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~ NOVEMBER 2005 NEWSLETTER ~ **MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS**

We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. General meetings conclude by 8.15pm and are followed by a guest speaker beginning at 8:30 pm. There is time for a cuppa between the meeting and the guest speaker. The venue for the meeting is Marrara Christian School, on the corner of Amy Johnson and McMillan Drives.

All welcome. Bring plants to swap, sell or have identified.

~ NEXT MEETING THURSDAY 17th NOVEMBER ~ **~Annual General Meeting ~**

Please try to make it to this meeting as we need a quorum for our Society to continue to function efficiently. It will be a short meeting to vote on the new Committee and our amended Constitution. (see more inside). This will be followed by a tea break and then what is bound to be an informative and fascinating presentation by undoubtedly one of the most experienced naturalists in the Top End.

~Guest Speaker ~

“The Unique Ecosystems of the Arnhem Plateau”

Ian Morris

If past talks by the well-known naturalist and photographer Ian Morris are something to go by, he will amaze and entertain us with his magnificent slides of escarpment flora and fauna.

~ NOVEMBER FIELD TRIPS ~

Adelaide River Catchment rainforest patches
Saturday 19th November

Willie Burgess has offered to take us to visit two rainforest patches in the Adelaide River Catchment. A great time of the year to visit rainforests as the build up to the rainy season is "when it is all happening" with regard to reproduction. Numbers are limited so please contact Willie on 8927 6278 if interested. A day trip, so please bring a cut lunch, water bottle, hat, sunscreen and sturdy footwear.

Seed collection and Plant Propagation Workshop **Starting at 9am on Saturday 26th November**

Now is a good time to sow seeds into trays to ensure you have plants to plant out when regular rain sets in. This will be a great opportunity to learn and/or share your knowledge on seed collection, sowing, potting-on and cutting techniques, and for TENPS to build up stock for our plant sale at Willie's Open Garden in April next year. Also, participants get to take home six plants each. See more details inside.

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

~ Other Upcoming Events ~

December: Instead of a General Meeting we will be having a **Christmas party** at East Point Reserve at 6pm on Thursday 15th December. BYO chair, mozzie repellent, drinks, food to BBQ and salad or desert to share.

January: There will be no Newsletter, meeting or field trips in January

February: General Meeting and Field Trip - **Grasses – Identifying native and exotic - weeds and fuel loads.** *Final details will be in the December Newsletter*

~Seed Collection and Plant Propagation Workshop ~

At the home of Sally Jacka and Greg Beresford, Lot 7 Solar Village, Humpty Doo
Turn right off the Arnhem Hwy into Stanley Rd. Then left into Strangways Rd. and right into Dalgety Rd. Go to the end of Dalgety Rd. then continue on the dirt road after the 'Private Property' signs. From here, arrows will direct you the rest of the way.

Come along for all or part of the program.

Please RSVP and for further details call Sally on 8988 5654.

~Darwin Palm update~



Dave demonstrating distinguishing features of Darwin Palm on a field trip to Whitewood Road rainforest patch.



Darwin Palm is a thin, clumping palm, 5 to 10m high, with sprouting feather-like fronds with fine leaflets.

In September, as part of Biodiversity month activities, Dave Liddle led field trips to various Darwin rural region rainforest patches in search of Darwin Palm. While we did not find any new populations, we saw some interesting rainforests and had the chance to brush-up on our plant identification skills.

In October, Parks and Wildlife staff and Australian Conservation Trust Volunteers erected a fence at Banker's Jungle in Koolpinya Station with materials purchased

through a \$10,000 EnvironmeNT Grant awarded to TENPS. The purpose is to restrict access to part of the jungle by cattle, buffalo and feral pigs in an attempt to save the endangered Darwin Palm (*Ptychosperma bleeseri*, now named *Ptychosperma macarthurii* by the Darwin Herbarium).

