



Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands Inc

The right tree in the right place for the right reason

T R E A T

Home About Contact Events Calendar Site Map
Projects Mabi Forest TREAT & Wildlife Resources

►TREAT Home ►Resources ►TREAT News Dry Season July - September 2005

TREAT News Dry Season July - September 2005

I Wish I May, I Wish I Might..

by Deborah Pergolotti, Cairns Frog Hospital

Sometimes you should be careful what you wish for - it might come true! Ten years ago, you might have wished that all those noisy frogs calling in your yard on a wet, summer evening would just go away so you could hear the TV. You probably didn't mean it, but this is one wish which has come true in many areas of FNQ.

If you happen to live on a block that is well vegetated with natives, and you don't use chemicals, and your domestic animals are particularly sensitive to environmental changes but are also visible species to us can be so useful. When they start to die out, this is a warning to us that ripples are taking place and need to be investigated. Amphibians are one such "indicator" and the rate of decline we are witnessing now should be a very loud siren -- but not enough people are paying attention.

Wildlife managers in agencies will tell you that one disease has been responsible for the decline of frogs in the Wet Tropics bioregion and that disease is chytrid fungus. It has been involved in losses to high altitude populations and has since spread to some areas of the Tablelands during the winter months. But what about the die-offs that are being reported when chytrid fungus is not active? Areas like Cairns and the entire tropical coast do not have problems with chytrid at all, so why are all these localities (from Townsville to the tip of the Cape) reporting and turning in sick and dead frogs and cane toads? The answer is because chytrid fungus is NOT the only disease decimating frog populations in the region.

The Cairns Frog Hospital started receiving frogs from the public in late 1998 and as of July 2005, has received over 1,500 frogs, dozens of sick toads and thousands of tadpoles. We have been chasing pathology and researchers for tests and analysis and to make a long, complicated story short, we have categorised the new diseases killing local amphibians into four groups.

They are the immuno-deficiency complex which targets the White-lipped tree frog very strongly; the "respiratory" disease which started killing frogs, toads and possibly snakes one year after the drought started; cancer and other tumours; and the "Redlynch" virus, named for the suburb in Cairns where deformed frogs were first found.

Winter is the time of year frogs are most affected by disease. The modified environment they live in becomes too stressful for them during the dry season and they respond by succumbing to disease. If you are seeing any sick or dead frogs or toads on your property, please contact us to discuss it. We also need more support if we are to keep on doing the disease surveillance we have for the past six years.

Donations dropped off sharply after the tsunami and we are desperate for new support. We have an extensive website (www.frogsafe.org.au).

Inside this issue

- Annual General Meeting
- Friends of Leslie Creek Project Success
- Donaghy's Corridor Field Day
- Peterson Creek Field Day
- Fruit of the Month
- Update on Upper Johnstone Project
- Flowing On
- Nursery News
- Coming Event
- Fruit Collection Diary

[Kids Page](#) [Water Watch Crossword](#)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 23rd TREAT AGM will be held in the Yungaburra Community Hall on

Friday 19th August starting at 7.30pm.

Our guest speaker will be **Barbara Waterhouse**, a botanist with AQIS (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service) working on the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy and collaborator with the Weeds CRC (Co-operative Research Centre). Barbara will be talking about some invasive plant species which are not yet widespread in Nth Qld.

Annual reports by the President, Treasurer and Nursery Manager will be followed by the election of new office bearers and committee members and a General Meeting. Members are reminded that they must be financial when voting for the new committee.

Subscriptions will be accepted at the AGM.

There is a supper afterwards and plate contributions are appreciated.

All are welcome to attend.

Friends of Leslie Creek - Project Success

by Bronwyn Robertson

The Friends of Leslie Creek (FOLC), with the support of the Barron River Catchment group and the Eacham Shire Community Revegetation Unit, have been successful in establishing over 4000 trees at a particularly difficult site at Ian and Rita Sinclair's property on Leslie Ck. Previous drainage work along this section of Leslie Ck has severely altered the site, with straight, artificial drainage lines replacing the meandering creek and soils remaining heavily waterlogged for many months.

