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## ~ March 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 MEETING THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup> March~

Kristin Metcalfe will be speaking on *Mangrove Floristics and the Recovery of Mangroves from Disturbance*. Kristin recently completed her PhD on the recovery of mangroves from disturbance through CDU. Her talk will be a general talk on their floristics, illustrated with reference to the mangroves of the Darwin region. Kristin's study site was at Charles Darwin Park which we will visit as a follow-up for the March field trip.

#### ~ NEXT FIELD TRIP- SATURDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> March ~

**Charles Darwin Park. Meet at 9am at the picnic shelter near the main car park.** Kristin Metcalfe will be leading this trip to show us the mangroves and the study site for her PhD. Please note the date as it is a week later than normal due to the Easter weekend following the general meeting. The walk may be wet and muddy, so please wear appropriate clothing. Old walking boots (lace-ups) or gum boots are recommended. Long pants, long sleeved shirts and hats are also advisable. Don't forget some water to drink.

#### ~ BONUS FIELD TRIP- SUNDAY 30<sup>th</sup> March ~

**Charles Darwin Park. Meet at 8am at the picnic shelter near the main car park.** Dave Liddle will be leading this trip to continue to monitor the orchid *Nervillia peltata* at some study sites there. Please contact Dave on 8945 6809 if you are intending to come.

**Open Garden Scheme.** Dale Dixon is having another open garden this weekend March 15-16 at 12 Triller Court Bakewell. TENPS will be selling plants at this event, if you can help out please Phone Russell on 8983 2131

## WHAT IS YOUR COMMITTEE DOING . . . . . ???

- Russell and Marj are continuing to liaise with Mandy Cox on the planned labyrinth for the Palliative Care Hospice. We may possibly ask members if they would like TENPS to make a contribution towards this project, either through a donation or a gift of plants.
- Ongoing funding for maintenance of the fence at Bankers Jungle is still to be negotiated.
- The committee is considering a fund-raising event at the Deckchair Cinema for next Dry season. We will keep you posted.
- Next Members Monthly Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm Thursday 20 March 2008.
- Next committee meeting will be held at 7.30 Tuesday 25 March 2008 at the electorate office at Moil Shopping Centre. Members are very welcome to attend committee meetings if they wish so to do.
- Arrangements for the website are still pending.

### ~ Notes from GENERAL MEETING – February ~

Dr Michael Braby's very interesting talk entitled 'Butterflies by day, moths by night' identified, with stunning photography, some of the more often mistaken species of Lepidoptera. (Lepidoptera is an Order of the Class 'Insecta' that includes butterflies and moths.)

In opening his presentation he referred to some useful books for identifying both moths and butterflies for both the amateur and the keen student. Those recommended were: 'Moths of the Adelaide region', 'Moths of Australia', 'Flying Colours' (which Michael recommended as being particularly useful), 'A guide to Australian moths' and a text book – 'Moths of Australia' by I.F.B. Common.

- There are few butterflies in the world that fly at 'night', and these typically fly at dusk, and the early hours of the morning.
- There are a few Australian butterfly species in this category including the 'Evening Brown' and Dusk-flats.
- Moths that fly in the day are poorly known, because most moth studiers operate at night, whilst most people interested in butterflies ignore them because they are moths! So combined with a lack of interest is a lack of information.
- Most of the day-flying moths don't fly during the middle of the day – mainly morning and late afternoon/dusk.
- Day-flying moths are usually very colourful, which is one reason they are mistaken for butterflies
  - the phylogeny of Lepidoptera shows that whilst most groups of moths are nocturnal, day flying has evolved independently in different groups.
- Hesperioidea, Hedyloidea and Papilionoidea are Super Families of butterflies
- Calliduloidea and Uraniodea are moth Super Families most closely related to butterflies.
- There is a very close relationship between moths and plants. One species, A Family, or a group of Families might be associated with one plant.
- *Cephanodes janus* is the 'Hawke moth' which has been mistaken for a humming bird! About 3 inches long, with a large body and clear wings, it has a long proboscis and beats its wings so rapidly that you can only see the body.

