

WHAT'S FLOWERING THIS MONTH



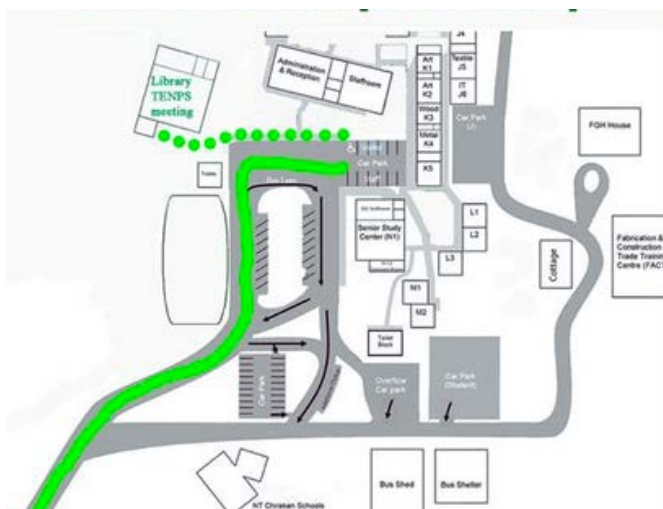
Nymphaea violacea by Russell Dempster

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Top End Native Plant Society (TENPS) general meetings are held at 7:00pm on the third Thursday of the month at Marrara Christian College library on the corner of Amy Johnson Ave and McMillans Rd. Bring your plants to swap, sell or have identified over a cuppa. The guest speaker presents at 8pm.

This month's talk will be by Claire Hewitt on her role at Environmental Resources Management.

NEXT MEETING: JULY 17TH 2025



TENPS (Top End Native Plant Society) Committee Members

President: Russell Dempster
(0459440665)

Vice President: Sean Stieber

Secretary: Johanna Stieber

Treasurer: Graham Zemunik

Publications and Librarian: Richard Boyne

General Committee Member: Ian Morris

General Committee Member: Claire Hewitt

Publicity: Vacant please inquire

Webmaster: Vacant please inquire

Public Officer: Dave Liddle

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JUNE MEETING ~ STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF MONSOON FOREST IN THE TOP END PRESENTATION FROM JEREMY RUSSELL-SMITH

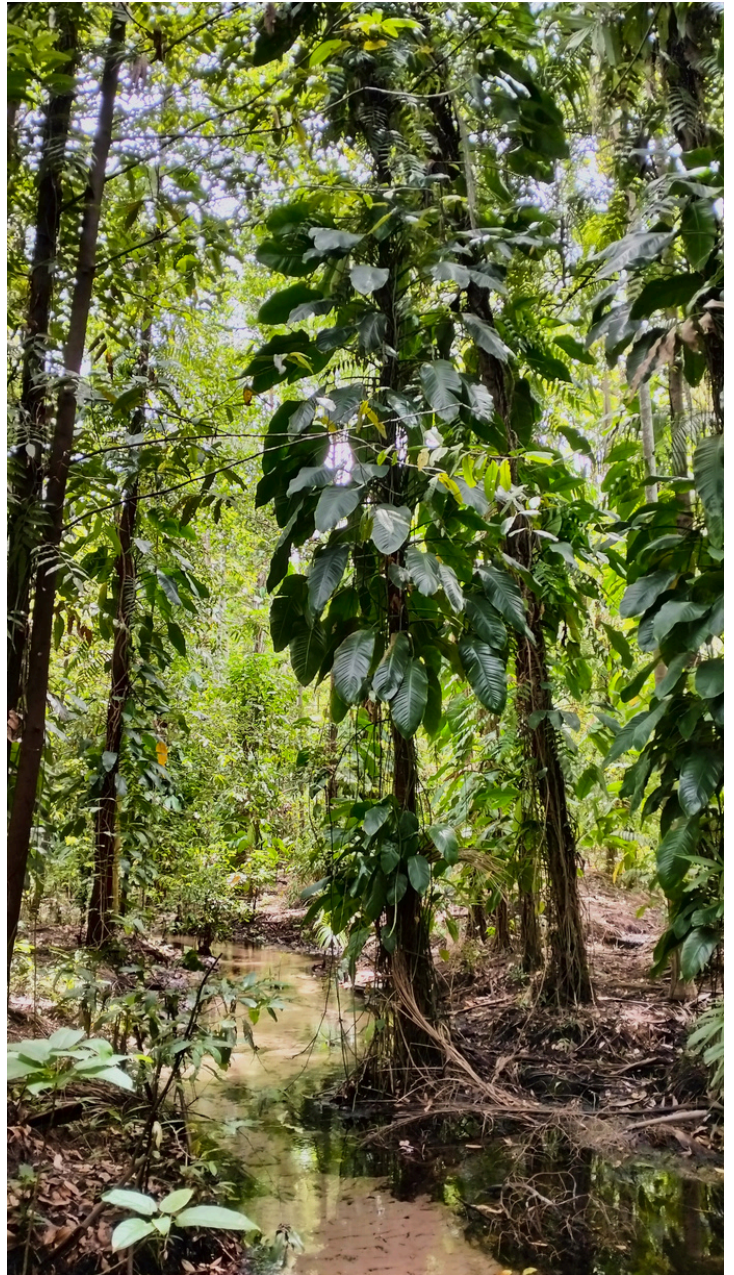
Jeremy Russell-Smith presented at the June meeting on the status and distribution of monsoon forests in the Top End. He worked on jungles across the Top End in the late 1980s.

