TREAT Newsletter May 2000

TREAT NEWS Editor: Dan Murphy
Items are included in "Treat News" for their interest to members and do not necessarily express treat's views.

COMING EVENTS

May 20th - Whing Creek Planting at El Arish 1pm - 4:30pm Details

July 1st - Field Day at Donaghy's Corridor

July 2000 - Launch of new fomat TREAT NEWS

Special Note - The release of the new format TREAT NEWS has been postponed - only until next edition. There have been a few delays in finalising the layout and new style. Watch out for big changes in the next edition.

Tree-planting at the start of a new century

By Joan Wright

The opening of the tree-planting season on the Atherton Tableland was successful and very wet! More than 12,000 native trees, raised by TREAT members in the nursery at Lake Eacham, were planted on four sites at the beginning of a big program for the year 2000.

Hundreds of volunteers, working alongside the QPWS Centre for Tropical Restoration staff, planted trees at Peterson Creek near Yungaburra, Mazlin Creek near Atherton, Massey Creek near Ravenshoe and the Nasser's property near Wongabell. All of these projects have been funded through the Bushcare Program as part of the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage Trust.

The landholders involved in each project have been most co-operative and are watching the trees' growth with interest. The projects provide a range of benefits at the farm and regional scale including increased stability of creek banks, improved shade and shelter for the stock , or in the case of the planting at Nasser's the beginnings of the recovery of a critically endangered rainforest ecosystem known as Mabi (or Type 5b) forest.

TREAT volunteers with QPWS staff have been planting trees in the first few months of the year for more than a decade. The Tinaburra peninsula, the Gillies Highway at Lake Barrine and Donaghy's Corridor now include thousands of trees growing to rainforest maturity. The continuing enthusiasm of the TREAT members provides inspiration for people from other areas and countries to start similar programs, and we've not finished yet!

Other community groups are now doing similar work. TREAT supported the planting at the Peterson Creek platypus - viewing area at Yungaburra, organised by the lower Peterson Creek Landcare Group. Members also joined in the Year 2000 planting on the Tolga Scrub Committee, led by TREAT's president Tony Irvine. Most recently members turned out to help the Barron River Integrated Catchment Management Group to plant 2,000 trees on the banks of the Barron downstream of the Jim Chapman Bridge - an Olympic Landcare 2000 project.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT

Australian Ethical Investment (AEI) - a Canberra based public funds manager, has donated $225 to TREAT. This donation will help us financially, but more important in many respects, we are told that the award process is very competitive, so once again we can congratulate ourselves on the success of our work over the years and the wider recognition this is now achieving.

A unique part of AEI's constitution is a provision to donate 10% of profits generated to non-profit organisations promoting environmental improvement and social responsibility. In 1999, TREAT was one of 16 organisations throughout Australia to benefit from this policy. We stand alongside organisations and programmes such as Timor Aid, Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the earth, Aged Rights Service and others all of whom received grants ranging upwards to $1,000.

> AEI's Chair - Dr Judy Henderson, has called upon the country's largest companies to show similar responsibility towards the communities they serve. "By donating even a fraction of their profits the positive impact would be enormous" she said.

Quoting from a background paper issued by the company, AEI state that they specialise in environmental and socially responsible investment but go beyond the more common ethical investment practice of merely avoiding investment in repressive regimes, uranium mining, rainforest logging and so on. They claim a strong pro-active principle of providing investment support to environmental and socially positive activities - such as recycling, conservation, energy efficiency, preservation of endangered species, animal welfare and workplace relations.

Currently, AEI manage four unit trusts and four superannuation strategies; it has a shareholder base of more than 100 and serves a rapidly growing client base of over 5,000 ethical investors. If you are interested in investing - detailed information can be obtained from Diane Robertson on free-call 1800 021 227.

NATIVE TREES IN TOWN

by Joan Wright

Some of our TREAT members live in towns. At the nursery they are advised to choose small native trees and shrubs which will suit their block size.

