

Top End

Native Plant Society

**President:**

Russell Dempster 0459440665

**Vice President:**

Zig Madycki

**Secretary:**

Jan Herrmann

**Treasurer:**

Jan Hurmann

**Publicity:**

vacant

**Publications:**

Sarah Hirst/Sylvia Hurse

**Public Officer:**

Sean Bellairs

**Librarian:**

Ian Morris

**General Committee Members:**

Sylvia Hurse

**Webmaster:**

Sarah Hirst

PO Box 135

Palmerston NT 0831

Or email us:

[topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com)



## Top End Native Plant Society September/October Newsletter

---

### General Meeting Times

The next TENPS meeting will be held on *Thursday October 17th 2019* commencing at 7:30 pm. General meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at Marrara Christian College, on the corner of Amy Johnson Avenue and McMillans Road. The meeting is followed by a chance to chat with other members and access the TENPS reference Library over a cuppa. Bring your plants along to swap, sell or have identified. The guest speaker presentation commences around 8pm. All are welcome. Field trips are usually on the weekend following the meeting. Details of upcoming events are provided in the newsletter, or check the TENPS website.

### What's in flower?



*Cymbidium canaliculatum*, a good sign of an approaching build-up. *Courtesy Zig Madycki*



*Natives mean more!*

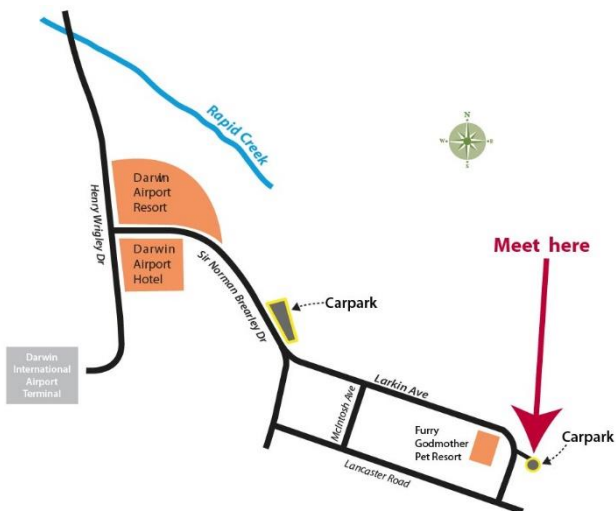
[www.topendnativeplants.org.au](http://www.topendnativeplants.org.au)

## Upcoming TENPS guest speakers

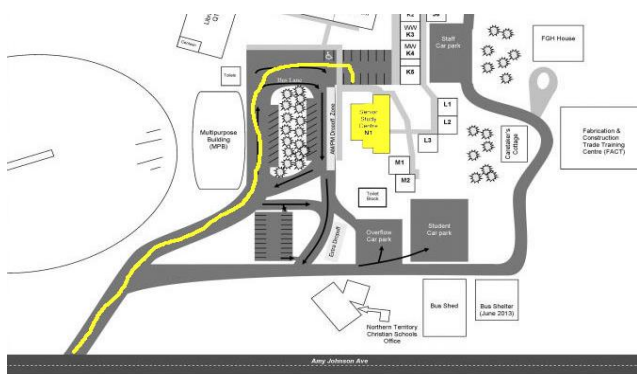
**At our 17<sup>th</sup> October meeting** Michael Schmid and Lesley Alford from Veg North will discuss land management work at Darwin International Airport's Rapid Creek Reserve. Vegetation communities in the reserve range from woodland to riparian monsoon forest alongside Rapid Creek.

## Tenps Field Trip

**The following Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 to 10:30**, join us to explore the Gurumbai Trail at Darwin International Airport's Rapid Creek Reserve. The Reserve encompasses unique examples of native vegetation in a capital city context. Michael Schmid and Lesley Alford from Veg North will lead the walk and discuss the different vegetation communities and land management activities undertaken in the Reserve. Meet at the carpark just past the Furry Godmother Pet Resort on Larkin Avenue at the Airport at 8.30am (see map). A full page flyer about the Gurumbai Trail is on page 6 near the end of this newsletter.