Jeremy began his talk by showing a photograph of a majestic Antarctic Beech from the Border Ranges National Park in New South Wales next to its north-eastern border with Queensland. These *Nothofagus moorei* plants were once found in the NT.

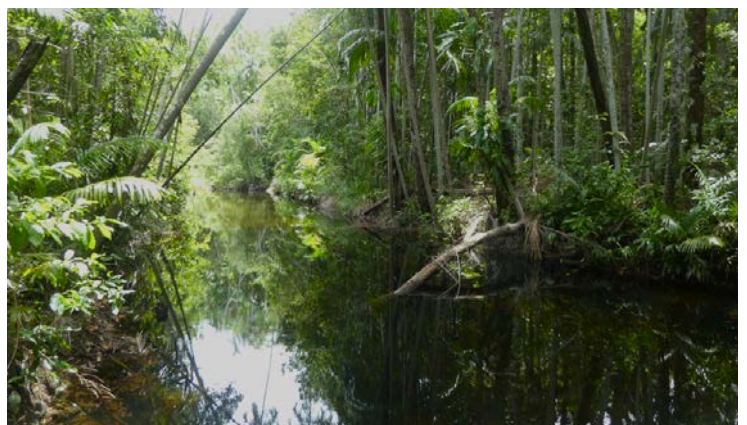
The highest diversity of species in rainforests in Australia occurs in north Queensland near Mount Bartle Frere. In the midst of the forest areas, there is some heath land probably as a result of burning by Indigenous people

Australia separated from Antarctica between 30 and 40 million years ago. About 23 million years ago contact with Asia started. Up until 15 million years ago Riversleigh was very rich in rainforest species, having a higher diversity than Papua New Guinea currently. Wet forests diminished from then on and now we have a patchwork of monsoon forests remaining. Jeremy recommended a couple of books on these topics: “After the Greening. The Browning of Australia” by Mary E. White, and “Riversleigh. The Story of Animals in Ancient Rainforests on Inland Australia” by Michael Archer, Suzanne J. Hand and Henk Godthelp.

What is left of the ancient rainforest can be found in the upper East Alligator River, Petherick’s Jungle / Litchfield National Park, Judbara / Gregory National Park and Bullwaddy Conservation Reserve on the Sturt Plateau.



Greenant Creek forest, Litchfield National Park



Litchfield forest near Pethericks

More modern forests can be found as coastal vine thickets such as at Port Essington, spring-fed wet jungles such as on the Tiwi Islands, and jungles in the Daly River region.

