levels, from small projects with local community groups to large scale long term projects, to public campaigns and government policy.

TSN manages a community grants program that has provided \$4.5 million to over 330 projects around Australia. Some of the projects in the northern Australia include the translocation of northern quolls and bandicoots, mentoring indigenous rangers on Tiwi, cane toad fencing on Groote Eylandt and fire management in the East Kimberly. The East Kimberly project was particularly successful with good support from the community and a two way exchange of knowledge between TSN and the traditional owners.

In order to best target its resources TSN divided Australia into five 'eco' regions, with the Top End being in the North Australia or savanna region. Although there is much work to be done in the NT, many plant and animal species are data deficient and with funding only available to federally listed threatened species, many potential projects are missing out.

TSN has recently re-located to the Hub at the Rapid Creek Shopping Centre, but sadly this arrangement will be short lived, as TSN is now threatened species itself. TSN's application for ongoing funding was unsuccessful and it will cease operations in September.

November Plant Sale - Calling all Propagators

The committee has planned a Plant Sale to be held at the Coolalinga Markets in November. Please consider growing some plants to sell. The TENPS Guidelines for Preparation and Sale of Propagated Plants can be found on our website

Field Trips

The August Field Trip will be a tour of the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens and the Duke Street Rainforest, led by Andrew Mitchell. Andrew is a member of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens and has also been looking after the Duke Street rainforest for a few years. The tour will be held on Saturday the 22nd. Meet at 8:30 at the bottom of the Botanic Gardens, next to the fountain.

Report from the July Field Trip

Words by Russel Dempster, photos by Don Franklin...

On Saturday 18th July a group of TENPS members and friends met with Kristin Metcalfe at Coconut Grove. Kristin took us for a walk through the mangroves along a track to the beach. Besides the very pleasant walk through the important plant community, we also saw plenty of wildlife such as worms, crabs and birds, including an Azure Kingfisher and Brahminy Kites. Only some of the mangrove species seen are mentioned here.



Sea Purslane *Sesuvium portulacastrum*

Excoecaria ovalis (Milky Mangrove or Blind Your Eye Mangrove) has a widespread distribution around the NT coastline. It has white latex and rounded oval leaves which yellow and fall in the

dry season. The small trees have a smooth grey trunk with lenticils, which are dots which enable oxygen to get into the plants.

Sonneratia alba (Star Mangrove) is another mangrove with a widespread distribution across the NT, mainly on the northern and western coasts. A pioneer species, *S. alba* produces star shaped fruit from flowers which are pollinated by bats. The seeds are hard, very small and woody.



Club Mangrove *Aegialitis annulata* 'bonsai'

Aegiceras corniculatum (River Mangrove) occurs in tropical Australia. It is a small tree which produces clusters of sweet smelling flowers.



River Mangrove *Aegiceras corniculatum*
with salt on leaves

Bruguiera exaristata has flowers which are pollinated by birds. They explode when the Red Headed Honeyeater pokes its head into them. The tree form knee roots. Only *Bruguiera* mangroves do this. They look like knobbly knees.

Rhizophora stylosa has the beautiful large prop roots. *Rhizophora* are viviparous. The flowers are pollinated and germinate on the plant. After a year it drops off shooting into the ground and the propogules grow from there. Otherwise it can float for a couple of months and grow in a new situation. *Ceriops australis* is also capable of this vivipary.



Stilt-rooted Mangrove *Rhizophora stylosa*

Osbornia octodonta is in the Eucalypt family (Myrtaceae). The new branches are a beautiful red colour and the leaves can be used as an insect repellent when crushed.

Thankyou Kristin for your leadership of this field trip, and thanks to Brigid for the afternoon tea.

Greening Australia New Nursery Hours

The Greening Australia Nursery will now be open every Saturday from 9am to 1pm, in addition to being open on Tuesdays from 8am to 5pm. They specialise in Top End native plants with an extensive range of Grevilleas, Acacias, Eucalypts and Syzygiums and they also stock a range of books. The nursery is located at 125 Thorak Road, (last driveway on the left) in Knuckeys Lagoon.

NT Threatened Species Art & Photography Competition 2009 - Last Chance to Enter

Entries for this year's NT Threatened Species Art & Photography Competition must be in by the 24th of August.

The theme of the competition is 'threatened species, their habitats and their threats in the NT.' It is open to all ages and for all mediums with great prizes on offer. Individuals as well as community groups and schools are invited to submit works.

Works will be on display at the Darwin Entertainment Centre Gallery from 7 - 10th September. A selection of winning entries will then be on display at the Alice Springs Desert Park.

Please contact TSN for more details on (08) 8941 7554 or savannas@wwf.org.au.

Website Review

Noosa Native Plants is a site run by the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association. It covers plants (natives and environmental weeds) found around the Sunshine Coast, Cooloola and Fraser Island. Some of these species are also found in the Top End. You can search for plants by common or species name, vegetation type, flower or fruit colour, and life form. The quality of the photos is variable and the plant descriptions are brief, but I like the pronunciation guides to help those of us who might otherwise butcher Latin names.

<http://www.noosanativeplants.com.au>

Notes from the May Meeting

At the May meeting Anna Richards spoke on 'Mixed Species Native Rainforest Tree Plantations - Insights from Australia and Vietnam.' Russell Dempster had kindly provided these notes...

The current rate of global deforestation is 9.4 million hectares per year. In North Vietnam, extensive deforestation in the past has led to environmental and social problems.

Attempts to increase forest cover in the past focused on exotic timber plantations (Eucalypts) and these have caused soil degradation. There is an interest now in planting native species, but there currently isn't enough knowledge of native plants. The plantations in Vietnam are generally on higher ground as rice is grown in the valleys.

In Australia, 7000 hectares have been planted in the last 15 years in tropical and sub-tropical areas. Anna worked on a site in south-east Queensland at Maleny. 27 species and 2700 trees have been planted on 2 hectares of land, with the spacing being 4m by 4m.

The study species were *Elaeocarpus angustifolius*, *Grevillea robusta* and *Castanospermum australe* (Black Bean). Trees were planted in rows of fast growing shade intolerant species next to slow growing shade tolerant species. *E. angustifolius* and *G. robusta* have a very fast photosynthetic rate, related to their growth rates. It was found that different species have a high demand for nutrients at different times of the year.

The benefits of mixed species tree plantations over monocultures include an increase in soil fertility, greater resistance to pests and disease, better landscape aesthetics, improved wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and potentially a higher productivity for the land.

Thanks Anna for an informative and interesting talk.

What's in Flower?



Clerodendrum floribundum

Clerodendrum floribundum is a tall shrub with simple opposite leaves, and rough deeply-furrowed light-grey bark. The flowers are white and tubular (2-7cm long) with protruding stamens. The fruit is black and sits atop a red star-shaped calyx.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM - MEMBERSHIP DUE 1 JULY 2009~

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