Many TREAT volunteers will remember the Peterson Ck planting at Burchill's property in 2004, while some of the older TREAT members may even remember assisting at a planting at Ant and Melissa Mai's place on Ball Road nearly 10 years ago. At both these sites, careful strategies were used because of the waterlogged conditions and Sinclair planting has occurred in similar conditions and some careful planning has made the new seedlings are healthy and growing vigorously, despite the tough conditions.

Smaller previous plantings on the Sinclair's property struggled with frosts, inundation and the heavy clay soils. To help avoid these problems, trees were planted during September 2004. This allowed the seedlings the maximum possible time to establish before the next frost. It also meant seedlings had several months to establish before they had to contend with seasonal inundation during the wet season. Early irrigation kept them alive during the first dry months. Species were selected very carefully, with the majority chosen for their ability to flourish in these conditions. Creek cherries, lilly pillies and figs are all doing well at the site.

The final innovative adjustment made to the standard planting technique involved creating mounds to plant the trees into, raising them up out of the waterlogged soil while they established. This is similar to techniques used in some agricultural crops, like bananas, and has proved particularly successful. Without these changes to our standard revegetation techniques, this planting is unlikely to have been as successful.

The Sinclair's property links to Mt Quincan, where a significant population of Tree Kangaroos resides. Over the next few years, it is hoped to expand the rehabilitation efforts on other FOLC properties to strengthen the link to existing remnants and expand the available habitat for Tree Kangaroos.

Funding support for this project was provided through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust.

Donaghy's Corridor - Field Day

Geoff Errey

Ten years ago the animals of the Lake Barrine National Park were in trouble. Isolated in a small fragment of rainforest surrounded by farmland, scientific studies had shown that their genetic diversity was dwindling because they were unable to maintain contact with others of their kind in the neighbouring, and much larger, Gagarra State Forest. Although little more than a kilometre away, the forest was separated from Lake Barrine by grazing country which offered no protection for small mammals needing the cover of trees to move about in safety.

At the time, Nigel Tucker was Senior Ranger at the Lake Eacham nursery of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). In 1995, assisted by volunteers from TREAT, he commenced an ambitious project to revegetate a corridor along Toohyes Creek to the two forest sections. He sought the co-operation of the two families farming the area, and they fenced off the creek, limiting their cattle to just a couple of access points for water. Then over four successive Wet seasons to 1998, QPWS staff and TREAT members planted 20,000 trees in a 100 metre wide strip lining both sides of the creek.

The 101 different species of trees were selected to play a variety of roles in the project. Fast-growing pioneers species offered protection for the others and quick shade to prevent the invasion of weeds and grasses from the neighbouring paddocks. Others types were to act as food trees providing blossom, leaves and fruit for birds and mammals, while varieties growing to different heights generated the canopy and mid-level structures.

On 18th June TREAT conducted a Field Day in what has become known as Donaghy's Corridor, named after one of the landholders involved. Nigel Tucker, who is now a principal of Biotropica Australia, a revegetation consultancy firm on the tablelands, led about 50 visitors on a two-hour walking tour to see the results of the intervening ten years.

Mr Tucker showed that what had been a trampled, eroded stream verge is now a thriving plant community, with a canopy in places 15 metres or more in height. Possums, antechinus and other small mammals from Lake Barrine and Gagarra have colonised the corridor. Birds, bats and the wind have brought in additional seed material so that the original 101 species of trees planted have increased dramatically. Ferns, vines, mosses, fungi and invertebrate animals have added complexity to the ecology. In 2002, Mr Tucker led a survey group of scientists to examine the effects of the project on the mammal population, DNA testing proved that there had been a mingling of the populations from the two forest segments, providing the genetic diversity needed to ensure viable populations can continue.

The work of QPWS and TREAT in the provision of wildlife corridors continues. They are presently halfway through an even more ambitious project to link Lake Eacham National Park with the Curtain Fig Forest along 7 km of Peterson Creek.