Jeremy showed us maps on monsoon forest density in the Top End and the distribution of *Allosyncarpia ternata* in Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land from his publications in the early 1990s.

Each monsoon forest patch needs to be protected. There is an impact on diversity if one patch is taken out. A network is needed to save species, for example consider *Elaeocarpus miegei* on the Tiwi Islands, there may be five plants in one jungle, two in another and only one or none in another.



Kakadu escarpment

Regarding the distribution of *A. ternata*, mapping is critical. Sometimes it is found growing in sandstone gorges, sometimes it's on the edges of escarpment. It takes decades for seedlings to get their roots established. They can handle very dry conditions, but they don't like fires. *Allosyncarpia* can re-establish from lignotubers.

Allosyncarpia forests are in severe retreat, especially in Kakadu National Park. Aboriginal ranger groups are doing well managing patches using fire in Arnhem Land.

Modern problems for all monsoon forests include buffalo, pigs, para grass and fire. Coastal jungles are relatively new forests. Fire has a major impact on these monsoon vine thickets.

Bullwaddy forests contain many hardy monsoon forest species growing in them. Bullwaddy is *Macropteranthes keckwickii*, in the family Combretaceae. *Acacia shirleyi* (Lancewood) sits around the Bullwaddy. There is a sparse understorey, but fires on the edge of these forests are a significant problem. You don't see seedlings of Bullwaddy.

Thank you Jeremy, for your informative and most interesting presentation. We look forward to the new book you are putting together with John Brock and Ian Morris on monsoon forests.

Text and photos by Russell Dempster.

JUNE FIELD TRIP: HOLTZE LANDCARE AREA



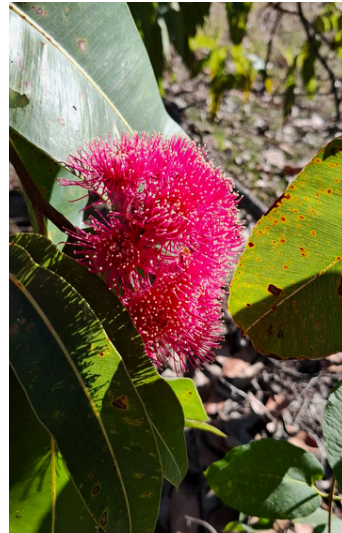
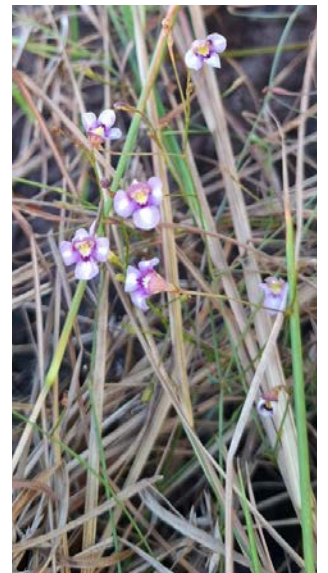
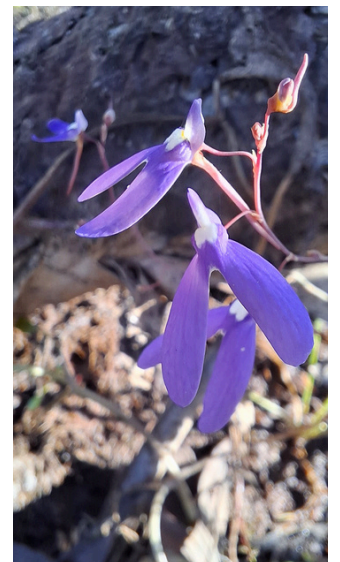
We had a walk on Saturday 7 June in the Holtze Landcare Conservation Area, led by Thisbe and Plaxy Purich and Jenni Risler. The area covers a diverse range of ecosystems including peripheral savanna woodland, paperbark forest, sand sheet heath, magnetic termite mound wetlands and ephemeral lagoons.