One member has a small group of TREAT trees and she said, "It gives me a lot of joy to watch the butterflies and birds in my trees. I often sit on the verandah and watch them". Bottle-brushes, grevilleas and ivory-curl trees are especially suitable to town gardens, and butterfly trees, too.

If these trees and shrubs begin to grow too big for the garden, they can be cut back. Young trees and shrubs can be reduced in height and cut to a pleasing shape if secateurs rather than a chainsaw are used!

Geoff Tracey, our co-founder, offers the advice that trees should never be planted closer to a house than their own height. When cyclones, such as Steve, threaten our gardens, this is good advice.

Report on the 'Forest Restoration for Wildlife Conservation' Workshop, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Nigel Tucker. CTR Lake Eacham.

In February this year I attended a forest restoration workshop in Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand. Dominated by the majestic peak of Doi Suthep, this city was the perfect venue for a workshop to examine restoration of south-east Asia's dry tropical forests. The workshop was organised by the Forest Restoration Research Unit (FORRU) at Chiang Mai University (CMU) and attended by researchers from 16 countries throughout Asia and the Pacific Rim. I was invited to the workshop to talk about our TREAT / Qld. Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) model, discuss the interactions between wildlife and the forests we have re-built over the years, and try to assist Asian forest managers develop cost-effective techniques to restore dry tropical forests.

The dry tropical forests of northern Thailand are usually a cross between Forty Mile Scrub National Park and the Mulgrave River forests at the base of the Gillies Highway. They have a high number of deciduous trees and are often dominated by just one family, (the Dipterocarps), which reach majestic heights of 45 metres. The understorey of these forests usually includes bamboo, and if burnt by wildfires or continuously disturbed by ever-expanding slash and burn agriculture, these complex forests revert solely to bamboo or exotic grasses. In the face of this pressure much of the forest has been lost, so too has its wildlife - tigers and other native cats, primates and many bird species.

Happily, the story gets better. The passion of the Thai king for forests and forest restoration has helped to foster a restoration movement and Thai expertise is now steadily improving. In 1997, QPWS invited staff from FORRU to visit our Centre for 2 weeks intensive training in forest restoration and from my observations the results of this visit were clear and positive. The February workshop then represented a great opportunity for FORRU to show their expertise and projects to other researchers / groups from Thailand and the Asian community.

Apart from those by the Thai's, presentations given by researchers from Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia were especially interesting. The Vietnamese have been incredibly resourceful and innovative in their efforts to re-build forests destroyed during the Vietnam War, and results of the latest direct seeding trials by scientists from Ho Chi Minh University left me with much to admire. In Indonesia and Malaysia, researchers have been working on the cultivation of soil mycorrhizae and the use of sewage effluent, to help with plant nutrient uptake in restored minesites. Researchers also made trips to the field to look at restoration sites in a Hmong hill tribe village and inspect FORRU's impressive tree nursery on Mt. Doi Suthep. Workshop attendants took much interest in our work at Donaghy's Corridor and a number of groups have expressed an interest in visiting us over the next 12 months for training in restoration.

At the conclusion of the workshop, researchers were asked to produce a prioritised agenda of research questions most likely to advance our knowledge of dry tropical forest restoration. This list will be used by groups like FORRU to seek funding from a range of organisations, and begin to answer some of these questions. Proceedings of the workshop are currently in press and will be available at the nursery during the next month or so.

Doing two jobs with one bird

The Torresian Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula bicolor*) is a prominent bird of coastal northern Australia, spending its summer here before returning to Papua New Guinea for the winter.

Travelling in flocks of many thousands, often over great distances, these birds are important seed dispersers, a critical job in the maintenance of diverse tropical forests, however over the past century, the species has been drastically reduced in number as a consequence of habitat destruction and hunting pressure.

