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

We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. General meetings conclude by 8:15 pm 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 20th OCTOBER 2005 ~ **~ GUEST SPEAKER ~** **DR DAVE LIDDLE: Should we take our spring-fed rainforests for granted?**

A topical question given that Howard Springs has stopped flowing. Is the future of the spring-fed rainforests around Darwin assured, or might we be seeing the outcome of fundamental changes to the hydrology of the catchment? Having spent 15 years studying these rainforests, Dave has many insights into the workings of the rainforest mosaic near Darwin and the impacts of a range of disturbance agents from buffalo, cattle, pigs, fire and weeds; to the vexed question of water supply. This talk will be followed by field excursions to monitor a population of the endangered Darwin Palm on the 23/24 and 30/31 October.

~ OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS ~

Sunday 23rd Monday 24, Sunday 30 & Monday 31 October

As part of TENPS contribution to the project to protect the Darwin Palm from the impact of buffalo and pigs at Bankers Jungle we will be undertaking some population monitoring and assessing establishment of seedlings. Construction of the fence is in progress and is expected to be completed by late October. The fencing materials were purchased by TENPS using the \$10,000 funds we received from the Northern Territory 2004-05 Environment Grants Program. It is an interesting year to visit this patch as the rainforest is the driest seen for many years. One can even walk around without getting boots muddy! Please get involved, even if it is only for one of the four days. Please contact Dave Liddle on 8945 6809 a/h or 8944 8492 b/h to register attendance for these field days.

~ NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER
SPEAKER - IAN MORRIS with Elections and voting on adoption of
a revised constitution. ~

~ NOVEMBER PLANT PROPAGATION WORKSHOP ~

A one-day workshop on either Saturday 19 or Sunday 20 November. Details to be confirmed, but a great chance to enhance your propagation skills as well as establish material for sale at Willie's Open Garden in April 2006.

~ *Nervilia peltata* Sampling at Charles Darwin NP ~

Following on from the survey work TENPS undertook last year, the focus will be on searching for flowering plants of this Data Deficient ground orchid early in the wet season (December 2005) and a leaf count late in the season (March 2006). Flowers were elusive last year with none observed; hopefully we will be more successful this wet season. To

watch for flowering, we will set up a roster of visits. We can visit the sites in late November to refresh our memory of the plot locations. Dave will be away from 10 December; so to see some flowers this year will need a team effort. To be involved please contact Dave on 89456809 or podocarp@bigpond.net.au

~ Be a Weed Buster & Help us Free the Trees! Sunday 23rd October ~

Window on the Wetlands needs your help to remove weeds from both the canopy of native trees and the ground underneath. So get involved and give our native plants a chance to live and provide needed habitat to birds and animals. Meet at the Window on the Wetland car park, 60 km from Darwin along the

Arnhem Highway from 9am - 11am with a free sausage sizzle afterwards. Don't forget to wear enclosed shoes, a hat and sunscreen. We will provide you with cold drinking water and gloves. Please contact Lori Jeeves or Wendy Thomsen with any queries on 89888188.

~ TENPS Constitutional Changes ~

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 at <http://tenpsnt.tripod.com/index.htm>. The constitutional change has been forced by requirements under the NT Associations Act. There is a model Constitution under the regulations and in the main we are moving to this model Constitution. The model constitution includes provision for inserting organisation specific clauses such as the objects and purpose of an association, along with optional matters such as minimum numbers of members and size of quorums. We want a few extra changes, such as specifying voting rights for members and will end up with a Constitution that is not the "model", but adopts many of the features of the model. The main clauses in which the proposed constitution deviates from the model constitution are outlined below.

The authority to modify the existing constitution rests on the existing clause 12.1 which states *"This Constitution can only be altered by resolution of a two thirds majority of the financial Members voting, either in person or by postal vote at an Annual General meeting of Special General Meeting. Notice of Motion to Amend signed by a minimum of five financial Members shall be given at the previous General Meeting and forwarded to all Members at least fourteen days prior to the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting"* Accordingly, we need to finalise the proposed changes by the October General Meeting. If you have any comments, please advise Dave Liddle on 8945 6809 or at podocarp@bigpond.net.au as soon as possible.



Whilst walking in Holmes Jungle, I came across an area that had been recently burnt. Amongst the ashes, where several freshly fallen pandanus fruits. The colour contrast caught my eye.

~ What's in Flower this month? ~



Grevillea parallela (Mark Raines 2005)

PROTEACEAE *Grevillea parallela* (Knight) Common names include Silver oak and beefwood.