It was a lovely morning. We hope to add to the records of plant species listed for the conservation area as a result of our walk. We retired to Plaxy's house for some refreshments and a debrief after our walk. Thanks to Plaxy for the scones, and to Thisbe, Plaxy and Jenni for leading the trip.

By Russell Dempster



JUNE FIELD TRIP PHOTOS

*Decaisnina signata**Commelina agrostophylla**Corymbia ptychocarpa**Drosera fragrans**Ectrosia leporina**Heterachne abortiva**Mitrasacme subvolubilis**Lindernia lobelioides**Lindsaea ensifolia**Styliidium eriksoniae**Utricularia chrysantha**Utricularia leptoplectra*

HERBARIUM REPORT: A VISIT FROM KAREN L. WILSON AND ANNOTATION SLIPS

In early July the Herbie hosted Karen L. Wilson from the National Herbarium of New South Wales. She worked as a botanist there for many years before her retirement in 2016. Now she's an honorary research associate, a very common career pattern in that field. Her families of interest are Cyperaceae, Juncaceae, Polygonaceae and Casuarinaceae. Some species named by her include *Muehlenbeckia arnhemica*, *Cyperus portae-tartari* and *Eleocharis rivalis*.

Our herbarium has 958 accessioned specimens collected by her, most of which are sedges from her Northern Territory trips in the 80's and 90's.

For her visit we showed her some sedge specimens that had not been identified beyond the genus level and she got to work identifying them for us. She also added her own ID's to specimens that were misidentified. This is a common practice when botanists visit other herbaria and there's a standard procedure for how to record it.

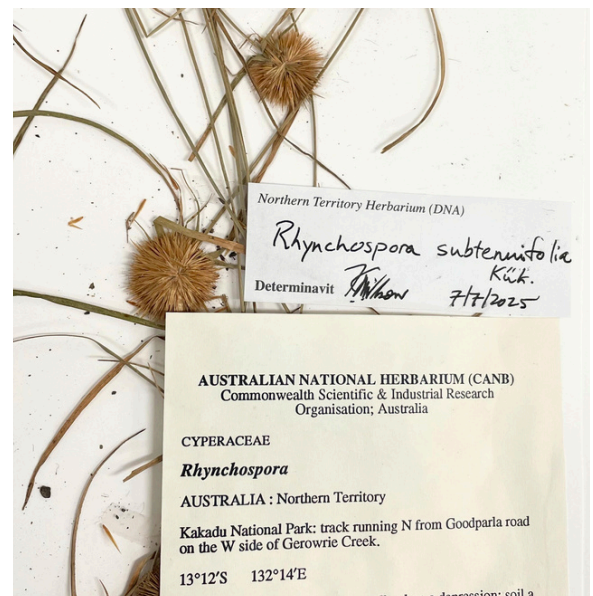
If a visitor decides that a specimen should be renamed, they write the taxon name on pieces of gummed paper called 'det' (short for 'determinavit') slips that get stuck to the sheets. Det slips should also include the name of the visitor and the date that they saw the specimen. These slips supersede whatever name is on the original label, so we need to update the name in our database.

Sometimes the visitor might agree with a previous name, in which case they add a 'conf' (short for 'confirmavit') slip instead, usually it just has their name and date.

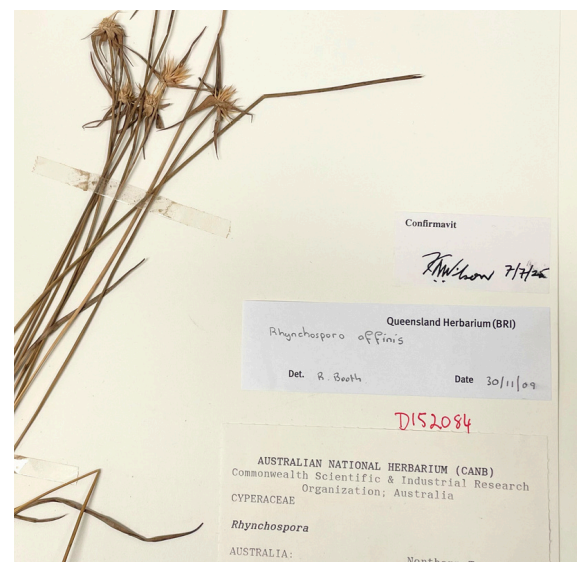
These are both kinds of annotation slip, which add value to the specimen because they tell you something about its history since it was accessioned and mounted. I recall seeing at Kew specimens with annotation slips just said "No!" and "Never!" in red ink. Those weren't signed or dated, so they're not very useful.

