



# Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands Inc

The right tree in the right place for the right reason

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## Newsletter Storm Season October - December 2004

### Geoff Tracey, One of TREAT's founders

By Joan Wright

Geoff Tracey, who died on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2004, was a very important TREAT personality. Without him TREAT would never have started.

He was a rainforest ecologist who had a deep knowledge of and love for the Far North rainforest. He had worked in Brisbane in the CSIRO with Dr. Len Webb at the Long Pocket laboratories for many years before he came to live in the Far North of Queensland in 1980.

It was in Brisbane that Geoff met his wife, Reinhild who came from Vienna. She was a graduate Botany student studying grasses. They were married shortly after, in Vienna, and then returned to Australia. They came to live in Yungaburra where my husband, Dr. James Wright and I were also living at the time.

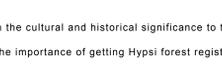
In 1982 Geoff suggested to me that Tableland landowners needed a source of native tree seedlings, and from that suggestion flowed the formation of a committee which organised the beginning of TREAT.

Geoff had many of the ideas which were incorporated into TREAT. His friendship with Peter Stanton, who was regional manager of Queensland National Parks & Wildlife Service at the time, made possible for a native tree nursery to be set up at Lake Eacham. TREAT and the nursery have cooperated productively for twenty years.

Although, of recent years, Geoff had not been able to take an active part in TREAT activities, he took the chair for elections at his annual meetings and attended at important occasions. TREAT owes a great deal to Geoff and he will be remembered with gratitude.

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#### POT RECALL

Note to Members: It would be appreciated if empty tubes were returned to the nursery.

### Hypsi Forest Field Day

By Larry Crook, TKMG Project Coordinator

An estimated 60 people attended the Hypsi Forest Field and Information Day held on 17th July at Malanda Falls.

Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group (TKMG) Project consultant Larry Crook claimed the day as a great success. "We had an overwhelming response from people wishing to know more about the Hypsi rainforest that is characteristic of the south-east Atherton Tablelands. It is an endangered ecosystem which means there is less than 10% remaining today."

This forest type has been named after the smallest kangaroo in the world, the Musky-rat Kangaroo, or Hypsiprymnodon moschatus, which lives mainly in this forest type. It is TKMG's intention to combine with other like-minded community groups to lodge an application to have this ecosystem listed at federal government level, this will increase the likelihood of attracting federal funding to establish a recovery plan for the ecosystem and further funding to carry out more revegetation work.

The speakers included Wet Tropics botanist Kylie Freebody who explained the terminology, floristics, structure and distribution of Hypsi forest.

Dr Andrew Dennis, a zoologist from CSIRO, spoke of the importance of fauna in the forest, focussing on seed dispersal and the Musky-rat kangaroo.

Njadjon representative Ernie Raymont spoke on the cultural and historical significance to the Njadjon people of Hypsi forest.

TKMG representative Sue Mathams explained the importance of getting Hypsi forest registered under the federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Eacham Shire Mayor Ray Byrnes was the final speaker and expressed his gratitude to groups such as TKMG and TREAT and volunteers for their conservation work. He spoke of the Shire's new motto, "Developing naturally", and the importance of nature tourism. Ray then launched the TKMG Hypsi T-shirt and then fielded questions on many related topics including dogs and cats and real rebates.

An estimated 35 people then attended the Field section of the Day at Reg and Olive Waltham's property, The Maples, near Millaa Millaa. People travelled on a mini-bus donated for the day by the Mareeba Environment College.

Here people were treated to a fine afternoon tea before walking down to a TKMG tree planting site to discuss the revegetation project and its significance to the larger picture in the surrounding landscape: the planting is part of a network of wildlife corridors and remnant habitat linkages that are being built on three adjoining properties and an environmental reserve in the district.

TKMG and volunteers have planted almost 9000 trees on the project since 2003, which represents 3 hectares of forest planted. The project is funded by the Natural Heritage Trust Envirofund.

### Tree planters alliance formed

By Helen Irwin

Community groups involved in revegetation works around the Atherton Tablelands have formed an alliance.

The Southern Atherton Tablelands Revegetation Alliance (SATRA) have been holding quarterly meetings for over a year and have recently formalized the group by deciding on a label.

The group brings together representatives from the Barron River Catchment Management Association, Trees for Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands (TREAT), Ngadgon Mitcha Jimma-Ma, Eacham Shire Community Vegetation Unit, Lower Peterson Creek Landcare, Tree Kangaroo and Mammal Group, Madgon Mitcha Jimma-Ma, FNQ NRM Ltd., School for Field Studies and Mabi Forest Working Group.

