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~ FEBRUARY 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

1. The TENPS Digital camera will be brought along to each general meeting for use by members
2. Calender for future speakers
3. We will attempt to include speakers to suit all levels to encourage more attendance by members

General meetings

Future meetings need to be more punctual and shorter. Speakers will be asked to talk for 30-45 mins, beginning at 8pm. We will be passing a suggestion sheet around at the next few meetings for members' ideas about future talks and field trips. Please contribute your ideas so we can try to meet your needs!

~ NEXT MEETING THURSDAY 15th FEBRUARY ~

Alison Derry who works in Weeds identification, at Palmerston will be talking about weeds.

History of problem weeds in the Northern Territory: How we can get rid of weed: Different methods of control.

Bring along your weeds and have them identified.

In the current *Ecos*, a CSIRO publication there is an article by Denise Goodfellow, on ornamental plants and the problems they can cause as weeds, in the Northern Territory.

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~ FIELD TRIP- SATURDAY 17th FEBRUARY ~

weeding *Citrus gracilis*

Meet Sayer Road, 4 pm. Sayer Road the last road on the left before turning onto the Arnhem Hwy) Date is Saturday 17th, time 4 pm. Bring muscles, gardening gloves, mattock. Dave Liddle will be attending and there will be some monitoring of the plants.

~ FUTURE EVENTS ~

***Nervilia peltata* Survey, Sunday 18th March at Charles Darwin National Park.**

Meet at the picnic ground at Charles Darwin NP at 8am for a morning of surveying these cryptic ground orchids. We have been assessing a series of monitoring plots each year since 2004 by counting and measuring the size of leaves. Some interesting population trends are evident as there appears to be some effect from fire, despite the plants being underground and dormant by the time the dry season fires arrive. Please contact Dave Liddle on 8945 6809 if you plan to attend, just in case there is a last minute change in arrangements due to the weather.

Dr. Dale Dixon confirmed that his Open Garden will be on the 18th and 19th August. We will be having a plant sale at his house when it is open for the Garden Scheme. So we need to get propagating now for it!

Also, he requested that if anyone has small Top End Native plants that he could buy to plant now, please contact him asap at the Herbarium.

March

Ian Morris will share with us some of his interesting and varied experiences at the March meeting, with a comparison of plants in PNG and Australia.

We hope to get Mike Braby to come and talk about butterfly plants at a future meeting.

~ PAST EVENTS ~

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In January, Kristen Appel, Senior Ranger with the Parks and Wildlife Service, Darwin Region Parks, talked about the values of our local parks. She is responsible for Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Charles Darwin National Park, Leanyer Recreation Park, Knuckey Lagoon Conservation Reserve, Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve, Holmes Jungle Nature Park, Howard Springs Nature Park and Berry Springs Nature Park.

Kristen spoke about the challenges of park management with few staff and limited resources by comparison to Commonwealth-funded parks such as Kakadu National Park. Casuarina Coastal Reserve, for example, is the most visited park in the NT with more than 1 million visits per year. Her 4 Rangers who are responsible for this reserve, along with others, have many tasks, few of

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which relate to the natural values of the park such as weed control and many which are more regulatory and maintenance type tasks such as rubbish collection, itinerant and dog control management.

Kristen referred to the importance of community groups such as TENPS and the Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group in assisting her rangers and improving natural values by revegetation and monitoring adverse impacts from people and feral organisms such as weeds. The Reserve has a management advisory committee to assist Parks management that has community representatives from the Landcare Group and the Surf Club.

A particular example of a successful weed control program is the control of *Senna alata* (Candlebush) along the stretch of Sandy Creek near RDH, and ongoing efforts to control other weeds such as *Cenchrus echinatus* (Mossman River Grass) and *Tribulus terrestris* (Caltrop) by spraying with herbicide. Of concern to the future natural values of the Reserve is the new adjacent Lyons housing development and the additional recreational pressure (eg mountain biking) that is being placed on the Reserve.

Kristen expressed her willingness to take advice from TENPS on native vegetation matters and past President Dave Liddle suggested that TENPS could provide support for Parks on particular matters if required.

Field Trip to Casuarina Coastal Reserve (Sunday 21 January)

The weather was ideal for weeding, with light rain, but this seem to deter both members of the Landcare Group and TENPS. The area targeted for weeding on this occasion was the second section of coastal area between the track and the beach that is in process of being rehabilitated. Parks and Wildlife have provided water to the area, which has ensured the survival of most of the plants that were planted in December, despite the lack of rain.

Weeds were cleared around the plants and then some time was spent trying to identify them. With the aid of the original list we succeeded with one exception.

We then retired to the Dripstone Cliffs and enjoyed food and drinks, but unfortunately no sunset.

Geoff Gaskell has provided a list of plants that were planted at Casuarina Coastal Reserve in December, below.

Canavalia rosea
Vitex rotundifolia
Casuarina equisetifolia
Pongamai pinnata
Acacia auriculiformis
Breynia cernua
Cordia subcordata
Glochidion xerocarpum
Guettarda speciosa
Sterculia quadrifida
Helicteres ixora
Ficus virens
Scaevola taccada (formerly *sericea*)
Morinda citrifolia



Other matters

Michael and I would like to thank the TENPS committee for their good wishes and the big basket of delectable fruit they sent Michael on his recent stay in Royal Adelaide Hospital. And a special thanks to Marj King for keeping in touch with me during those long weeks. Michael is now back in Darwin and undergoing treatment at Royal Darwin Hospital.



Bryce Courtenay's pond

A couple of weeks before Christmas I flew to NSW to stay with my friend Christine Gee and her partner, author Bryce Courtenay, in the Hunter Valley. Bryce's property consists of both rolling pasture and heavily forested hills. It really is beautiful country, but I must admit, I knew very few of the plants. However, one I did recognise was a *Dianella* sp., a member of Liliace with straplike leaves and a purple berry. I've seen it growing in the Arnhem Land escarpment.

Bryce is having difficulty keeping the pond (see behind us) clean. The water is always covered with green scum. I suspect it may be because there are no plants in the water, but if anyone has some advice, I'll pass it on.

I also visited other friends, George Negus and Kirsty Cockburn, in Sydney. They'd not known what plants or fish to introduce into their pond, and they did not want anything exotic.

Dave Wilson kindly gave me contact details for the NSW native fish society, and they were able to help with advice on both plants and fish, and the pond looks pretty good. This organisation may also be able to help Bryce. Unfortunately, because of an email crash I've lost the details of this organisation, and I've not been able to contact Dave. So if anyone has contact details could they pass them on to me?

Denise Goodfellow

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

TO:

**~SUBSCRIPTION FORM MEMBERSHIP DUE 1 JULY 2006~
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).....

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Newsletters are now available by email (Acrobat Reader required to read files).
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