The next step will be to loan out some specimens that she wants to spend more time examining. Herbaria regularly loan specimens to each other to aid with research and identification. We look forward to seeing what annotations she makes when they come back.

Text and photos by Richard Boyne



A determinavit slip. Karen Wilson identified the *Rhynchospora* as *R. subtenuifolia*.



A confirmavit slip. Karen Wilson agreed with Ron Booth's determination of *Rhynchospora affinis*.

FROM THE ARCHIVES ~ COLLATED BY LON WALLIS

30 years ago – July 1995 – June Field Trip

Our June field trip was out to Howard Springs to see what plants were growing in Anne's back garden which includes Dutchies Lagoon.

Dutchies lagoon was once a billabong that used to stay wet year round, however it has now been blocked off at one end and dries out by the end of the dry season. At the moment there look like there is still plenty of water in the middle.

Dutchies Lagoon was named after a Dutchman who first owned the land. It has been home to cattle and horses and still has a few pigs rooting around. Although really pristine, there are plenty of native plants to see. But all that weeding !!!!!

Species list

Acacia auriculiformis - tree
Alphitonia excelsa - tree, Red ash
Alstonia actinophylla - tree
Ardisia humilis - not a native!
Carallia brachiata - tree
Carpentaria acuminata - palm
Caryota species - palm
Commelina species - herb
Dicranopteris linearis - fern
Drosera indica - carnivorous herb, Sundew
Eriocaulom species – herb
Eucalyptus alba – tree
Eucalyptus miniata - tree
Ficus benjamina - tree
Ficus congesta - tree
Ficus hispida - tree

Grevillea heliosperma - tree

Leea rubra - shrub

Livistona bentharii - palm

Lobelia dioica - herb

Ludwigia octovalvis - herb

Lygodium microphyllum - fern

Melaleuca species

Melastomoa polyanthum - shrub, Native
lasiandra

Melicope species

Myristica insipida - tree

Nauclea orieitalis - tree

Nymphoides indica - aquatic herb

Pandanus spiralis - tree

Philodrum species

Salmonia ciliata

Scleria poaeformis -grass

Timonius timon - tree

Xyris species

Field Trip

(oops sounds more like work; read on)

This month our "Field Trip" will be back to Anne's place on Sunday 23rd July at 3pm in the afternoon.

The Garden Fair is coming up quickly, so all hands are needed to get things ready. The booth is a bit scrappy and needs to be cleaned up and given a coat of paint.

Give Anne a ring to find out if anything is needed, a paint scraper will be handy. Come along and find out how you can help with the Garden Fair.

20 Years ago – July 2005

Inspirational Role Earns Life Membership

Sunday 19th of June, TENPS honoured long-term member Joyce Stobo with an award of life membership. This is the first time life membership has been awarded by the Society, given in recognition of Joyce's contribution to the Society and her role in generating interest in the wildflowers of the Top End.



During the presentation ceremony under a shady tree on Darwin's Esplanade, Society President, Dr David Liddle, expressed the respect and gratitude of members:

"Joyce is an inspiration through her enthusiasm and knowledge of plants, particularly the little flowers. The seasonally inundated wetlands of the Howard River area are of international significance with their diversity of carnivorous bladderwort plants, and Joyce has been a driving force in bringing these small showy wetland plants to the attention of members."

Within the Howard River catchment, in an area around 30 paces by 30 paces the global authority on bladderworts found 14 species, a level of bladderwort diversity equally high to anywhere around the globe."

Her inspiration to others has engendered an appreciation of the many delightful and little studied herbs that grow in the region."