Barbara Lanskey, president of TREAT, said that the alliance was formed so that groups could communicate and cooperate.

"In the past, each tree planting group worked quite independently but this alliance brings us together to improve our planning, to share resources and to help each other apply for funds."

"Already the alliance has had its first success with the recent approval of a \$53 000 grant from FNQ NRM Ltd., the Wet Tropics Regional Board, through the federal government's Natural Heritage Trust."

"This first grant will be used to continue work on the Upper Johnstone Revegetation Project, where over 150 000 trees have been planted since 1995, and another section of the Peterson Creek project where TREAT has planted 27 000 trees in the past 7 years."

Rowna Grace from FNQ NRM Ltd. is certain that the formation of this group will create a shift in the way that our natural resources are managed in this region.

"By working together, community groups are seeing where they can use what they have for the health of our environment. The Southern Atherton Tableland has many unique species and forests and only by working together can we do enough to bring about a sustainable future."

### Annual General Meeting

by Barb Lanskey

TREAT's AGM on 27th August at the Community Hall in Yungaburra was well attended with 40-50 people present.

Our Treasurer's financial report was shorter than usual as the audits had not been completed.

Peter Dellow gave a PowerPoint presentation of nursery activities and statistics for the year and included an interesting item on the restoration of an area at Malanda falls following a tree fall near the river bank.

The president's report listed TREAT's activities in revegetation work and public awareness programmes and noted that monitoring activities needed to be expanded in the coming year.

The recent deaths of Geoff Tracey, Doug Clague and Stan Crighton were acknowledged and Joan Wright spoke in tribute to each of them.

Elections for the TREAT committee for the coming year were then held. Joan Wright wished to retire from the committee after serving on it from the beginning, 22 years ago, John Hall also wished to retire after serving 14 years and Col Walsh wished to retire as Treasurer after 8 years. Tony Irvine spoke of the achievements of all three and we enjoyed a "Thank You" cake to them at supper.

The new committee now includes Ken Schaffer as Treasurer and Dawn Schaffer as a committee member and the president welcomed them to the team. At the September committee meeting, Geoff Errey was welcomed as the 12th committee member, filling a position that was left vacant last year. Geoff is taking on publicity matters, previously handled by Joan Wright.

An ordinary general meeting followed the AGM and various matters were raised by the members.

Teresa Bradbury was the scheduled speaker for the evening and we looked forward to her presentation on figs and wasps. Unfortunately, our borrowed equipment held secrets we could not fathom and despite all efforts a decent screen picture was unobtainable. We abandoned the talk and had supper instead. Teresa still hopes to show us her presentation at a venue to be decided before she returns to England.

### FNQ NRM draft plan

by Colin Hunt

FNQ NRM Ltd. is the regional body that has been set up to carry out planning and to invest in strategies and actions for nature and natural resource conservation in the region. The boundaries of the region are the Bloomfield River in the North, the Herbert River in the South, the Barron at Mareeba in the west and the coast in the east. It is important to note that the plan does not cover the Queensland Wet Tropics World Heritage Area which is administered by the Wet Tropics Management Authority and has its own plan. Nevertheless, the NRM plan should complement that of the Authority.

The importance of the NRM plan is that it will address the crucial needs for conservation of biodiversity and natural resources on freehold and leasehold land, and land held by traditional owners.

On ground action will be facilitated by providing incentives directly to landholders, or via community groups of which there are some 160 in the region. The planning process should also include an assessment of the capacity of landholders and the community to put plans into practice and actions to enhance that capacity where necessary. Final accreditation of the plan will trigger investment of Commonwealth Government funds.

The draft plan - presently in the public consultation phase that ends on Friday 29 October - includes targets for conservation but does not yet include an investment strategy which will be the subject of further planning and consultation.

While TREAT will be making a formal written submission - to be posted on the TREAT website - individual members are also encouraged to access a copy of the draft plan and to make submissions for themselves.

The draft plan is available on CD from FNQ NRM Ltd, Phone 4061 6477. Copies can also be accessed at Libraries, Local Councils and EPA and NRM offices.