- The Sesioidea Super family of moths mimic wasps, and it is necessary to use pheromone traps to catch them. They differ from wasps in having thick antennae, heavy scales and hairs on the end of their body.
- *Birrhana cleis* spends much of its lifecycle on mistletoes, laying eggs in large clusters on leaves. A very hairy caterpillar pupates to a silk cocoon attached to a leaf. The moths predominantly fly during the very late afternoon.
  - The zodiac moth (*Alcides metaurus*) is day flying and has only 3 recordings of sightings, and these have been on the Gove Peninsula. It is thought that they may be dispersing from the Wet Tropics on the east coast of QLD) as they have only been seen in the NT during the dry. They pupate in soil or leaf litter or under the bark of a tree.
- *Perioptera diversa* is an unusual species in that the males only fly during the early morning and the females in the late afternoon. They favour Rubiaceae (plants) and lay their eggs in loose soil rather than on plants. They are therefore found more prolifically in open areas rather than dense woodland. They also pupate in the ground for between 8-10 months. The adult moths have very good hearing so are frightened away easily.
  - The Castniidae group are all endemic to Australia and are associated with the monocotyledons: predominantly the grassland and sedgeland communities in the south-west and south-east of Australia. They are seen as an indicator group for grassland community health with quite a few species undescribed.

*Birrhana cleis*



*Perioptera diversa*



**~ Summary FIELD TRIP- February 2008 ~**

Our February field trip was to Lee Point. We met at the edge of the Commonwealth land at the start of the coastal reserve opposite Lee Pt Caravan Pk. The initial part of the walk was through

open woodland dominated by *Eucalyptus tetradonta*. Upon reaching the edge of the coastal monsoon vine forest the path took us down a sometimes steep track towards the beach.

Apart from the annoying mozzies, it was a very pleasant walk. The coastal vine thicket is rich in species, with many plants flowering or fruiting at this time of year. The plant list includes those species that were seen flowering and fruiting. *Clematis pickeringii* is a pretty creeping ground cover and there were quite a few impressive *Amorphophallus*.

Russell Dempster.

Species	Family	Flowering / Fruiting
• <i>Abrus precatorius</i>	Fabaceae	fr
• <i>Acacia auriculiformis</i> (Black Wattle)	Mimosaceae	
• <i>Alstonia actinophylla</i> (Milkwood)	Apocynaceae	
• <i>Amorphophallus paeoniifolius</i>	Araceae	
• <i>Ampelocissus acetosa</i> (Wild grape)	Vitaceae	
• <i>Breynia cernua</i>	Euphorbiaceae	
• <i>Bridelia tomentosa</i>	Euphorbiaceae	
• <i>Caesalpinia bonduc</i>	Caesalpiniaceae	
• <i>Canarium australianum</i>	Burseraceae	
• <i>Capparis sepiaria</i>	Capparaceae	
• <i>Carpentaria acuminata</i>	Arecaceae	
• <i>Cassytha filiformis</i> (Dodder Laurel)	Lauraceae	
• <i>Cathormion umbellatum</i>	Mimosaceae	
• <i>Cayratia</i>	Vitaceae	
• <i>Celtis philippinensis</i>	Ulmaceae	
• <i>Clematis pickeringii</i>	Ranunculaceae	
• <i>Croton habrophyllus</i>	Euphorbiaceae	
• <i>Cupaniopsis anacardioides</i> (Tuckeroo)	Sapindaceae	
• <i>Denhamia obscura</i>	Celastraceae	
• <i>Dioscorea</i>	Dioscoreaceae	
• <i>Diospyros calycantha</i>	Ebenaceae	
• <i>Drypetes deplanchei</i>	Euphorbiaceae	
• <i>Exocarpos latifolius</i> (Native Cherry)	Santalaceae	
• <i>Flacourtia territorialis</i>	Flacourtiaceae	
• <i>Flagellaria indica</i>	Flagellariaceae	
• <i>Flueggea virosa</i>	Euphorbiaceae	fl, fr
• <i>Glochidion xerocarpum</i>	Euphorbiaceae	
• <i>Glycosmis trifoliata</i>	Rutaceae	
• <i>Helicteres isora</i>	Sterculiaceae	fl
• <i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i> (Beach Hibiscus)	Malvaceae	fl
• <i>Hypoestes floribunda</i>	Acanthaceae	
• <i>Ipomoea abrupta</i>	Convolvulaceae	
• <i>Ixora timorensis</i>	Rubiaceae	

