



President: Russell Dempster 8983 2131
Vice President: Geoff Gaskell 8945 5825
Secretary: Felicity Middleton 8988 1840
Treasurer: Marj King 8985 6885
Publicity: Vacant
Publications: Jane Burford 8985 4741
Public Officer: Geoff Gaskell 8945 5825
Librarian: Vacant
General Committee Members
Melina McDowell
Josephine Wong

PO BOX 135 PALMERSTON NT 0831

<http://tenpsnt.tripod.com>

~ FEBRUARY 2008 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.

~ Next GENERAL MEETING Thursday 21st February 2008 ~

Mike Braby – Plants that butterflies feed on

Emma Woodward – Howard River catchment area (and TENPS involvement in the area)

~ Next FIELD TRIP Saturday 23rd February 2008~

Lee Point. Meet on Lee Point Rd past the caravan park on the left hand side at 9am. Contact Russell Dempster for further details 8983 2131.

~ Notes from GENERAL MEETING – January ~

The TENPS talk this month was 'Attracting birds and other fauna to your garden' by Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow. Notes taken by Sean Bellairs.

In a very colourful talk, with lots of interesting anecdotes spicing up the story, Denise gave a series of tips for attracting wildlife to a Top End garden. Gardens in the Top End can attract many birds and provide habitat for a range of other fauna but it depends on the plants. Some tips from Denise:

1. Let the weeds grow! (I like that advice). Some of the plants won't actually be weeds. As well flowering weeds provide resources and shelter for many insects.
2. Now add some special plants, especially some native ones. Vitex rotundifolia is a good one. Crotalaria novae-hollandiae is also pretty, but Denise notes it can be toxic and so caterpillars eating it may also be toxic. A pile of sand will attract Pardalotes. Include plants with different types of leaves, flowers and fruits such as: Denhamia obscura, Xanthostemon eucalyptoides, Cordia subcordata or Carallia brachiata.
3. Fruiting palms will attract birds. The Common Koel, Figbird and Pied Imperial Pigeon all feed on the Carpentaria palm.

4. Let the grass grow and flower! The Yellow-rumped Mannikin, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin and finches will be attracted to eat either the grass seeds or insects eating the grasses.
5. Don't have a cat!!
6. Fruit trees will attract birds. Plant either introduced mango, custard apple or citrus trees, or grow their Australian relatives such as Green plum (*Buchanania obovata*), *Polyalthia australis*, *Melicope elleryana* or *Glycosmis macrophylla*. These attract butterflies as well as birds.
7. Add some *Grevillea* – as well as birds, stingless native bees also like *Grevillea*.
8. Try a local *Hibiscus* or two or other local *Malvaceae* such as *Abelmoschus moschatus*. Dusky and Brown Honeyeaters love them.
9. Add *Eucalyptus* or *Acacia*. Woollybutt and black wattle attract cicadas, and then birds eat the cicadas. Green lacewing larva hide in *Acacia* blossom and these larva eat aphids. In turn, night birds eat the larva.
10. Add a weeping t-tree (*Leptospermum longifolium*). Finches and honey eaters use the fine twigs for nesting. *Carpentaria* bees burrow into dead branches and they are also good for spiders. Birds use spider web for nests and some birds, such as the Helmeted Friarbird, eat spiders.
11. Add a shallow pool and encourage native plants to grow in and around it. Include *Hybanthus enneaspermus* and native ferns such as *Cyclosorus interruptus* or sedges such as *Fuirena umbellata*. This may attract dragonflies, Rainbow Bee-eaters and Northern Water Dragons. In turn Brown Goshawks may eat the lizards.
12. Make it a big pool and other birds such as the Banded Land Rail, Pied Heron and Wandering Whistling-Duck may visit. They have been seen in suburban pools. A branch over the pool will allow Kingfishers to bath.
13. Add some native fish, such as the Chequered Rainbow Fish.
14. Add some monsoon forest plants such as *Breynia cernua*, *Maranthes corymbosa*, *Miliusa brahei* or *Lee rubra*. Some pretty moths such as the Common Grass Yellow will be attracted and attract insect eating birds. Other birds such as the Rose-crowned Fruit-dove eat the fruits. However watch out for pale yellow/creamy hairy moths/caterpillars as they can be highly irritant.
15. Untidy gardens with lots of leaf litter make good homes for insects and attract the Orange Footed Scrub Fowl, the Rainbow Pitta and the tiny Red Sided Rainbow Skink, which lives in leaf litter. The male skinks have copper coloured sides in the breeding season.
16. Don't use plants that are weedy or poisonous and spread by birds, as some are environmental weeds, the poisonous ones include: *Oleander* (*Nerium oleander* (red) or *Thevetia peruviana* (yellow)) and *Strychnine tree* (*Strychnos lucida*); while *Wild Passionfruit* (*Passiflora foetida*), *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) and the *Fishtail Palm* (*Caryotis mitis*) are environmental weeds.
17. Encourage neighbours to grow native plant gardens too and other birds will be attracted to larger patches of vegetation: Brown Quail, Little Curlew, Pheasant Coucal, Barking Owl.