So in 1994 Marine Parks ranger Jenni Le Cussan and the Centre kicked off a four year study to look at the TIP diet, and to start some coastal revegetation focussing specifically on TIP's. To facilitate this we set up seed traps under TIP roost trees on Woody Isle, the mangrove island next to the Low Isle sand cay. The seed traps consisted of pieces of shade cloth tacked to a frame which sits about 300mm above ground. Each month during pigeon season, QPWS' Low Isles ranger Geoff Iliffe, assisted by LIPS (Low Isles Preservation Society) volunteers, emptied traps of their messy catch, meticulously separated the seeds into groups and forwarded them on to Lake Eacham. Once at the Centre, seeds were germinated, then identified by QPWS and CSIRO staff and seedling specimens lodged at the CSIRO Herbarium.

At the same time Jenni and I visited Snapper Island, a continental island off Cape Kimberley on the road to Cape Tribulation. Snapper Island National Park had formerly been the site of a lime factory and a section of the rain forest on the island cleared for the facility. Now covered with guinea grass and other weeds, this area made the perfect final destination for the seedlings rapidly accumulating from the germinated trap material which was potted up by TREAT members on Friday mornings. This material was ideal for a number of reasons, firstly it definitely contained species TIP's and other pigeons included in their diet, and in proportions which told us a lot about fruit preference and available quantities; secondly the genetic variability and integrity could be assured because the birds are foraging from a number of different trees which are all within normal flying range and hence the distance over which seeds can be dispersed; and thirdly the variety of species germinating allowed us to sift out those we knew would be unlikely to survive being planted in the open.

The project is now in its fifth year and on April 14th this year, QPWS and LIPS again got together to re-establish more new forest on Snapper. Over the five year period around 100 species have been identified in the diet of the birds at Woody Isle. The most prominent family were the laurels (Lauraceae) with 14 species (so far). Other important families were the figs (Ficus spp., 7 species) and the star apple/pigtta pericha family, Sapotaceae (6 species). These 3 groups are also well represented in our Snapper plantings, and we hope in years to come the whole cycle can begin again as TIP's visit the new forest and feast on the unwitting co-operation of their ancestors.

For more information contact the Centre on 4095 3406

Mabi Forest Book Launch

by Joan Wright

Lumholtz Tree Kangaroo

Mabi forest is a rare type of rainforest which once covered large areas of the Tableland, north and west of Malanda. It draws its name from the local aboriginal name for Tree -kangaroo, one of the most common large mammals in this forest type.

Clearing for settlement has reduced the forest, also known as Type 5b vine forest, to small scattered remnants such as Tolga Scrub, Picnic Crossing and the Curtain Fig and Wongabell State Forests.

A Working Group (of which TREAT is a member) was formed in 1997 to manage Natural Heritage Trust funds to start an ecosystem recovery project.

As part of the project the Group produced a booklet, Vanishing Vegetation of Far North Queensland - Mabi (5b) Forest which was launched by Atherton Shire Mayor, Jim Chapman, and QPWS Regional Service Director, Clive Cook, at the plantout on Nasser's property in March. For information on where to get a copy of the free booklet call the Centre on 40953406.

More Information on Mabi Forest and the booklet is available to download from the Mabi Forest page.