About a decade ago, at an age where most people would run as fast as they could from new technology, Joyce went out and bought a computer."

She mastered the technology and set up a database to store her numerous photographs of wildflowers."

Her enthusiasm and capacity to take on new challenges is an inspiration to us all."

Although a self-taught amateur, Joyce's knowledge of Top End herbs is only equalled by the most experienced botanists."

At 85 years, she is still discovering species in the Darwin rural area that are considered rare."

Thanks to members who contributed to organising the ceremony to award life membership to Joyce Stobo and to those who turned up on the day to make it a great event. The ceremony went off well, accompanied by a delicious afternoon tea and pleasant stroll along Lameroo Beach. TENPS presented a certificate produced by Deb Bisa and a photo album compiled by Robyn Liddle.

Joyce will bring the certificate and photo album to the next general meeting, so members who could not attend the ceremony will have a chance to view the items.

- Dave Liddle

To the Top End Native Society

This is a letter of thanks to the Society who so kindly presented me with a life membership, it is much appreciated.

I was thrilled to have both the attractive certificate, showing some of my favourite Utricularias, and the magnificent photo album. For those of you who may not have seen the album, it shows excellent photos of many of the club's field days, interspersed with Bronwyn's amusing sketches.

I cannot quite remember when I first joined the club. The meetings were held at Howard Springs .Since the meetings have been held at the Marrara Christian School I have attended the meetings fairly regularly. I enjoy the input from the speakers and also the company of other members.

In about 1986 I joined a small group flower hunters in WA . It was led by Dr David Philcox, a botanist from Kew. I was fascinated by many of the plants we came across, and on my return started looking to see if some of these families and species grew in the Top End.

With the aid of the checklist of vascular plants of the Northern Territory, I found that many of the same families did exist here.

Since then I have been looking for these plants that were previously unknown to me, and I am still looking. !!

- Joyce Stobo

Joyce died 2 August 2005 aged 84

10 years ago - July 2015 - May meeting report: A trek through the Simpson Desert with Louise Finch.

In May 2014 Louise Finch and five other walkers joined Andrew Harper's Outback Camel Expeditions for a twelve day walk in the Simpson Desert. Andrew guided and six cameleers prepared meals. It was a day's drive south-east of Alice Springs travelling comfortably in a 4WD OKA (*below*).



The drive took them through Old Andado Station past the Mac Clark *Acacia peuce* Reserve on the way to the start of the walk on the flood-out of the Hay River.

Acacia peuce is called the 'waddy tree' because of the very hard wood used as a waddy, and they look similar to a 10m pine or *Casuarina*. The only other stands of this species are found near Birdsville and Boulia.

These 3 populations were possibly linked in the wetter climate of the Tertiary period. They are now relict populations after being isolated by the Pleistocene Ice Age.



An old *Eucalyptus coolabah* (Coolibah) in the Hay River flood-out.

For the trek, eighteen camels carried food, water, camping and cooking gear for thirteen people for twelve days - along with first aid supplies, a satellite phone, our reference library, maps and spare bits and pieces. The walkers learned to load and unload the camels each day (*below*).



The rhythm of each day and the fact that the camels walk at a steady pace that takes them out of sight very quickly amongst the dunes limited the opportunities for 'botanising'. Louise took pictures when she could and tried to identify plants on return.

The group made use of a track created by an oil exploration crew and abandoned in 2008. The surface damage caused by the track showed little sign of natural repair and it now channels run-off.

They were in sand-hill country for the duration. The Simpson dunes are longitudinal trending north west – south east. They are parallel to the wind directions that created them in the Pleistocene. On average they are 30m high and 500m apart with a gentle western slope and a steeper eastern face. Only the crests are mobile now.

Louise felt it was like walking through an extensive bush garden, as the desert had greened up after rain with no recent fires. In between flowering plants they found areas of soft grasses. Every evening the camels sought out *Acacia ligulata* or Umbrella wattle – a small domed shrub for their evening meal – they loved it even though it is unpalatable to cattle.