\* Colin Hunt is the TREAT representative on FNQ NRM Ltd Membership Body

### Doug Clague's Idiospermum Connection

by Sandy Clague

Doug Clague was a veterinarian who also had an immense love for the bush and as a consequence a great interest in plants. In the course of his work he was involved in investigating deaths in livestock resulting from eating poisonous plants, something that had been well covered in the veterinary course.

As a result of one of these investigations, Doug was instrumental in a discovery that had a major impact on North Queensland. Following autopsies, he sent plant material associated with the death of a number of cattle south of Cape Tribulation to the Queensland Herbarium. An excited phone call from the Government Botanist, Sel Eberst informed him that he had made the botanical find of the century. When Doug informed him that the tree had been destroyed and all the seeds collected and disposed of in a pit toilet, Sel referred to the botanical tragedy of the century. Fortunately, further investigation showed that it wasn't the last of its kind and that it was an even more important find than simply rediscovering a lost species.

The original plant had been collected from Harvey Creek near Babinda by Delis, collecting for Von Mueller who was working in the Botanical gardens in Melbourne. He identified the insect damaged specimen as *Callicantua australense* and took the only specimen with him when he returned to Germany where it was destroyed by bombing in Berlin during the war.

There had been extensive unsuccessful searches for this plant and when the floral material of the rediscovered tree was properly examined, it proved to belong to a new family of primitive flowering plants, and was renamed *Idiospermum*. This discovery, along with the number of other primitive flowering plants that were then found in the wet tropics, changed the whole status of Australian rainforest. Far from being a recent invader from the north, it showed that Australian rainforests are ancient and contain relicts of the old Gondwanaland early flora. This provided the scientific foundation on which the declaration of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area was based.

### Which Bumpy Satinash is the fruit of the month?

by Tony Irvine

"Gee this cassowary has been having a good feed" uttered Sam Mcoy to his two friends, Betty Bunyji, a Ngajonji woman and Danny Jangaburru, a Tableland Yidinji man as they wandered around the rain forests at Gadgarra in Yidinji country. "Too right" said Danny, "and most of the fruit belongs to **murul**. There must be a **murul** tree close by." They walked a little further and suddenly the final link was lit up by a tree with clusters of large white fruit approaching the size of small apples that occurred on bumpy gall-like areas on the tree's trunk. Very immature and mature fruits were present and some had fallen onto the ground. Some of the younger fruits had a pinkish bluish but the older fruits were mostly white. "Our name, **murul** is very similar to your name" Betty said to Danny "but if we give it an English name, we call it White Apple." "So do we," said Danny.

"Ah but the proper English name is Bumpy Satinash" said Danny authoritatively, "and its scientific name is *Syzygium corniflorum*." "The flowers are white, and look like shaving brushes and are up to 5 cm wide." "Do you use it for timber?" asked Danny. "Not this form" said Sam, "as it tends to be a mid canopy tree and is marred by the flowering and fruiting bumps on the trunk. But there is a form that is a much larger canopy tree, which occurs mostly in the lowlands and predominantly flowers on the branches. It can have light flowering on the trunk that does not form conspicuous bumps. I call it Bumpy Branch Satinash. I have logged it from time to time. I reckon those botanist blokes are wrong that call it the same species. Bumpy Branch Satinash doesn't start flowering until August and finishes in October whereas the Bumpy Satinash can start flowering in March on the coast, finishing in August and starts in April on the Tablelands, finishing in early September. In the higher country, Bumpy Satinash flowers between May and October."

"I know the one you mean" said Danny, "and we know that it is different because we call it **gurrabal**. The fruit tastes nicer than **murul** (Bumpy Satinash) and when you bite into the pale flesh, the flesh does not immediately change its whiteness whereas with **murul**, the flesh immediately starts turning a pale pink or white mauish colour and soon turns dark brown." "I don't know the Bumpy Branch Satinash" said Betty. "It could be in our country but if it does occur there, it is pretty rare and I do not know any language name for it."

"Uncle Tony reckons there is a difference in the number of eggs in the flowers of the two forms. He counted 28 to 41 eggs in Bumpy Satinash flowers and 72-102 eggs in Bumpy Branch Satinash (**gurrabal**)" Danny claimed. "By the way" uttered Danny, most of the Bumpy Satinash fruit around here seems to have white mature fruit but I know of a red fruited form at Downfall Creek."

"The cassowary must appreciate the fruit because at this time of the year (October) it is usually very dry and in my experience there are not too many fleshy fruits around. Many fleshy fruits are immature now and begin to ripen in November" stated Sam. "That's right" said Betty, "but Flying Fox, Musky Rat Kangaroo, Coppery Brushtail Possums, Fawn Footed Melomys and some birds like to eat the flesh also and we eat them as well."