G. parallela is an attractive slender tree 3 to 7 metres in height with characteristic pendulous foliage often silvery green. The leaves are narrow, tapering to the base, dull green above, silky-hairy with 1-5 longitudinal veins beneath, 10-40 cm x 0.2-1.0 cm. Leaves may occasionally be divided into 2-6 narrow lobes. The bark of the trunk is grey, rough conspicuously furrowed. Cream to white fragrant flowers are borne in cylindrical racemes 5 to 10 cm long in terminal inflorescence. Flowering occurs from July to December. Two broadly winged seeds are borne in a rounded follicle 2-2.5 cm x 1.5 cm.

The tree occurs sparsely across a broad range from the Kimberley to Queensland. This specimen was found flowering in Fannie Bay on a nature strip. This species may be propagated from scarified seed. Cuttings are also reported to be successful. In cultivation profuse flower occur when given extra water when buds are forming. The wood apparently makes for attractive craft pieces.

MYRTACEAE *Melaleuca argentea* W.Fitzg. Common name is Silver Cadjeput, silver -leaf paperbark.

A tree up to 25 metres in height with pendulous branchlets adorned with silvery green foliage. Long narrow leaves are alternate, silvery green with fine hairs when young. The trunk is covered with papery soft grey bark. Flowers are creamy green with numerous stamens, strongly scented on cylindrical spikes. Flowers appear from June to November.

Often found along watercourses and swamps throughout the Top End, this specimen was found flowering along MacMillan's Rd in Anula. *M. argentea* is cultivated from fresh seed, tolerant of a variety of soils and prolonged inundation. Its graceful shape and showy flowers makes it an attractive garden tree. Aboriginal uses include the papery bark to wrap foods for cooking, to make a shelter, as bedding and a variety of other uses. Leaves have been used as a fish poison. Birds, bats and bees are attracted by the flowers.



Melaleuca argentea (Mark Raines 2005)

[Exploring The Genetic Resources Of Tropical Melaleucas](#) Doran & Gunn CSIRO Division of Forestry, Canberra.

~ Gudjekbinj Baby Dreaming ~
Denise Lawungkur Goodfellow



Gudjekbinj is in Western Arnhem Land some 350 kilometres from Darwin, and home to the baby spirits of the traditional custodians, the Kunwinjku people. Baby spirits live at Gudjekbinj, some in waterholes where they sometimes leave tiny footprints in the sand. Others inhabit little red termite mounds on a hill near the outstation. Then there is Lost Baby Dreaming, a picturesque patch of pandanus, for babies who haven't found mothers. Baby spirits protect and feed their mothers, thus reflecting the important role that reciprocity on the part of all play in Kunwinjku family life. Young children learn to care for older relatives, but also for babies, the latter role acknowledged with the title of "little daddy" or "little mummy".

Among the sandstone are little rock shelters, the homes of 'old' people now long gone. Ancient paintings are also found here, the precursors of the Kunwinjku people's famous X-ray paintings that are represented in major galleries throughout the world. They are on sale at the outstation, along with weaving and didgeridoos.

Gudjekbinj is heaven for anyone interested in natural history. About 200 bird species are recorded from the area including the sought after Banded Fruit-dove, Black-tailed Treecreeper and White-lined Honeyeater. The huge Oenpelli Python lives in the rocks as does the endemic Black Wallaroo, and a couple of species of rock-wallaby. There are butterflies such as the rare blue 'Adaluma urumelia'. Late in the year the gorgeous lolly pink flowers of Andardjek, (*Grevillea goodii*) form a carpet in the open forest.



Photograph of billabong This is one of several billabongs in the area. This one is called Barkibong. It has a rocky bar at one end and white sand beaches.
Photo from Denise Goodfellow

Denise Lawungkur Goodfellow birding and natural history guide, author and adopted sister of Mrs. Nganjmirra and Esther Maralngurra, the senior custodians, has been asked to handle the operation and organise publicity and training.



Kikikyaw (Little Bird Dreaming). This sandstone country is riddled with caves. The area is rich in birds; including sandstone endemics such as Chestnut-quilled Rock-pigeon and White-lined Honeyeater), reptiles (eg Ring-tailed Dragon, geckos such as *Oedura gemmata*, and skinks), mammals (from Delicate Mouse to Black Wallaroo) and plants (eg. *Corphyra*, *Patersonia macrantha*, *Acacia humifusa* and *A. sublanata*). Photo from Denise Goodfellow

~ Pandanus Weaving ~

By Esther Managku as told to Denise Lawungkur Goodfellow.