So far, four field trips by TENPS members have been made to assess the density and health of the Darwin Palm population within the fenced area. There is obvious damage by feral animals and, sadly, we only found 10

individual *Ptychosperma*. We will continue to monitor their progress and regeneration now that the fence is complete. Trips will also need to be made to check the condition of the fence after the wet season. We have a



wonderful opportunity here to learn more about the palm and the effects of feral animal damage to other species and rainforest communities in general.



Above: Feral animals have left much of the ground bare of plants at Banker's Jungle. Hopefully our fence will give more plants a chance to regenerate.

Left: We did not find any Darwin Palm in this rainforest patch off Gunn Point Road; however, it has been ravaged by fire so there were few under-canopy species to be seen.

~ Request for Fairy Garden plants ~

Alawa Preschool is planting a fairy garden and is looking for donations of appropriate plants. At present the accumulated plants are predominantly exotic. Australian fairies and preschoolers need native plants. Perhaps you have a spare plant or two that is non-poisonous, non-prickly and grows to 1 metre at the most. A variety of plant forms such as grasses, herbs, bushes, and prostrate would be lovely. If you can help please contact: Grusha Leeman phone 8948 3339 grusha@audealism.com



~ Greening Australia Plant Sales ~

Greening Australia is holding two native plant sales at their nursery at 26 Dinah Beach Road, Stuart Park on Saturday 12th Nov. and Saturday 10th Dec. from 9am to 2pm. For enquiries ring Marguerite on 0428 787 097.

~ Constitution Update ~

A two-thirds majority is needed to accept the proposed Constitution. If you cannot attend the AGM, please vote on the enclosed proxy form and return it before the 17th November.

As highlighted over recent months, major changes to TENPS constitution will be voted on at the AGM in November. A full version of the proposed constitution is available on the web site:

<http://tenpsnt.tripod.com/index.htm>. The

constitutional change has been forced by requirements under the Associations Act. There is a model constitution under the regulations and in the main we are moving to this model constitution. The main clauses in which the proposed constitution deviates

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from the model constitution are outlined below.

EXTRACTS FROM DRAFT REVISED TENPS CONSTITUTION

PART 1 – PRELIMINARY

2. Objects and purposes

The objects and purposes of the Association are to promote and encourage –

- (a) the appreciation, conservation and study of flora native to the Top End of the Northern Territory of Australia and the diverse habitats of such flora;
- (b) the propagation and cultivation of Top End native flora on both private and public land;
- (c) the establishment of national parks, flora reserves, other protected areas and botanic gardens;
- (d) the strengthening of laws for the conservation of Australian native flora and its habitats;
- (e) the recording and publication of information on Top End native flora and its habitats; and
- (f) the establishment and maintenance of association with organisations having compatible objects and purposes.

3. Minimum number of members:

The Association must have at least five (5) members.

PART 3 – MEMBERS

9. Application for membership:

To apply to become a member of the Association an applicant must –

- (a) submit a written application for membership to the Committee –
 - (i) in a form approved by the Committee;
 - (ii) signed by the applicant; and
 - (iii) accompanied by a joining fee; and
- (b) be a person, family or organisation.

10. Approval of Committee:

- (1) The Committee must consider any application made under clause 9 at the next available committee meeting and must accept or reject the application at that meeting or the next.

- (2) If an application for membership is approved by the Committee, the applicant becomes a member.
- (3) If an application is rejected, the applicant may appeal against the decision by giving notice to the Secretary within 14 days after being advised of the rejection.
- (4) If an applicant gives notice of an appeal against the rejection of their application, the Committee must reconsider the application at the next committee meeting after receipt of the notice of appeal.
- (5) If after reconsidering an application the Committee reaffirms its decision to reject the application, the decision is final.
- (6) If an application is rejected and: either no appeal against the rejection is made; or if an appeal is made and the Committee reaffirms its decision to reject the application; any joining fee paid by the applicant is to be refunded in full.

11. Joining fee

The joining fee is either –

- (a) a pro rata annual fee based on the remaining part of the financial year; or
- (b) the amount determined from time to time by resolution at a general meeting.