Peterson Creek Field Day

Barb Lanskey

On the glorious afternoon of 16th July, Simon Burchill led a group of about 20 people through some of the earliest and most recent plantings along Peterson Creek. We started at the first planting (1998) on the Burchill property and were pleased to walk under the canopy of the trees to get out of the sun.

Simon has been involved in mammal and bird monitoring in this planting and has also been infilling over the years so he was able to show us various interesting examples of tree loss and growth. In September last year TREAT added to the edge of the planting and the growth of the new trees was quite astonishing - some of them now over 2 metres high.

We then walked to the western to the 2004 plantings to see the Para Grass problem choking the creek further downstream. The afternoon ended with a visit to Palumbo's property and a short walk past previous plantings to look at one of the cattle crossings.

As an experiment for the afternoon, Simon used a small portable PA system and it proved quite effective.

Fruit of the Month

by Tony Irvine

"Gee, I find the edge of this planting, difficult to maintain" uttered Sam McCoy to Betty Boonjie and Danny Janggaburru as he was showing them over his garden. "This is a rain forest planting and damn Guinea Grass and Bracharia Grass keep invading the frontal 2 metres of the plot. "Why don't you replace the grass with some of those flax lilies" replied Betty and Dan in unison. "They form dense clumps with strap-like leaves and have blue flowers followed by dark vivid blue fruit." "Aw, I think I know the ones you mean," said Sam. "Sounds like a good idea."

"There are several different forms of them and botanists seem to have trouble sorting them out" said Betty. "But my people, the Ngajonji, had no trouble sorting them out. We just called them all the one name. In fact we did not distinguish them from the Mat Lily (Lomandra hystrix) although the plants look clearly different. We called all of them including the Mat Lily, jilgan. Probably because we had the same usage for them. Their leaves were used to make temporary dry mats and baskets." "Our people (Yidinyji) had the same usage as well," said Danny. "We called the Mat Lily, jilgan (pronounced like the "ng" in sing" ie. "sigan jilgan") but I do not know if we had a different name for the Flax Lilies."

"Uncle Tony Irvine told me that a good flax lily to use was *Dianella caerulea* Sky Blue Flax Lily," said Danny. "The plants he has, have dark purple-blue flowers about 1 cm wide, with yellow anthers that have blackish vertical streaks. You can often see a stocky, blue and yellow-banded Carpenter Bee visiting the flowers. Fruits are globose, vivid dark blue, 9-10 mm long x 8-9 mm broad. When you cut across the fruits, you can see three chambers (locules), with small glossy black mature seed, 3 mm long x 2 mm wide. Seeds are initially brown before they turn black. Each fruit has at least 15-18 seeds. Leaves on his plants seem to be larger in width than you see in the books, being 28-32 mm wide in their mid area. The total length of the closed portion of the larger leaves to the very base of the leaf sheath is 16-20 cm. Lawn Honeyeaters feed on the stalks and eat the fruits."

"Uncle Tony says that another flax lily that you could use, is *Dianella atraxis* Purple Stem Flax Lily. With all the flax lilies, you can easily see the stems into portions with basal roots and plant them as well as sowing the seed to rapidly multiply your plants. You could use the flax lilies in the front row along the edge of the trees, together with the Mangrove Lily, *Crinum pedunculatum* and then behind this row among the trees, plant ginger (Alpinia caerulea, A. modesta, A. arctiflora [not in Mabi areas], *Amomum dallachyi*, *Pleuranthodium racemigerum*) and Cunjevoi (*Alcoxia brisbanensis*). Behind these plants, shrubs such as *Sauropus macranthus* (Atherton Sauropus) and *Mackinlaya macrosciadea* (Green Parasol Bush) could be planted in Mabi areas."

Sam McCoy piped up "I remember now I read in a book by Tim Low that he has eaten fruits of several species of Flax Lilies and that they appeared edible although most were watery and tasteless." Betty and Danny said that they did not know if their people ate the fruits and thought that if they ate any part of the plant it would have been the white basal part of the leaf as they did with the Mat Lily but they were uncertain whether their people did such.