Camels relish this succulent called ‘munyeroo’ by their guide (*above*). Louise thinks this plant is likely to be *Portulaca intraterranea* or Butterfly Pigface even though the common name used is usually for *Portulaca oleracea*.

Big rains in 2013 produced plenty of fuel for fires and there was lots of evidence of the hot fires that swept through large areas that season.

Canegrass or *Zygochloa paradoxa* is very common on dune crests. It grows in an angular way creating a great refuge for dune dwelling birds, mammals and birds. Other plants such as flowering daisies make use of the framework left by an old grass clump for support.



The camels waited at the crest of each dune to be zig-zagged down the dune (*above*). Less experienced camels don't like to walk in single-file so they come down dunes in pairs. The cameleers stand on the downhill side to keep the two camel strings calm and in line.

Louise was expecting the May days to be crisp and clear with high level cirrus clouds but several times during the trek the south-easterly wind dropped, the humidity rose and a few raindrops fell (*below*)



The swales were full of Eremophilas. The hard fruits were impossible to open with a knife or crush with a rock. Known as Emu bush, Emus do eat the seed and seed dormancy is broken on passing through the bird's gut.

Eremophilas are in the Myoporaceae family and there are 200 species across arid Australia. Species pollinated by insects are blue, purple, white and lilac, whilst those pollinated by birds are red, orange or yellow (*below*).



Grevillea juncifolia or Honeysuckle Grevillea (*below*) was commonly found on spinifex sandplains and sand hills. Some of these plants re-shoot readily after fire.



After eight days of trying to keep up with camels and ‘botanise’ in windy conditions, a two-day drive north along the Coulson Track returned the walkers to Alice Springs.

Unfortunately Andrew is no longer offering this kind of tourist experience in the Simpson Desert.

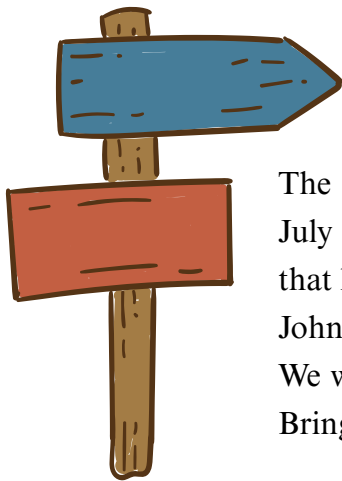
Article by Sarah Hirst, Photos supplied by Louise Finch.

JULY MEETING

The speaker for our meeting on July 17 is Claire Hewitt.