And if you would like more information, Denise's book, 'Birds of Australia's Top End' has a chapter 'Attracting birds to your garden'.

~ Summary FIELD TRIP- January 2008 ~

In November 2007, TENPS received an approach from Olive Frakking, Secretary of Fred's Pass Management Board Inc, seeking our support for an application by the board for a grant from Australian Conservation Volunteers to assist with:

- establishment of a 5.2 km walking track around the lake and surrounding vegetation;
- revegetation along the creek line to help prevent erosion of that area;
- planting of different species to enhance the existing diversity of flora and habitat, thus contributing to the educational value and beautification of the area;
- placement of interpretive signage to enhance the educational aspect, intended to attract attention to fauna and flora as well as the adjacent Palm Garden.



Commencing the excursion

The intention is to provide an area which will provide good environmental opportunities for local schools, community members and visitors to Fred's Pass Reserve to appreciate the natural beauty of the area. It is understood that Australian Conservation Volunteers would supply labour for the project and Fred's Pass Management Board would pay for materials.

In response to this initial approach, Russell, as then vice-president, provided a letter indicating that TENPS supports this project and is interested in providing some plants for it and in being involved in the initial survey of plants that exist already in the area. Our committee then proposed that a plant identification and survey of the area be undertaken as the January field trip. As a result, on Saturday 19 January, some 12 TENPS members met with Olive Frakking, Maree Davis, Fred's Pass Reserve Supervisor, Pam Wickham, advising on the proposed walking track, and Sharna Frakking who proposed the project after an excursion with university colleagues drew her attention to the potential of the area.

The 165 acres area comprising Fred's Pass Reserve was declared a reserve in 1978. The reserve is a well-used community asset and extensive improvements have been made to facilitate use of some areas for sporting and recreational activities, not least of which is the annual Fred's Pass Show. An ornamental, man-made lake was created in the early 1970s, inspired partly by the need for drainage, but also to provide an area of beauty and interest. This has been successful and attracts many water birds. We were taken firstly to an open grassy area which was too wet to cross.

This area abuts the Palm Garden which was planted in 1986 and 1988 by members of The Palm Society of the Northern Territory. It contains some very interesting palms from the Territory and around the world and includes some very large specimens. We then drove to the other side of the lake and plunged into the woodland, which was pretty dense and criss-crossed with little running streams. Significant and other native trees were flagged and it was noted that the area would be considerably improved if a concentrated effort were made to remove many of the *Dillenia alata* trees which have spread densely, thus excluding more desirable plants. AS ever, mission and



gamba abound. As Olive explained to us, this is seen as an ongoing project that will require work for many years to come to bring it to fruition, but they are keen to make a start. Denise was able to identify many birds, lizards and spiders for us and hopefully a plant (maybe weeds too) list will accompany this together with Melina's photos.

We have undertaken to visit the area again and to provide advice where it might be helpful. It is probable also that they will be looking to purchase some suitable plants.

