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~ MARCH 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 begins at 8pm. Tea & coffee are available during the meeting. The venue 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

- TENPS is looking at purchasing a laptop computer and printer with a budget of \$1500.
- The committee agreed to start early negotiations with NTHA about the Garden Fair
- A fence sign for members identifying themselves as being a member of TENPS was suggested.
- Work is in progress on the TENPS database and website.
- TENPS equipment – databeam, camera etc. – are now housed with Marj.
- We agreed to participate in the World Environment Day Expo on Sunday, 3 June.
- Efforts are being made to organise a plant identification workshop weekend if Litchfield education centre accommodation can be arranged.

~ NEXT MEETING THURSDAY 15th MARCH ~

Ian Morris will talk on a comparison of plants in PNG and Australia.

~ FIELD TRIP- SUNDAY 18th MARCH ~

***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.

~ FUTURE EVENTS ~

The recently formed group, Friends of Fogg Dam (FOFD) have invited TENPS and Field Naturalists' club members to join them on Sunday 22nd April. We will meet at 10am at the rotunda at the Fogg Dam car park at 10am. After a walk and talk there will be an information session about what FOFD are about and their future plans. This will be followed by a BYO BBQ lunch. TENPS members are happy to share cars.

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

~ PAST EVENTS ~

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Alison Derry who works in Weeds identification, at Palmerston gave a presentation on weeds at the last meeting on 15th February. Dr. Andrew Mitchell of AQIS (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service) was also present and helpfully identified several plants for those who attended. Our thanks to both.

Field Trip to weed *Microcitrus gracilis*

On Sayer Road just in from the corner of the Stuart Highway, a roadside area has been quarantined from the ravages of the mowing contractors to protect a small population of *Microcitrus gracilis*. Although locally not uncommon there has been only one sighting of this plant bearing fruit in Arnhem Land. On the afternoon of the 17th February a small number of members devoted a couple of hours weeding around plants and monitoring the status of the population. It appears the adjoining landowner has poisoned a number of trees along the boundary and this has had dire consequences for a number of the plants. Dave Liddle has been collecting and collating the data for some years.



Other matters

Acacia spectra

In May 1998 while in a bushwalking trip to the Mitchell Plateau, a flower with large bright yellow flowers attracted my attention, on closer inspection it was identified as an Acacia but not being familiar with plant in the area I thought no more of it other than to take a photo and collect a seed pod. On returning to Darwin I planted it on my nature strip where it grew well. I took the photo to the NT Herbarium but they were unable to identify it, as it was probably not a NT species. Some time later I tried using the Acacia CD to identify it but still no luck.



In 2003 I took samples to Perth herbarium and met with Bruce Maslin - initially he took some convincing it had been collected on the Mitchell Plateau as the area I had collected it from has been the site of numerous flora surveys. Eventually he decided it was an unnamed species. The process from finding to naming has taken several years, as it was necessary to get some plant material from its original habitat. On a return visit to the area I was amazed to find large numbers of the plant but it does seem its habitat is somewhat limited, but also subject to regular burning.

Last month this acacia, which was called the Kimberley Ghost Wattle, was named *Acacia spectra*. As the photo shows it has needle like phyllodes, which are about 40 cm in length and sparsely place along the branches, the flowers are spectacular bright yellow balls. The original plant died last year but many vigorous seedlings are now colonising my nature strip.

Marj King

Ecos article

Denise's article in *Ecos*, on ornamental plants and the problems they cause is available at

http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=EC134p28.pdf or
http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=EC134p28.pdf

Anyone who can't access this contact me, and I'll email you the article as a PDF.

Denise

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NT 0831**

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