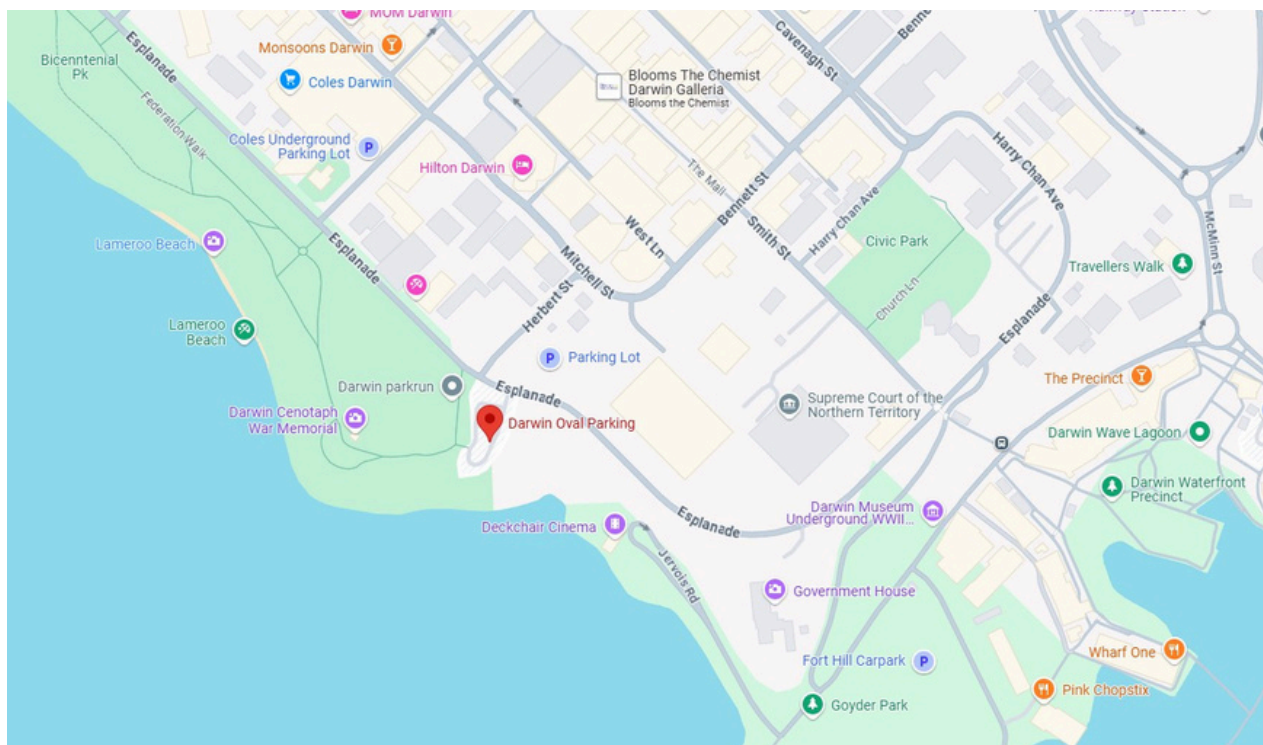
Claire is a Principal Technical Consultant at ERM (Environmental Resources Management), a global consultancy firm. ERM employs approximately 5,500 people in over 40 countries and territories and aims to provide innovative solutions for business and government clients helping them understand and manage the sustainability challenges that the world is increasingly facing.

Claire's specific role is to provide biodiversity assessment services for clients, mainly for renewable energy developments and conservation projects. Claire is an ecologist and botanist, with most of her experience gained in NSW. She is based in Darwin but works all over Australia. Claire's presentation will provide an overview of what she does for her job and what she has learned about plants, animals and vegetation communities during her travels.



JULY FIELD TRIP

The July field trip will be a walk along the Darwin Esplanade on Saturday July 19. We will meet at the car park on the esplanade at the top of the steps that lead to the deckchair cinema (near the Darwin Cenotaph) at 9:00 a.m. John Brock will lead the walk. It's an easy walk along the bitumen pathway. We will walk towards the west, and most probably down to Lameroo Beach. Bring a hat, sunscreen and a water bottle.





BECOME A MEMBER!
Member discounts for plant sales.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
(Due annually on 1st July each year)

The Top End Native Plant Society is a community group aimed at **PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING THE APPRECIATION, CONSERVATION AND STUDY OF FLORA NATIVE TO THE TOP END AND THE DIVERSE HABITATS OF THIS FLORA**. The Society is active in the propagation and cultivation of Top End native flora.

Visitors are welcome to meetings held on the third Thursday of the month at 7.00 pm with a speaker starting soon after. The venue is Marrara Christian College, on the corner of Amy Johnson Avenue and McMillans Road. Guest speakers are a feature of meetings and field trips are undertaken each month to a diverse array of habitats.

New Membership ☐ Renewal ☐
Membership fees are:

Individual Waged:	\$35.00
Family Waged:	\$45.00
Individual Unwaged:	\$15.00
Family Unwaged:	\$20.00

Payment: \$ _____

Family name: _____

Name/s: _____

Email address: _____

Postal address: _____

To pay online:

Bank Bendigo Bank

Account Name: Top End Native Plant Society

BSB: 633 000

Account: 207 974 247


Note: Please include your name in the transfer reference and email the information in this form to topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com

Or pay in person at meetings or events where cash or card will be accepted.

Follow 'Top End Native Plant Society' on Facebook for information on current activities and events.

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