• <i>Jasminum didymum</i> ssp. <i>didymum</i> (Native Jasmine)	Oleaceae	fl
• <i>Litsea glutinosa</i>	Lauraceae	fl
• <i>Memecylon pauciflorum</i>	Melastomataceae	
• <i>Micromelum minutum</i>	Rutaceae	fl, fr
• <i>Milusa brahei</i>	Annonaceae	
• <i>Millettia pinnata</i> (syn. <i>Pongamia</i> )	Fabaceae	
• <i>Murraya paniculata</i> var. <i>ovatifoliolata</i>	Rutaceae	fl
• <i>Opilia amentacea</i>	Opiliaceae	
• <i>Pouteria sericea</i>	Sapotaceae	
• <i>Psychotria nesophila</i>	Rubiaceae	
• <i>Smilax australis</i>	Smilacaceae	fl
• <i>Stenocarpus verticis</i>	Proteaceae	
• <i>Sterculia quadrifida</i> (Peanut Tree)	Sterculiaceae	
• <i>Strychnos lucida</i>	Loganiaceae	fr
• <i>Tabernaemontana orientalis</i>	Apocynaceae	fr
• <i>Tacca leontopetaloides</i>	Taccaceae	fl
• <i>Terminalia microcarpa</i>	Combretaceae	
• <i>Thespesia populneoides</i>	Malvaceae	
• <i>Vitex glabrata</i>	Verbenaceae	
• <i>Wrightia pubescens</i>	Apocynaceae	
• <i>Ziziphus oenoplia</i>	Rhamnaceae	
<b>Woodland</b>		
• <i>Acacia dimidiata</i>	Mimosaceae	
• <i>Croton arnhemicus</i>	Euphorbiaceae	
• <i>Erythrophleum chlorostachys</i> (Ironwood)	Caesalpiniaceae	
• <i>Eucalyptus tetradonta</i> (Stringybark)	Myrtaceae	
• <i>Gardenia megasperma</i>	Rubiaceae	
• <i>Persoonia falcata</i> (Milky Plum)	Proteaceae	



*Helicteres isora*

## ~ FUTURE EVENTS ~

### April General Meeting:

Ken Scott, CDU. *Grass layer dynamics in a long unburnt savanna*

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

**Plant identification workshop.** Two years ago Dale Dixon held a plant identification workshop at Litchfield national Park and he has kindly has agreed to conduct another one over long weekend 3 – 5<sup>th</sup> May. The Coomalie Camp Site has been booked and details are still being finalised. If you are interested in attending, email [chibberta@bigpond.com](mailto:chibberta@bigpond.com) or phone Russell 8983 2131 (AH).

**A team at CSIRO is conducting a project in the Howard River region, east of Darwin.**

- The project hopes to identify the full range of cultural and social values/uses of wetlands and water in this region. They hope to do this by talking to different members of the community.
- It is important that these uses are properly documented so that people realise that there are multiple uses of water that must be taken into account when decisions are made about its management.
- This information will be provided to the NT Government to assist them in the development of a water allocation plan for the region.
- People have been very forthcoming about why they think a certain lagoon or creek is important, and many people are very passionate about being able to continue using their favourite areas.
- The extensive local knowledge that people hold about the Howard Region has been very revealing. For example, one fisherman spoken to has fished the same stretch of the Howard River for the past 35 years. The information he could provide about change in both the use of and condition of the Howard River is undocumented and extremely valuable in looking at managing change over time. For example, the banning of netting at the river mouth has resulted in more big fish, whilst a new set of users in the region, including quadbike and motorbike riders are destroying access to some fishing areas.
- Wetlands as close to Darwin as Knuckey Lagoons hold great historical significance. A number of significant sites including the foundations of a WWII radar station and a deep well, dug by market gardeners to access water prior to the war are still evident.
- Old archives at both the National Archives and at the Northern Territory Library have prove to be very informative and the range of historic photos in the NT collection has been very revealing, particularly the uses of different wetlands around Darwin. We have found photos from the 1920s of motorbike race meets at Knuckey Lagoons, horse racing and water-skiing competitions (complete with jumps) at Leaning Tree Lagoon.
- Old correspondence from the 1950s has been discovered which described the process of setting up what is today known as Howard Springs Recreation Reserve. Back in those days you could go hunting and use a shot gun anywhere in the Darwin region as long as it wasn't within one mile of the Darwin Post Office. There was a concern first and foremost that people might accidentally get shot whilst picnicking at Howard Springs, so the area was made a Bird Protection District; thus protecting humans also!
- From the research so far it has been found that conflicts over water use, are certainly not a new thing. But listening to each group, and determining the full scope of reasons why these areas are important, is a good start to planning their use for the future.

**Field Naturalists:**

March 2008 meeting. Wednesday March 12<sup>th</sup>. 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~**

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