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~ AUGUST 2007 NEWSLETTER ~

MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

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 are available during the meeting. The venue for the meeting is Marrara Christian College, on the corner of Amy Johnson and McMillan drives. All welcome. Bring plants to swap, sell or have identified.

Summary of the last Committee Meeting

- This was the last committee meeting Sally Jacka was able to attend as she is moving interstate. Sally has contributed hugely to TENPS over the years. Her tireless work has included being secretary, organizing the library, running propagation workshops and assisting with plant identification workshops. We will miss you, Sally.
- Garden Spectacular: would any members with plants to sell contact Marj King ASAP so she can print labels for plants. Please contact Russell Dempster if you would like to volunteer on one of the days. Any help is welcome. We will be putting up a floral display of native plants, so if you wish to contribute something for the display, this will also be of help.
- We are considering auctioning further library books. Anyone who would like to donate any books they no longer need, please contact TENPS (see notice below August speaker).
- Due to a number of people not receiving newsletters, we will take more up-to-date information from people attending the general meetings. If you know of anyone who is not receiving the newsletter, could you please ask them to forward their current details to TENPS.
- TENPS and NT Field Naturalists will advertise in each other's newsletters about upcoming presentations and field trips. We may coordinate field trips together at times. Further advice will be given here next month.

~ NEXT MEETING THURSDAY 16th AUGUST ~

Sue Fraser-Adams, a builder, will speak about her use of native plants in developments: the pitfalls and the triumphs. Once Sue just used introduced plants, but she went through a sea change in attitude three years ago, when building Denise Goodfellow and Michael Stott's home. We didn't want a garden full of water-hungry exotics. Since then Sue has become a zealot in the cause of indigenous flora. Her plan for Little Mindil was to build an eco-resort highlighting such plants.

Meeting the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at Marrara Christian School Library

Book Auction

To create space in the Library and to raise some funds for new books, we will be holding a book auction during the August general meeting. We will sell duplicates of some of our books and invite members to donate any plant books they no longer want to keep.

~ FIELD TRIP- SATURDAY 26th AUGUST ~

Meet at 4 pm, 26th August with Sue Fraser-Adams at Little Mindil (the area between the Casino and the escarpment) and share with her the vision she had for this area. Also check out the vegetation on the escarpment which has come under the care of the Landcare Group that also looks after Duke Street Rainforest and the area between Gardens Road and Dashwood Crescent. Bring a chair and a glass and sit and watch the sunset. Sue will bring the sparkling wine!

~ FUTURE EVENTS ~

Open garden

Dr. Dale Dixon's garden "Gondwana", will be open on the 18th and 19th of August from 10 am to 4.30 pm, at 12 Triller Court, Bakewell. Please contact Russell Dempster if you can help with the native plant sale during this event.

Invitation to COTA bird watching soiree, Leanyer Sewage Ponds

It would be wonderful to see members at this event. Apart from the entertainment, champagne and nibbles, I'm sure COTA's guests would enjoy being introduced to our mangroves.

Denise Goodfellow

August is Senior's Month and as part of our celebrations COTA (NT) is organising a bird watching soiree at the Leanyer sewage ponds, Darwin on Saturday 25 August, from 5.30 pm for 6.00 pm start.

Participants will meet at the front gate to the sewage ponds in Fitzmaurice Drive, Leanyer (travel east along Fitzmaurice drive until you come to the gate). Attire will be evening dress, sensible footwear (gumboots etc) and binoculars. Don't forget to bring insect repellent!

For catering purposes we require an RSVP. Phone COTA (NT) on 8941 1004 or email admin@cotant.org. There will be a prize for the best-dressed couple, so let your imagination run wild with your costumes!

Graeme Suckling
Executive Director
COTA (NT)

~ PAST EVENTS ~

Some notes from the July meeting on the talk given by Dr. Brian Thistleton, the principal economic entomologist for the Department of Primary Industry. Thank you, Russell Dempster.

Termites

Termites are fairly primitive insects closely related to cockroaches. There are approximately 350 species of termites in Australia.

Not all termites make mounds, and different species produce different types of mounds. *Coptotermes* mounds are often against trees. They attack living trees. Magnetic Termite (*Antitermes meridionalis*) mounds are orientated approximately N-S for temperature regulation.

The vast majority of termites are not pests. Indeed, only about 10-12 species of termites cause damage to buildings etc. They feed on plant material, digesting cellulose to recycle the plants in this way. They actually improve soil structure and help soils retain water.

Biology of *Mastotermes darwiniensis*

Mastotermes are found in Northern Australia and PNG and there are fossils of this species in Europe and America. They are completely subterranean, with nests in the soil and inside trees. Colonies can be large in disturbed areas, up to 200m in diameter. *Mastotermes* hollow out trees from inside the trunks. They can also ringbark plants. In terms of horticulture it is one of our most serious pests. Without control measures it could cost our economy between 5-10 million dollars per year.

90-95% of natural bush is damaged by *Coptotermes*. In cleared or disturbed areas, *Mastotermes* are far more prevalent.

Mapping and Treatment

Mirant is a persistent organochloride insecticide which used to be used for treatment. It is now being phased out due to its persistent toxic nature.

Colony size and mapping has been achieved using radioactive tracers, but more recently by using fluorescent dyes and DNA studies. They have been recorded traveling 118m in a week using different colour dyes. Control is very difficult as productive sites can be found in almost all trees in an affected mango plantation.

Termidor is the chemical now being used on arrange of horticultural crops. It is the same chemical used to treat dogs for ticks. Termidor is injected into some trees so that it runs down into the colony. The termites spread the chemical effectively to trees within 25m radius. An area can be kept free of termites for three to four years through monitoring on the edges of the treatment site.

Methods of distribution

Flights of kings and queens
Budding off the main colony
Transport in timber
Transport in firewood

Note that membership subs were due on 1 July, 2007.

**SENDER: TOP END NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
PO BOX 135 PALMERSTON
NT 0831**

TO:

**~SUBSCRIPTION FORM MEMBERSHIP DUE 1 JULY 2007~
TOP END NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
PO BOX 135 PALMERSTON NT 0831**

Please accept my subscription/renewal for membership of the Top End Native Plant Society

My details are as follows:

Name/s (Please print all family member names)

Postal Address Post Code

Telephone (work) (home)

Email address

Newsletters are now available by email (Acrobat Reader required to read files).
If you would like your newsletter sent by email please tick the box.

Payment Enclosed \$..... (\$20.00 per member/family, \$15.00 unwaged)

Signature

Date:/...../.....

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