Sam picked up a firm white fruit from the ground and bit it. "Ugh, I don't think much of that" uttered Sam as he spat the rest of the mouthful out. Danny agreed that they did not taste very nice but said "Like the cassowary, at this time of the year we had to make the most of what fleshy fruit there was around. But try a softer one. Sam tasted a softer fruit and said "that's a bit better but I reckon it tastes like dried mushroom taste."

### Peterson Ck Corridor Project

The morning of Saturday September 25 saw TREAT and QPWS stage the 8th planting in seven consecutive years along Peterson Ck as part of a long term project to reconstruct a wildlife corridor between Lake Eacham National Park and Yungaburra State Forest. On a superb spring morning more than 25 volunteers met at Doug and Sandra Burchills' property in an effort to extend the corridor by a further 3300 trees. Whilst spring represents a rather unorthodox time of year to be planting on the Tablelands, the Burchill site was also quite atypical in relation to previous upreast plantings. The decision to undertake a planting in late spring was deliberate, and recognised the most fundamental characteristics of the site particularly its propensity for extended inundation during the wet season. Given the seasonal influences at this time of year, planting conditions on the day were optimal with a significant effort invested in irrigating both pre and post planting using a combination of techniques. Considerable effort was also given in mulching the entire site to retain moisture and suppress the weed growth. The assistance from Doug and Simon Burchill in preparing the site combined with the nursery staff and commitment shown by numerous volunteers clearly demonstrates the willingness and capacity within the local community to effect the most practical of conservation outcomes.

This spring planting raises the project total to more than 32000 local provenance trees equivalent to 10.5 hectares or 20 football fields. Whilst this represents an enormous achievement for a community based project, the full investment over the past seven years will only be realised when the final link in the corridor is completed. If plantings along Peterson Ck continue on an annual basis the final link would be established around 2009/2010. For this reason community support becomes more and more critical the further TREAT and the QPWS progress toward achieving the projects' objective. The Peterson Ck Corridor has been identified as a Priority 1 project in the recently released Wet Tropics Conservation Strategy (2004). TREAT has secured funds through the FNQ NRM Ltd and Threatened Species Network to undertake two further plantings in the 2004/2005 season. The former will target an area at the top end of Peterson Ck while the latter will consolidate previous plantings with understorey and vine species. In total another 5000 local provenance trees will be planted this season so your continued involvement in the project has never been more necessary.

### Nursery Report

by Peter Dellow

#### Staff News

On Friday August 13 TREAT and nursery staff held a modest farewell for Angel Salerno who after 32 years with the Water Resources, Forestry and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service officially retired. Angelo was at the nursery for the last 3 years of his public service life and was a familiar face amongst the regular Friday morning crew. His friendly jovial manner was the hallmark which endeared him with an ability to forge personal friendships with staff and volunteers alike. I'm sure I speak for all wishing Angelo and Lena all the very best in their retirement.

Ironically, on the very same day of offering a farewell to Angelo we were able to congratulate Peter Snodgrass on his appointment to the position made vacant by Angelos' departure. Peter who has been a valuable member of staff for the past eight years has now secured a permanent Ranger position at the nursery ensuring his vast experience will be available to TREAT members and landholders who require quality advice in undertaking restoration projects.

Whilst Peter Dellow and Nick Stevens have both taken leave during September /October, all staff will be back on deck by the start of Summer in readiness for another busy planting season. In fact, from September through to May TREAT have a full program of plantings on the Tablelands - details and dates to be announced in the next TREAT newsletter.