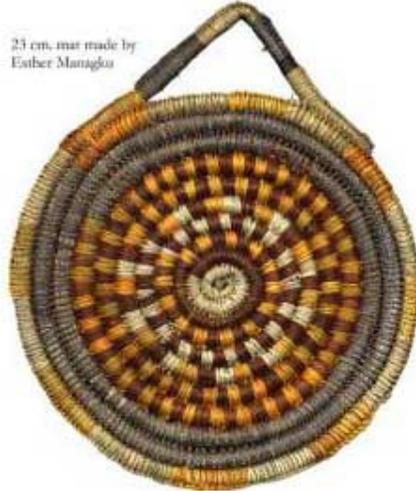
First you go into the bush to get that manbelk (pandanus). The best ones have long, long leaves. They can't have (insect) holes in them. They high up, so you get hook stick (inverted fork of a branch) and you bring those leaves down, wrap them in your hand and then pull them out of the

tree. Then those leaves are broken (split in sections with the thumb) and the little prickles are taken off. Then you boil him with colour. There are many colours and they come from many plants. Yellow is from the root of two trees - mandjundum (*Pogonobolus reticulatum*) and mangukmayin

(cheese-fruit - *Morinda citrifolia*). You dig him up with crowbar and digging stick. Sometimes those roots go straight down. Hard work that one. We put that colour in a billycan with the pandanus. First of all we make him yellow, that pandanus. And after that we take the ashes from where you make your fire, you can make him turn to red. I tell you straight (I tell you the truth)!

To make green I put dry pandanus in the fire. Then I put those ashes in the billycan and make him little bit green (pale green) in colour. Other colours come from grass roots. Wirdilwirdil (*Haemodorum coccineum*) is that small grass. Wirndilk is a bigger grass (*Haemodorum* spp.) I wash them roots, take the skin off with a knife, then smash the roots with a stone and put it in the billycan. But this one I don't put ashes. It turn to pink, light purple, dark purple. If I have lots I can cook it in a drum. February is purple time. We call that time gudiewg (Wet season). But March/April is good too. That time we call banggereng. Those gundalk (grasses) start getting seed then.

Each billycan and each colour separate together (colours are made in separate containers). Then you hang that pandanus out to dry. I leave it there in the hot sun. Then you thread him (put a pandanus strand through the eye of a large needle). Then you hold that bunch of pandanus - make him straight. You stitch (blanket stitch) and then you pull them stitches tight. I make him bend (fold the



sewn pandanus over). I make a hole here tight. Then go (stitch) in same hole. I learned this weaving from my teacher when I was in the school. Her country was at Gunbalanya (north-west Arnhemland). She the same skin colour as me. I don't know the number how old I was when I learn, maybe six year old; that's the time I been

start, maybe even seven or eight. That's a long time to make baskets - more than 60 years. My mother she didn't know how to make this type of basket, only gundiabarrk (shoulder bag), dierret (string bag), balabala (floor mat), walabi (net for catching fish) and mandlabo (big net for catching fish). They use that medicine tree - mangolk (Cocky Apple - *Planchonia careya*), and also manbudbud (*Brachychiton paradoxum*),

manwonge and manbonde (banyan - *Ficus virens*) - all got string. When we make big mats we sit on them, on the floor. Mrs. Nganjmirra my dada (little sister) she can make them, but she got bad eye now. I now want to teach my other dada, Lawungkurr --- If I feel good I can make basket with handle, or without. Tablemats too. I can make two baskets in one sun. I start morning time. By afternoon I finished.

From: <http://www.denisegoodfellow.com/babydreaming/weaving.html>

~ Strange Things on Leaves? ~



Any ideas what has caused these strange reactions seen on a Melaleuca and Eucalyptus leaf? Send an email to topendplants@tenps.com

Summary Draft Northern Territory Parks & Conservation Masterplan

The primary goal of the Masterplan is to provide the basis for passing on to future generations the full range of biological diversity now present in the Northern Territory, together with the priceless legacy of our park system, not only intact but expanded and improved. At the same time, it is recognised that the future of the Northern Territory depends on flourishing tourism, pastoral, mining and fishing industries and culturally and economically strong Indigenous communities to provide the human and financial resources necessary for effective natural resource management and conservation.

This Masterplan aims to provide a framework for a sustainable future where development takes place within a context of land and seascape conservation. We are fortunate in the Northern Territory to be presented with such an opportunity. The Territory retains the bulk of its native vegetation cover and its waterways and marine environments are in good condition. It is important to note that marine ecosystems have not been assessed to the degree of terrestrial ecosystems due to limited knowledge. We will be endeavoring to fill gaps in our marine knowledge so that management and biodiversity conservation for these ecosystems can be developed on a par with our terrestrial ecosystems. In the absence of detailed scientific knowledge this Masterplan recommends a precautionary approach to managing the marine environment.

The Masterplan does not seek to deny access or foreclose options for the use of the Territory's natural resources, including its commercial and recreational fisheries, bush tucker for Indigenous groups, the use of rangelands by pastoralists or areas of high prospectivity for miners. It seeks instead to work cooperatively with these groups in ways that will ensure that development is ecologically sustainable, so that our biodiversity remains intact and available to future generations.