SOWING LIST January - April 2000

Xanthostemon whitei	Mischocarpus pyriformis	Castanospora alphandii	
Syzygium wilsonii subsp. cryptophlebium	Dysoxylum oppositifolium	Syncina cordieronum	
Rhysotoechia robertsonii	Elaeocarpus grahamii	Guioa lasioneura	
Syzygium australe	Guioa acutifolia	Flindersia brayleyana	
Diploglottis bracteata	Dysoxylum muelleri	Prunus turneriana	
Nauclea orientalis	Eucalyptus xanthoxyloides	Darlingia darlingiana	
Ruckinghamiana celciosima	Acmena smithii	Sarcopteryx martyana	
Cryptocarya meinocarga	Ficus virgata	Ficus destruens	
Ficus obliqua	Anthocarpa nitidula	Callitris intratropica	
Flindersia bourjotiana	Grevillia glauca	Blepharocarya involucrigera	
Cryptocaya triplinervis	Gmelina fasciculiflora	Camavonia araliifolia	
Omalanthus novo-guineensis	Mallotus mollissimus	Darlingia ferruginea	
Franciscodendron laurifolia	Elaeocarpus grahamii	Ficus destruens	
Ficus copiosa	Sauropus macranthe	Croton insularis	
Pitidiostigma tropicum	Ficus pleurocarpa	Gmelina dalrympleana	
Aglaia sapindina	Darlingia darlingiana	Dysoxylum gaudichaudianum	
Syzygium hemeyanum	Terminalia sericocarpa	Synoum meulleri	
Rhus taitensis	Ficus leptoclada		
Flindersia schottiana	Guioa acutifolia	Eurochinus falcata	
Castanospermum australe	Macaranga involucrata	Pararchidendron pruinosum	
Neolitsea dealbata	Ficus racemosa	Ficus septica	
Cryptocarya hypospodia	Tetrasynandra longipes	Ficus obliqua var obliqua	
Syzygium australe	Flindersia brayleyana	Cryptocatya laevigata	
Daphnandra repandula	Austromyrtus sp.	Ficus fraseri	
Elaeocarpus largiflorens	Trema orientalis	Pluteria cleredendron	
Ficus crassipes	Canarium muelleri	Prumnopitys amara	
Elaeocarpus eliffii	Diploglottis bracteata	Hicksbeachia pilosa	
Emmenosperma alphitonioides	Acronychia crassipetala	Ficus wakinoana	
Ficus superba	Toona ciliata	Mimusops elengi	
Acmena divaricata	Firmiana papuana	Alstonia scholaris	
Casuarina cunninghamiana	Nauclea orientalis	Ficus variegata	
Ficus virens	Ficus hispida	Callistemon viminalis	
Cordia dichotoma	Geissois biagiana	Glibeea adenopetala	
Evodiella muelleri	Rhodamnia sericea	Stenocarpus davallioides	
Grochidion philippicum	Endiandra montana	Syzygyum sayeri	
Apanathe philippinensis	Noahdendron nicholasii	Syzygium cancicortex	
Eucodia xanthoxyloides	Pullea stutzeri	Pittosporum ferrugineum	
Pittosporum venulosum	Syzygium gustaviodes	Ficus platypoda	

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Fruit of the Month

Scientific name: *Acmena graveolens*

Common name: Cassowary Satinash

Family: Myrtaceae

Look out standing under these trees at the moment!! Their pink - red fruits are up to 60mm diameter and weigh around 100 grams, definitely headache material, and falling right now. Fruits have a coarse, almost sandpaper like texture when ripe, with prominent ribs running down the sides. This large forest tree grows to 35 metres, occurring in lowland and foothills areas between Tully and Cape Tribulation, to around 500 metres above sea level. It is particularly common around Josephine Falls where the bright pink/ apricot flush of large pendulous leaves (up to 20cms long) makes an attractive sight. *Acmena graveolens* can be distinguished from its close relative *A. divaricata* by its rounded leaf tip. *Acmena divaricata* (Cassowary Gum) has an acute (pointed) leaf tip.

Seed takes up to 90 days to germinate and must be sown fresh. The tree grows best in a sheltered position, in well drained soils, and likes plenty of water.

Tree Planting Whing Creek, El Arish

Saturday 20th May, 2000
Come and join in!

Come and help us out at the Walter Hill Ranges planting at El Arish to strengthen the rainforest links from the southern Tablelands to lowland forests along the Walter Hill Ranges.

The trees you plant will:

- Give food and homes to wildlife
- Strengthen corridors for cassowaries
- Demonstrate the benefits of tree planting for cane rat control
- Stabilise the banks of Whing Creek
- And beautify our local area

Meet at Shell Pocket Road, El Arish at 1pm. Bring along hats, sunscreen, drinks, and stay for the free BBQ.

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