#### "Steaming Ahead"

That's right the nursery is now literally steaming ahead. Five years ago we changed from the unsustainable practice of using single use bags for growing our plants to a more efficient and sustainable black plastic supertube which has multiple use capacity. This was certainly a change for the better however it created extra work for the volunteers in sterilising tubes before reuse. Nursery hygiene is a critical component in raising healthy pathogen free plants and is a foundation principle in our nursery management practices. The Lake Eacham nursery is one of only 83 nurseries in Queensland that operates under a national accreditation scheme that sets operational guidelines for quality assurance purposes. Since the introduction of multiple use supertubes we have been required to ensure sterility before reuse particularly when tubes come in from planting covered with dirt and other extraneous matter. Until recently this chore was performed by willing volunteers on Friday mornings. The process was repetitive and monotonous as each tube was literally scrubbed in a detergent solution. During the course of each planting season anywhere up to 40 000 supertubes would need this form of treatment before reuse-there had to be a better way!! One advantage of operating under and accreditation scheme is you gain access to the latest product information and management systems that promote improved quality. Whilst steam sterilisation is not new technology it is gaining acceptance within the industry as a relatively cheap and flexible option. Many accredited nurseries now incorporate high pressure steam generators as part of their hygiene procedures. After minor teething problems, the Lake Eacham Nursery now has steam generator on line reducing the pressure on volunteers to laboriously scrub tubes and other nursery tools. A stainless steel cabinet with a capacity of 450 tubes and 10 trays is housed in the outside bunker at the nursery. A steam generator is connected into the cabinet and when activated, raises the temperature to a nominal 65 degrees C. According to industry guidelines 65 degrees C for 30-40 minutes effectively sterilises all equipment in preparation for reuse. This unit also means a single member of staff can sterilise up to 3 000 supertubes and 67 trays in one day without getting their hands wet. This unit is also capable of sterilising other nursery equipment such as buckets, secateurs and even potting media if necessary. Manual tube scrubbing still takes place on Friday mornings but is generally limited to those tubes that are particularly dirty from plantings undertaken in wet and muddy conditions.

#### November Workshops

This year's tree identification and seed propagation workshops will be held on 13th November and 20th November (at the Lake Eacham Nursery) starting at 9.00am and finishing about 12:30pm. Each day TREAT and the Nursery staff cover both topics and morning tea is supplied by TREAT.

Places are limited at these stimulating workshops so if you wish to attend please phone early to put your name down. Ph Nursery on 4095 3406 or Barbara Lanskey on 4091 4468.

#### Seed Collection Diary: July - September 2004

Species	Common Name
<i>Acmena smithii</i>	Red Ungella Satinash
<i>Acmena resinosa</i>	Lillypilly
<i>Acronychia acidula</i>	Lemon Aspen
<i>Arytera pauciflora</i>	Rose Tamarind
<i>Buckinghamia celsissima</i>	Ivory Curl
<i>Caldcluvia australensis</i>	Rose Alder
<i>Cananga odorata</i>	Ylang Ylang
<i>Castanospermum australe</i>	Black Bean
<i>Celtis paniculatus</i>	Silky Celtis
<i>Clerodendron longiflorum</i>	Wilches Tongue
<i>Cryptocarya oblata</i>	Tarzalli Silkwood
<i>Cryptocarya onoprienkoana</i>	Rose Maple
<i>Cupaniopsis dallachyi</i>	Tuckeroo
<i>Daphnandra repandula</i>	Grey Sassafras
<i>Decaspermum humile</i>	Brown Myrtle
<i>Dysoxylum alliaceum</i>	Buff Mahogany
<i>Elaeocarpus sp.</i>	Quandong
<i>Eupomatia laurina</i>	Bilwarra
<i>Ficus crassipes</i>	Banana Fig
<i>Ficus superba</i>	Superb Fig
<b>Species</b>	<b>Common Name</b>
<i>Harpullia rhytidocarpa</i>	Slender Harpullia
<i>Helicia lamingtoniana</i>	Lamington's Silky Oak
<i>Hicksbeachia pilosa</i>	Red Bauple Nut
<i>Litsea leefeana</i>	Bollywood
<i>Lomatia fraxinifolia</i>	Lomatia Silky Oak
<i>Mallotus paniculatus</i>	Turn in the Wind
<i>Melicope bonwickii</i>	Yellow Evodia
<i>Melicope xanthoxylodes</i>	Yellow Evodia
<i>Mischocarpus exangulatus</i>	Red Bell
<i>Mischocarpus macrocarpus</i>	Large Fruit Mischocarp
<i>Podocarpus discoloris</i>	Brown Pine
<i>Polyalthia michaelii</i>	Canary Beech
<i>Polyscias elegans</i>	Celerywood
<i>Prunus turneriana</i>	Almond Bark
<i>Schizomeria whitei</i>	Crab Apple
<i>Syzygium corniflorum</i>	Bumpy Satinash
<i>Syzygium gustaviioides</i>	Grey Satinash
<i>Syzygium kurandana</i>	Kuranda Satinash
<i>Tabernaemontana pandacocui</i>	Banana Bush
<i>Zanthoxylum ovalifolium</i>	Yellow Wood

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