Marrara Christian College Campus Map



## NT Field Naturalist Club Events

Meetings are held at 7.45pm on the second Wednesday of each month except January at Charles Darwin University, in Blue Building 2 (see map below)



Field Trips are a great way to explore the best of Darwin area's nature spots in the company of like-minded people. These are usually held on the Sunday following the monthly meeting and often related to the topic of this meeting. Additional outings are held from time to time, and everyone is welcome.

## SAVE THE DATE! TENPS PLANT SALE Woolworths forecourt Coolalinga November 23<sup>rd</sup> 8am to 2pm

Stock up on native trees and shrubs ready for the start of the wet season.

## TENPS November AGM

The November TENPS meeting is the AGM and will be held on *Thursday November 25<sup>th</sup> 2019* commencing at 7:30 pm at Marrarra Christian College. A change in the constitution enabling electronic banking will be an agenda item.

We expect business to be concluded quickly and our our guest speaker **Ian Morris** will take the floor. He is a biologist, educator, conservationist, author of 'Kakadu National Park', co-author of several other books including 'A Natural History and Field Guide to Australia's Top End' and one of Australia's most acclaimed naturalists. He has worked with Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the Arnhem Land region for decades, and was involved in forming Kakadu National Park.

some information taken from

<https://www.experiencethewild.com.au/?p=Wildlife-Ian-Morris>

### SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP

was a walking tour of Riyala, led by Ian Morris, a founder of the thirty six year old facility and currently Deputy Director of the Board.



photo courtesy [www.riyala.com](http://www.riyala.com)

“Riyala” means “clean running water” in Djambarrpuyngu, (one of the local Indigenous languages of North East Arnhem Land). The 20 acre block is bordered on the western side by the Elizabeth River. Other habitats on the site include a river corridor which is dominated by paperbarks, a Monsoon forest and Eucalypt woodland.

“Riyala” was established in the early 1980’s as a camping facility to serve Darwin and the rural area. It is located approximately 45 km from Darwin on 20 acres of land, fronting the Elizabeth River and in the vicinity of Noonamah. It is on a secluded natural bush block on a private road. The facilities continue to be used by a wide group of people – local and interstate schools, scout groups, drama groups as well as for church camps and retreats.

Many species of native wildlife have made the different habitats their homes. These include Agile Wallabies, Sugar-gliders, Northern Brush-tail possums and bandicoots; carpet pythons, Children’s pythons, Keel back and Slatey Grey snakes. Birds include Red Collard Lorikeets, Rajah Shell ducks, Peaceful Doves, the Rainbow Pitta and Orange Footed Scrub Fowl to name a few. Most of these can be seen regularly.



photo courtesy Ian Morris **Emerald Dove**

Attending groups of children are schooled in native animal and bird behaviour,

and the wider environment at the attractive venue made accessible with minimal, yet sufficient development.

Twenty five years ago when the property had been regularly burned to provide green pick for cattle, it was a different place. Now, with the planting of many native species there is a flourishing understory, a count of bird species have increased from forty to one hundred plus, and little skinks and lizards scamper around in the fallen plant debris.



above: rainbow pitta fluffing feathers in water spray photo courtesy Ian Morris



**all spruced up!** photo courtesy Ian Morris

**Allosyncarpia ternata** seeds from Elcho Island were imported years ago and have yielded many offspring. The City of Darwin alone has planted over two thousand to repair the ravages of Cyclone Marcus; all stemming from that original import.

Some facts on the economically valuable *allosyncarpa ternata*.