14. Voting

- (1) Subject to subclause (3) and clause 18, each person that is a member has one vote and each family or organisation that are members have up to two votes at general meetings of the Association.
- (2) Each vote at general meetings must be cast in person or by signed proxy.
- (3) Votes may only be cast by persons listed on the Associations register of members or by authorised representatives of organisations.
- (4) A member is not eligible to vote until 10 working days after their application has been accepted.

PART 4 - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

24. Composition of Committee

- (1) The Management Committee consists of –
 - (a) a Chairperson;
 - (b) a Vice-Chairperson;

- (c) a Secretary;
 - (d) a Treasurer;
 - (e) a Publicity Officer;
 - (f) a Publications Officer;
 - (g) a Librarian; and
 - (h) two (2) committee members.
- (2) Unless elected directly as a separate office holder, the Committee must appoint one committee member to be the Association's public officer.
37. Treasurer:
- (1) The Treasurer must –
 - (a) receive all moneys paid to or received by the Association and issue receipts for those moneys in the name of the Association;
 - (b) pay all moneys received into the account of the Association within 10 working days after receipt;
 - (c) make any payments authorised by the Committee or by a general meeting of the Association from the Association's funds; and
 - (d) ensure cheques are signed by him or her and at least one other committee member, or by any 2 other committee members authorised by the Committee.
 - (2) The Treasurer must ensure the accounting records of the Association are kept in accordance with section 41 of the Act.
 - (3) The Treasurer must coordinate the preparation of the Association's annual statement of accounts.
 - (4) If directed to do so by the Chairperson, the Treasurer must submit to the Committee a report, balance sheet or financial statement in accordance with that direction.
 - (5) The Treasurer has custody of all securities, books and documents of a financial nature and accounting records of the Association unless the members resolve otherwise at a general meeting.
 - (6) The Treasurer must maintain the register of members in accordance with section 34 of the Act;
 - (7) The Treasurer must perform any other duties imposed by this Constitution on the Treasurer.

38. Publicity Officer
The Publicity Officer shall co-ordinate promotion of the activities of the Association.

39. Publications Officer
The Publications Officer shall –

- (a) facilitate the production of a regular newsletter to be distributed to all members; and
- (b) assist in the production of other publications, as directed by the committee.

40 Librarian
The Librarian shall manage the library resources held by the Association.

41 Public officer

- (1) The public officer must ensure that documents are filed with the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs in accordance with sections 23, 28 and 45 of the Act.
- (2) The public officer must keep a current copy of the Constitution of the Association.
- (3) The public officer may hold any other office in the Association.

PART 5 - MEETINGS OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

43. Voting and decision making

- (1) Each committee member present at the meeting has a deliberative vote.
- (2) A question arising at a committee meeting must be decided by a majority of votes.
- (3) If there is no majority, the person presiding at the meeting has a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote.

Subject to subclause (3), on any individual motion, a person has one deliberative vote only at committee meetings, irrespective of the number of position

PART 6 - GENERAL MEETINGS

52. Quorum at general meetings
At a general meeting, twenty five percent (25%) of members present in person constitutes a quorum.

56. Financial year
The financial year of the Association is the period of 12 months ending on 30 September.

OTHER

(Clause 57 of the Model Constitution pertaining to a "common seal" has been omitted, removing the necessity for TENPS to

hold a seal for stamping some types of documents).

~ Plant Taxonomy ~

The following is Part 1 of a 2-part article which was published in the Burrendong Arboretum Newsletter, "BRIGGE". This text is printed with kind permission from BRIGGE and the author, Mrs. Marion Jarratt.

The history of plant taxonomy is a long one and reflects the needs and philosophical concepts of society in different periods and the level of knowledge and technology of that society.

We know from present day indigenous people that the pre literate hunter/gatherer was very aware of different plants and could name many hundreds based on practical properties such as their use for medicine, food, shelter and their potential to harm. However, knowledge and names remained essentially local. The need was practical and science and technology were non-existent.

