

Top End



Native Plant Society

October 2009 Newsletter

General Meeting Times

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Vice President:

position vacant

Secretary:

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position vacant

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General Committee Members:

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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 Oct 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.



Kapok bush - Cochlospermum fraseri

Natives mean more!

www.topendnativeplants.org.au

Upcoming Speakers

On Thursday 15 October, local Horticulturalist Tim West (Environmental Development Officer with the NT Horticultural Association) will give a short presentation on provenancing and how it should guide revegetation plantings in our natural landscapes. Tim will also facilitate discussion on how rural/residential native plantings could utilize provenancing as a means to enhancing the ecological integrity of these plantings. This talk is primarily aimed at awareness raising and encouraging better understanding and management of our natural vegetation resource.

AGM to be held November 26th

The next TENPS Annual General Meeting will be held in November and will include the election of the Committee for 2010. Having people who are willing to serve in the committee is vital if we are to keep TENPS running. Therefore please consider if you would be able to volunteer some of your time and fill any of the committee positions. Nomination forms will be provided closer to the date.

Please note that the AGM is on the **26th** of November rather than on the third Thursday of the month (the 19th) as shown on the TENPS calendar. Ian Morris will be the speaker at this meeting.

November Plant Sale

TENPS will be holding a Plant Sale at the Coolalinga Markets on Saturday 28th of November. Members are welcome to grow some plants to sell. The TENPS Guidelines for Preparation and Sale of Propagated Plants can be found on our website

October Field Trip - Mount Bundy

Ian Morris has kindly agreed to meet us at 6:30 am on Saturday 17th October at the pagoda information shelter (Mary River Park) on the left hand side of the Arnhem Highway just after Goanna Park. Why should you get out of bed so early on a Saturday morning? Well Ian has recently seen some Gouldian Finches near there

at a water hole very close to the highway as the spectacular birds come down for a drink just after sunrise. So this is a very rare opportunity to see these birds in the wild! Bring a hat, drink, camera (preferably with a zoom) and tripod (if you have one), a folding chair and some morning tea. Oh yes, we'll also look at some of the plants in the area, and we'll go down to Bird Billabong afterwards. Conventional two wheel drive vehicles are all that is required for transport, or hitch a lift with a friend!

Report from the September Meeting

In the September meeting Denise Goodfellow talked for us about her recent speaking tour of the United States. For those who missed it she has also kindly provided us with the following...

"We spent the first few days with Dr Fred and Anne Weinmann in Port Townsend, Washington. I had guided them in the early 1990s and Fred had written the foreword for my book Fauna of Kakadu and the Top End. Fred, originally a wetlands ecologist, was the architect of President Clinton's forest policy which still stands, and a keen birdwatcher.

We also visited Oregon, several parts of California, and Arizona (a lesson there in dry country gardens), Texas, Iowa, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina and Hawai'i.

In Texas, we were amazed at the variety and colour of wildflowers along the roads. Great masses of cerise winecups and bluebonnets, and sunflowers grew in great profusion. I wondered whether the flowers had been planted, and yet they looked entirely in place. I discovered the answer when I lectured at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Lady Bird Johnson, wife of President Lyndon Johnson, and film star Helen Hayes, were concerned about the loss of wildflowers in Texas, and raised millions of dollars to set up this wonderful establishment. Lady Bird also instigated a program whereby wildflower seed was spread along roads and highways. And that was why we were seeing so many wildflowers everywhere we travelled. Apparently wildflower tourism in Texas is worth billions. I

also met Marshall Johnson, ex- Professor of Botany, University of Texas.

In North Carolina we stayed with botanical legend, Ritchie Bell, Professor Emeritus, University of Carolina and founder of the NC Botanical Gardens, and his wife, Dr. Anne Lindsey, an authority on Cherokee plant usage. They had arranged for me to give the annual Evelyn McNeill-Sims lecture at the NC Botanic Gardens.

The next day we lunched with Evelyn McNeill-Sims, her daughter Nancy Preston who funds the lecture in honour of her mother's long dedication to the wildflowers of North Carolina, and several others, including the director of the NC Botanic Gardens, a member of the NC legislature, and several other prominent citizens.

The lecture was originally to be on weeds common to both Australia and the USA, but Nancy, the Director of Education had asked me the night before to also talk about my semi-traditional family. So I spoke at length about the Kunwinjku children on outstations, and how they learned about plants and the natural environment at a very early age. I also dwelled on how we were all connected – plants, people, environment. Ritchie and Anne said they would be seeking sponsorship from the University of NC for a return visit.

In Hawai'i we stayed with my hanai sister, Leilehua, a senior Indigenous woman and renowned maker of leis, and cultural practitioner. She knew her plants backward by their Hawaiian names, even the relatively insignificant ones. There are names for all forms and all parts of the plants. I shared my scientific and Indigenous (Kunwinjku) knowledge of plants. It was an experience we both enjoyed. I learned how to make grass skirts from a Cordyline sp, I ran workshops for the women performers of hula on dealing with insensitive comments by sightseeing tourists, among others.

The best experiences of the whole trip were my lectures on intercultural relations to Indigenous and African-American students. Yes, I know this has nothing to do with plants, but imagine addressing students at Merritt, the college that gave rise to the Black Panther Movement, who later told their lecturer that my comments

would remain with them all their lives. There was a similar response from Indigenous and other students at Berkeley City College. The African-American president of Merritt has invited me back, as has Nola Hadley, the Indigenous American lecturer at Berkeley."

Denise Goodfellow

From the President...

"Thankyou very much Denise for your talk and presentation at the September meeting of TENPS. It was really interesting to see the photos and to hear about your trip, and also to see plants from the same genus as some of our native plants. Thanks also for the donation of the autographed copy of the 'Rare Plants of Texas' book to TENPS, which we will place in the TENPS library."

Russell Dempster



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.

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.

What's in Flower?



Buchanania obovata



Cathormion umbellatum



Grevillia decurrens



Hildegardia australiensis



Jasminum didymum



Peltophorum pterocarpum

The six photos above were taken by Russell Dempster in his garden. The *Gardenia suffruticosa* to the right was photographed by Cherie Gellert in the Kakadu region.

Newsletter Contributions

We are always 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



Gardenia suffruticosa

TO:

Sender:
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