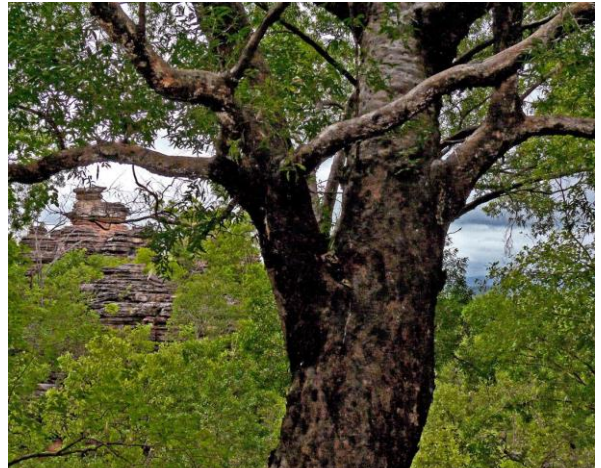
- a very tall shady tree with spreading canopy. (30 + metres high)
- an example at Gunbalunya has 4 metre diameter trunk and is estimated to be five hundred years old
- important source of honey
- infusion from bark applied to sores and open wounds
- uses of *allosyncarpia*: tied in with ancient beliefs and customs, eg carpet python
- don't need much water except in the seedling stage
- Cairns City Council found most still standing after Tropical Cyclone Debbie in 2017.
- Those planted along Lee Point Road by the City of Darwin survived cyclone Marcus in 2018
- Subsequently the City of Darwin has planted thousands of *allosyncarpa ternata*.
- don't foul up septic
- grass grows up to base
- termite proof

**maranthes** is another valuable native tree.

- 25+ metres high
- also termite proof and in addition repels mastodonte (white ants) from the trees surrounds.
- attracts birds when flowering
- frequently planted by the City of Darwin for high winds, and cyclone resistance
- offers cool dense shade and protection to animals and humans

some information taken from

<http://www.riyala.org>



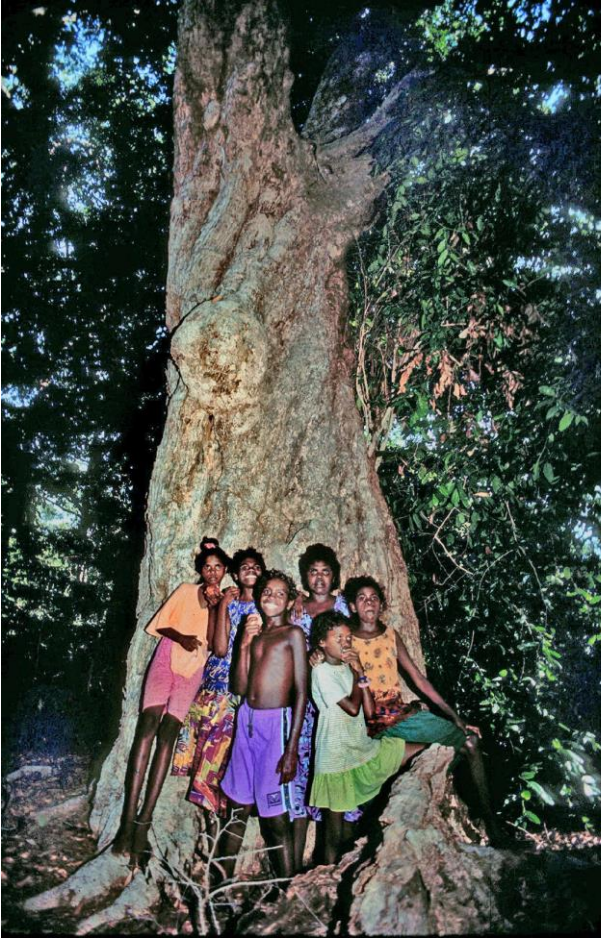
**Allosyncarpia ternata in Arnhem Land**  
**note sandstone ridge in background**



*above* fruiting *Maranthes* Photos Ian Morris  
*below* flowering *Allosyncarpia*



below: biggest tree on Elcho Island : a Maranthes



Zyg Madicki recorded some calendar plants.