The domination of Greece in the ancient world with its concomitant of stability and wealth, the growth of cities and the increasing appreciation of education and art introduced an entirely new scenario. Logic and reasoning were emphasized and this was reflected in the approach to the plant world. Theophrastus [370-285 BC] classified plants by form – trees, shrubs, herbs, - then by longevity – annuals, biennials, perennials – and finally by floral morphology, eg. superior and inferior ovaries. His was the first attempt to impose some kind of order on nature and he has been called the "Grandfather of Botany".

Discorides (a Greek physician in the Roman Army in the 1st Century AD) classified and described the medicinal qualities of 600 kinds of plants, grouping many members of currently recognised families. His book, *Materia Medica*, was the main source of medical information for the next 1,000 years and any person who had a copy (and could read) was guaranteed success and fortune!

The political and cultural disruption that afflicted Christian Europe for centuries after the collapse of Rome meant society was in a

constant state of flux. There were few opportunities or incentives for original science or observation. Essentially plant taxonomy returned to the practical requirements of a hunter/gatherer era. The manuscripts of the Greek and Roman period were kept in the care of the Church.

Between the 15th and 17th Centuries there were considerable changes in society and its way of looking at nature. The dismissal of earthly pleasures as snares of Satan gave way to a more sensual, but still reverent, celebration of the natural world. The Renaissance heralded a new interest in art, science and nature. Improvements in navigation opened up new worlds, and access to new plants. Moveable type meant books could be printed cheaply and speedily. The Church no longer had a stranglehold on learning and facts, discoveries and contentious theories flew back and forth among Europe's scholars. A more peaceful and stable environment and increased wealth, (for some), meant time for travel and the leisure to pursue interests such as botany.

In the same period there were 'advances' in plant taxonomy – the concept of 'genera' was first developed, botanic gardens were established so the plants from all over the known world could be observed and studied and the "herbarium method" was initiated. There was less reliance on the ancients and more original observation and analysis. Interest in medicine and the medical qualities of plants resulted in publications called *Herbals*. In fact the last great *Herbal* listed 6,000 plants and even used binomial names.

But there was little attempt to rationalize or standardize nomenclature and even at the end of the 17th Century multiple common names

were used and biologists were describing species with long unwieldy Latin names, (Latin because that was the universal language). For example, the common wild briar rose was called *Rosa sylvestris inodora seu canina* (Rose of the woodland, not perfumed except for a slightly doggy smell) by some and *Rosa sylvestris alba cum rubore, folio glabro* (Rose of the woodland, bluish white, smooth leaves) by others. These are rough translations.

By the middle of the 18th Century however, the changes – explanation, travel, microscopes, printed books, the influx of thousands of new plant species (as most voyages of discovery had naturalists as members of the expedition), increased leisure for many, the work of previous botanists and the passion of the age for order (it was called the Age of Classification) combined to make the development of some systematic method of plant nomenclature and classification inevitable.

It is Carl Linnaeus (1707-78), a Swedish pastor, physician, botanist (and salesman) who has the honour of being hailed the “Father of Taxonomy”. In 1753 after experimenting with a number of approaches he refined and standardized a binomial (double) naming system. He also established a classification system, which was simple

enough to allow most people to key out a plant much as we do today. It was called an artificial system because it relied on a very few features of the flower, primarily the number of stamens and pistils, as the primary basis for division.

Shock, horror!!! In reality the system was a sexual system of classification and the approach was emphasized by the language Linnaeus used in his texts. “The calyx is the bed chamber” he explained, “the filaments the spermatic vessels, and the anther the testes, the pollen the sperm, the stigma the vulva, the style the vagina”. “Too smutty for British ears” one critic spluttered while a clergyman protested “Linnaeus botany is enough to shock female modesty.” “Loathsome harlotry as several males (stamens) with one female (pistil) would not be permitted in the vegetable kingdom by the creator!” fulminated another offended reader. (One wonders what would have been their response to eucalyptus flowers). Self appointed moral guardians of society clamped down on mixed flower gathering expeditions and sanitised floral vocabulary by introducing meaningless euphemisms.