Species list:

These were the plants flagged that we thought were significant.

Acacia auriculiformis

Alphitonia incana

Alstonia actinopylla

Antidesma ghaesembilla

Brachychiton megaphyllum

Brachychiton species

Breynia cernua

Canarum australianum

Carallia brachiata

Carpentaria acuminata

Clerodendron floribunda

Corymbia polycarpa

Corymbia polysciada

Cycas armstrongii

Cyclophyllum schultzei

Denhamia obscura

Erythrophleum chlorostachys

Eucalyptus miniata

Ficus racemosa

Livistona humilis

Lophostemon lactifluus

Lygodium species

Maranthes corymbosa

Melaleuca viridiflora

Melicope elleryana

Pandanus spiralis

Petalostigma pubescens

Planchonia careya

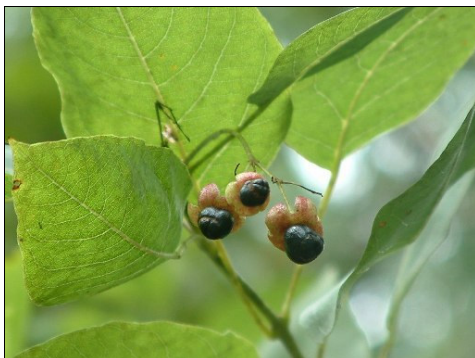
Premna acuminata

Smilax australis

Syzygium suborbiculare

Timonius timon

Xanthostemon paradoxus



Clerodendrum floribunda





Xanthostemon paradoxus

There were also plenty of weeds including *Dillenia indica*, *Ixora*, *Hyptis*, *Fish Tail Palm*, *Sida*, *Snakeweed* and *Triumphetta colloidis*.

~ Notes from COMMITTEE MEETING – January ~

WHAT IS YOUR COMMITTEE DOING.....?

- Pursuing funding for maintenance of fencing at Bankers Jungle;
- Assessing possibilities for creating a labyrinth at the Palliative Care Hospice;
- Liaising with Dale Dixon for plant sale at his open garden on 15-16 March;
- Seeking a venue for the plant identification workshop, hopefully for May Day week end;
- Seeking a member to be our Publicity Officer

~ FUTURE EVENTS ~

TENPS:

Plant Sale at Dale Dixon's Open Garden: March 15 & 16th at 12 Triller Court Bakewell

March 20th general meeting. Kristin Metcalfe. *Mangrove Flouristics and Recovery from Disturbances*.

To be confirmed.

March field trip. Charles Darwin National Park. To be confirmed

~ SPECIAL PROJECTS ~

Labrynth Project – Territory Palliative Care

TENPS has been asked to assist in advising and organising native plants to go around the hospice at Territory Palliative Care, Royal Darwin Hospital. Below is a picture of the design of the plan (labyrinth) that has been drawn up by In-Scape-Out.



Basically, a labyrinth is a singular path that winds its way into the centre and then back out again. It is a path that allows the mind a place to explore the emotional and spiritual aspects of a person's journey in life and to give space to reflect and look ahead to all they are currently facing in their lives.

Labyrinths are a very old concept, with the oldest surviving labyrinth found in Sardinia which dates back approximately 2,000 years BC. It is said that labyrinths are made up of a universal pattern, most likely created in the realm of the collective unconscious, birthed through the human psyche and passed down through the ages. They are mysterious because we do not know the true origin of their design, or exactly how they provide a space that invites clarity and wisdom.

Labyrinths are found in almost every religious tradition around the world and there are many shapes, designs and forms that it can take.

Field Naturalists:

February 2008 meeting. Wednesday February 13th. Emma Woodward.

Howard River environmental flows and social values project.

March 2008 meeting. Wednesday March 12th. Dale Dixon

Figs and their wasps.

Contact Field Naturalists for more details.

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

TO:

~SUBSCRIPTION FORM MEMBERSHIP DUE 1 JULY 2008~

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

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:/...../.....