Here are two:



**Amorphophallus galbra.** The flowers emerge in the build up and after they wither a single leaf emerges and remains for the rest of the wet season. Most people miss the flowering and only manage to see the leaf, if anything.

**Corymbia polysciada,** a medium sized tree which is



a very close relative of Eucalypts. Corymbias were once included in the genus Eucalyptus.

**TENPS Committee Meetings** are held every second month on the second Wednesday of that month. The next one will be Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at Virginia Road. All Welcome.

Gastrolobium mondurup seed pod exploding.



It is an endangered plant from the south of WA

A still captured from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCK9zBZYab0>

**Save the date!**  
**15<sup>th</sup> December**  
**TENPS Christmas breakup and planning session**  
**time and location to be advised**

# Explore the Gurumbai Trail near Darwin International Airport

The walk will be a joint event between the NT Field Naturalists' Club and the Rapid Creek Landcare Group. The landcare group will supply Rapid Creek Birdwatching Lists funded by Darwin International Airport. The walk will start at the woodland loop on the Gurumbai Trail where it is likely flowering *Osbeckia australiana* will be found (pictured). This section of the trail passes through woodland and transitional communities fringing the wetlands in the upper Rapid Creek catchment.

The walk will be led by Lesley Alford and Michael Schmid. Michael's business Veg North carries out management of the Rapid Creek Reserve for the Darwin International Airport. The Gurumbai Trail runs through the Rapid Creek Reserve. Michael and Lesley have both been involved in natural resource management in the Northern Territory over the past three decades. Michael has worked for the NT Government in weed management and water planning and co-authored Common Urban Weeds of North Australia. Veg North's work focuses on bushland rehabilitation in the Darwin area. Lesley has worked in the government and non-government sectors including the Central Land Council, Greening Australia and Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers and now works as a consultant (including as a sub-contractor to Veg North). She has had a longstanding interest in the Rapid Creek catchment and the local landcare network. She was a co-author on the article in the last issue of Northern Territory Naturalist about the invasive weed Chinese Violet that was discovered on the airport grounds and successfully eradicated.

**Meet:** 08.30 am in the carpark towards the end of Larkin Avenue, just past the 'Furry Godmother' pet resort (see red \* on map below).

**Bring:** Sunhat, sunscreen, enclosed footwear, binoculars and camera.



*Osbeckia australiana* will be flowering in the wet areas.  
Photo: Lesley Alford



Water birds such as this Nankeen Night Heron are often sighted along Rapid Creek. Photo: Tissa Ratnayeke

Darwin International Airport invites you to explore the

## Gurumbai walking trail

The lower, north western part of the Gurumbai trail takes you alongside Rapid Creek, Darwin's only significant freshwater system.

You can walk in the cool of the monsoon forest down to historic Yankee Pools.