The plan pays particular attention to the Territory's system of parks and reserves. It focuses on their role in the conservation of biodiversity as well as in providing inspiration for present and future generations of Territorians and tourists to enjoy and learn from the Territory's natural and cultural heritage.

The Masterplan has been prepared at a time of major transformation in the management of parks and conservation in the Northern Territory, and is itself part of that transformation. It is an essential ingredient in a forward-looking new parks and

conservation agenda for the Northern Territory, which through one integrated package aims to:

- provide for the full engagement of Indigenous people in all aspects of parks and conservation management
- resolve a number of land claim and native title issues
- significantly advance cooperative park planning and management
- improve the comprehensiveness of the Territory's park system
- achieve enhanced biodiversity protection in all other land and marine tenures
- establish and build upon the Territory's marine biodiversity capacity to better conserve the marine and coastal environment
- present the public with a wider range of recreational/tourism opportunities both within parks and reserves and beyond.

At the core of the Masterplan is the identification of terrestrial areas of highest priority for the conservation of biodiversity¹. Areas of international and national significance are identified through analysis of:

- concentrations of threatened plant and animal species
- concentrations of endemic and restricted range species
- wetland habitats
- important aggregations of wildlife
- sites of botanical significance.

This process has identified twenty areas of international significance and a further forty eight sites of national significance. Of the internationally significant sites, the three most extensive are the MacDonnell Ranges, the sandstone plateau of western Arnhem Land and the Tiwi Islands.

This analysis of biodiversity values runs parallel with other considerations of nature-based tourism potential and cultural significance. The MacDonnell Ranges have international significance on all counts, so a key recommendation of the Masterplan is that the Northern Territory Government work with the traditional owners, the Australian Government and other stakeholders to pursue World Heritage Area listing.

The draft recommendations of the Masterplan include three packages of initiatives focusing on:

- enhancement of the park system to improve its comprehensiveness, its contribution to the protection of biodiversity, and the range and variety of tourism opportunities
- improvements to tourism infrastructure in existing parks and the development of facilities in new parks
- partnerships to achieve conservation outcomes across Aboriginal, pastoral and urban freehold lands as well as the marine environment.

Enhancement of the park system: The analysis in the Masterplan indicates that the Territory's existing parks system provides very inadequate protection of biodiversity and recommends the progressive establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative protected area system including a broader range of conservation areas including Indigenous Protected Areas and privately managed conservation reserves.

Improvements to tourism infrastructure: The Masterplan contains a number of initiatives to enhance tourism in the Northern Territory, including the MacDonnell Ranges World Heritage Area listing, the establishment of a Greater Central Australian National Park, along with the enhancement of the Territory's existing high profile parks, notably Litchfield and Watarrka National Parks. In recognition of the rapidly increasing numbers of self-drive tourists, attention is also directed towards the development of facilities in those parks and reserves along the various tourism loops and routes. Importantly, the Masterplan contains recommendations to develop Aboriginal tourism initiatives and to build capacity.

Partnerships for conservation planning and management outside parks: Overall the greatest conservation value of the Northern Territory is its

broad-scale intactness. This contrasts strongly with other Australian states where in some cases in excess of 70% of the native vegetation has been cleared. A fundamental tenet of this Masterplan is to ensure that the ecological health and intactness of the landscape – across all land tenures and the seas – is maintained for the next fifteen years and beyond. In order to achieve this, the Masterplan stresses the conservation of biodiversity outside parks across the vast areas of pastoral and Aboriginal land and in the Territory's seas. The draft recommendations in this area are framed around the principle that, in general, the most effective and cost efficient conservation management across the Northern Territory will be achieved by supporting the skills and expertise of the landholders. Particular emphasis is therefore placed on support to the framework of Aboriginal ranger groups similar to existing Caring for Country programs on Aboriginal land, as well as close engagement with the pastoral, mining and fishing industries to enhance biodiversity conservation over other land tenures and the sea. As an important initiative in its own right and adjunct to this Masterplan, the Territory Government has decided to establish for the first time in the Northern Territory's history an Environment Protection Agency (EPA). The creation of such a body will provide a further boost to the conservation and sustainable development of the Territory.

TENPS Members are encouraged to make submissions for further details see the website at http://www.nreta.nt.gov.au/whatwedo/parksmasterplan-draft/draft_contents.html

1. This is for terrestrial biodiversity only at this stage because our incomplete knowledge of the marine environment does not permit a comprehensive analysis of marine biodiversity.



A visitor Sally brought along to out last TENPS general meetings....it's not just native plants we are interested in!

**NEXT MEETING THURSDAY
GUEST SPEAKER: 20th October 2005~
DR DAVE LIDDLE**

Should we take our spring-fed rainforests for granted?

**SENDER: TOP END NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
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NT 0831**

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