Why was the Linnaean system adopted? What was his real legacy? **To be continued in the December TENPS Newsletter.**

~ Committee Meeting Dot Points ~

- Structure of AGM
- Motion to adopt Constitution (see above)
- Motion to set fees. The Committee recommends to leave as is.
- Elections for new Committee members.

Members are encouraged to nominate for Committee positions. It's not hard work and includes many moments of good fun.

GOOD NEWS!! TENPS members will now be eligible for a 10% discount on plants purchased at TENPS plant sales. We will be providing a card to all members as proof of membership. The present Committee has established various guidelines, to enable consistent and efficient running of the Society. These include ‘Library Use’, ‘Equipment Use’ and ‘Preparation and Sale of Propagated Plants’.

As now is the time to prepare for propagation of plants for our next plant sale, which will be at Willie’s Open Garden in April, it is appropriate that we include these guidelines for those who plan to participate in this sale.

~Guidelines for Preparation and Sale of Propagated Plants~

TENPS is committed to promote and encourage the propagation and cultivation of Top End native flora. To help in the achievement of this object, all members are encouraged to propagate and pot up Top End native plants. Sales of these plants are open to the public at various times through the year. In order to ensure that quality plants are available for these sales, the following guidelines have been developed. For any propagation advice, or if you have questions, please contact members of the cultivation subcommittee.



Appearance of Plants and Pots

Plants should look healthy and vigorous (unless in a deciduous phase). Pots should be clean and undamaged.

- Plants should be free of any obvious disease or pest damage.
- Dead or partly eaten leaves should have been removed from plants.
- Weeds should have been removed from pots.
- Untidy growth on plants should be pruned.
- Any root material outside of pot should be pruned.
- Plants should be staked as necessary.
- The size of the plant needs to be appropriate to pot size.
- The plant should be ready to plant out or pot on.
- The potting material should be a good quality mix permitting free drainage.

Labelling

Where possible, labels should be arranged well in advance of plant sales. Plants should be labelled using TENPS computer generated labels, if possible with the following information.

- Botanic name.
- Common name, particularly in the Top End of the NT.
- Description, including ultimate size.
- Growing conditions.
- Pruning tolerance.
- Water requirements.
- Special features, eg. bird or butterfly attracting, indoor or veranda, deciduous, perfumed, colourful flowers and leaves, shade or screening benefits.



Tubes

For small tubes, some notes with information on how to care for the plant to help ensure survival should be provided on a push-in label. Additional information may be provided on a handout. Desirable information includes:

- Care in the pot.
- When to plant out.
- Where to plant out.
- Watering and fertilising.
- Sun exposure and protection.
- Protection from predation and accidental injury eg. rocks, fence.
- Companion planting.

~ What's in Flower?~



The Top End is home to numerous small beautiful Acacias and A. yirrkallensis, which grows up to 1 m in height and flowers in the build-up, is no exception. This species is endemic to the Top End, occurring mostly in eastern Arnhem land.



Curcuma australasica is an annual herb with growth arising from a perennial rhizome rootstock. Flowering from Nov. to April, it is a great plant to add colour to your rainforest. understorey.



Melastoma polyanthum is a beautiful garden shrub that flowers periodically, but does require plenty of dry season watering and likes dappled shade.



Eucalyptus polysciada, (incorrectly known as E. clavigera, which is an endemic to northern Kimberley (Brooker, 2004)) is a Top End endemic, small to medium tree that is flowering spectacularly this build-up. This species loses its leaves briefly in the dry season and its new season growth is a rich claret colour.

~ NEXT MEETING THURSDAY 17th NOVEMBER ~
~Annual General Meeting ~
and
~Guest Speaker ~
“The Unique Ecosystems of the Arnhem Plateau”
Ian Morris

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

TO:

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