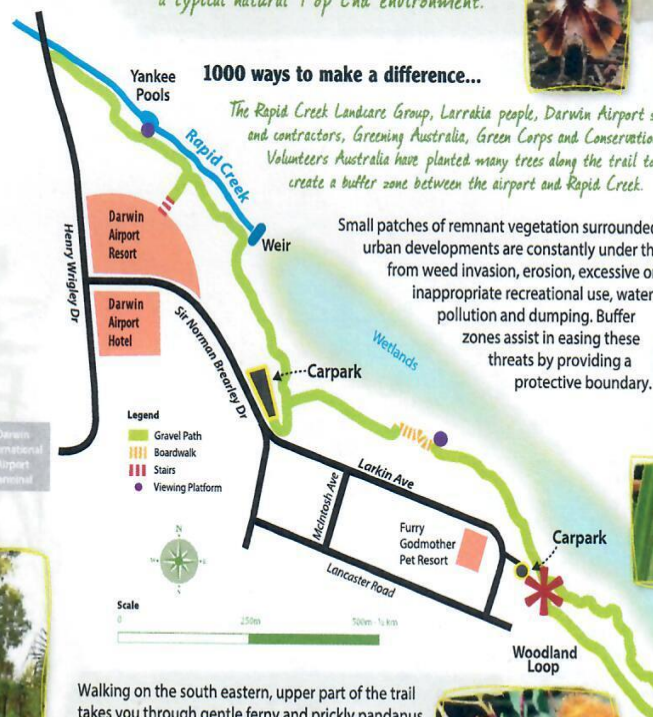
Gurumbai Trail photos by David Sides

Gurumbai is the Larrakia name for Rapid Creek and means 'elbow', referring to the shape of the creek at its mouth. Take this pleasant walk and enjoy a typical natural 'Top End' environment.

### 1000 ways to make a difference...

The Rapid Creek Landcare Group, Larrakia people, Darwin Airport staff and contractors, Greening Australia, Green Corps and Conservation Volunteers Australia have planted many trees along the trail to create a buffer zone between the airport and Rapid Creek.

Small patches of remnant vegetation surrounded by urban developments are constantly under threat from weed invasion, erosion, excessive or inappropriate recreational use, water pollution and dumping. Buffer zones assist in easing these threats by providing a protective boundary.



Walking on the south eastern, upper part of the trail takes you through gentle ferny and prickly pandanus environments alongside the wetland edges.

Further along you can explore the drier woodland with flowering grevilleas, eucalypts and acacias.





**ANPSA**  
What's New at the National Level

**ANPSA AWARDS 12/9**

Please find attached a copy of the press release that was sent out on behalf of the Australian Native Plant Society, notifying media about the two awards being presented at the biennial conference in Albany; as you probably know, one is for a professional person working in the field of native plants and one is for an amateur.

The two winners of these biennial awards are both fascinating experts in their quite specific fields and have notched up more than a few botanical 'wins' over the years.

**Kingsley Dixon** discovered the molecule in smoke that helps seed germinate, and has used this and other research to advise mining companies on how best to restore damaged mine sites. His work in orchid biology and relationships with micorrhizal fungi has also been groundbreaking. He's a fellow of the Linnean Society but also a very down-to-earth gardener who's passionate about entering local agricultural shows! Apparently his white Waratah was a huge success.

**Glenn Leiper** retired from teaching early to spend more time exploring the flora of the bush around his home in Beenleigh, Qld. He started recording the different plants he saw and, along with others in the Logan River Branch of NPQ, ended up literally writing the book on the area's flora - a field guide that has been reprinted and extended so many times it's now too heavy to carry around as a field guide! He does a lot of voluntary work with the Queensland Herbarium, leading botanists around floral hotspots, and his plant recognition is so good he had a plant named in his honour after he spotted the unusual 15cm-high bush from a moving car.

I would appreciate you distributing this to your local groups for inclusion in newsletters etc. I have hi-res images available if needed.

Kind regards,

Jane Canaway

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM - ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (DUE 1 JULY)**

Please accept my subscription/renewal for membership of the Top End Native Plant Society

New membership       Renewal

Name/s.....

Email address .....

**Please Note: The electronic edition of the newsletter will be uploaded to the member's page of the website each month and members will be notified by email (Acrobat Reader is required).**

If you DO NOT have email access and would like to receive the newsletter (black & white available only) by post please tick the box.

Postal Address .....

Post Code.....<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Payment Due \$..... (\$20.00 per member/family, \$15.00 unwaged)<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

**TO PAY ONLINE:** Bank: People's Choice Credit Union      BSB: 805050  
Account Name: Top End Native Plant Society      Account Number: 61225276  
*Please include your name in the transfer reference.*

**Or MAIL TO:** TENPS Secretary, PO Box 135, Palmerston NT 0831

Signature ..... Date ...../...../.....

TO: PO Box 135 Palmerston





Sender:

PO Box 135 Palmerston