Sam continued, "Also I read in Poisonous Plants of Australia (Everist, S.) there are reports of the fruits being poisonous but the evidence is mostly circumstantial and inconclusive. In fact he states that Len Webb (1948) described a case where a man sampled a small portion of a fruit of *D. caerulea*, spat it out without swallowing and a few minutes later, felt that he had an overwhelming desire to swing left whilst walking. It was probably something else that affected him but it was the cause then I reckon the Greens and the ALP should mass feed the people with *D. caerulea* berries to win the next federal election."

Update on Upper Johnstone Revegetation Project

Larry Crook

In the August 2005 edition of the newsletter, Helen did not mention the part played in the project by the Eacham Shire branch of the Wet Tropics Tree Planting Scheme (WTTPS).

WTTPS was the main partner with MUJCLA from the very beginning of the project. The WTTPS Technical Officer Mark Heaton and the WTTPS umbrella organisation, the Joint Board, were instrumental in directing and assisting Malanda Landcare with gaining NHT funding for at least the first six years of the project. (I write about the period 1995 to 2000 when I was working with WTTPS).

The WTTPS crew did all the on-ground work including liaising with landholders, site preparation, planting, maintenance, erecting fences, running miles of electric fences, installing cattle access points, establishing off stream watering systems and constructing concrete causeways for use by cattle. All the trees were sourced from the WTTPS nursery at Winfield Park.

As for volunteers when I worked on the project, there were the volunteer groups Australian Conservation Volunteers and Green Corps who assisted from time to time which were very grateful for. On two occasions, I remember, they were led by a young bloke from Townsville, one Peter Dellow.

A couple of stories: The banks were so steep in places that when hole digging we had a rope tied to the digger and while two of us would be on the digger, a third person would be up on the top of the bank holding the digger upright by pulling on the rope.

There was so much lantana to be cleared it was ridiculous. After a spray and a burn we had a neat method to remove the trees from the steep banks. Attached to the bobcat was a long chain. Attached to the chain was a set of ties. Two of us would carry the ties down the bottom behind the lantana and crouch on them to hold them down as the bobcat moved off and slowly pulled us up and the roots out. We did this for days. It may sound dangerous but it wasn't. It was done slowly, slowly and not one accident occurred.

To pull out lantana where we couldn't burn for fear of also burning native vegetation, we would tie the chain through the roots of the plant, join it back onto itself and the bobcat up top would do the rest. Then we would carry the ties down and finish off the job.

Our ganger, Trevor Akers, was a marvel at devising ways of attacking weeds and creating solutions to the many problems we faced. He found the tires in the scrub.

We began working on the Upper Johnstone Revegetation Project in 1995, commencing on Bromfield Creek at Bromfield Crater. By 2000 when I left WTTPS we had planted both sides of the creek and river as far as the bridge at Malanda. And that included a couple of forays upstream on the North Johnstone to do more planting on Ross Chapman's place, and a couple of other side creeks as well. (Jane's drawing illustrates it quite well). It was a marvellous and ambitious project and I thoroughly enjoyed working on it. It was heartening to experience the domino effect as those landholders who were a tad reticent to the project relaxed their resistance as they saw the trees being created.

The project's success owes much to Trevor Akers who directed all of the on-ground work and did most of the liaising with landholders.

"Flowing On" With Herberton State School

by Dawn Schaffer

"FLOWING ON" is an extension of TREAT's children education Tree Education Program. The aim of this new program is to educate children to the importance of water quality and the relationship of tree planting to the health of our water ways.

On 1st June Year 5/6 students from Herberton State School participated in our first program. The TAP team met the class at Allumbah Pocket, Yungaburra and the students were each given a workbook. Their first task was to do a visual assessment of Peterson Creek giving ratings for the following categories - land use, litter, smell, water clarity, vegetation, invertebrate and vertebrate animals. This gave the students the opportunity to form a quick opinion based on their 'feelings' whether Peterson Creek is healthy. The students then, with the team very close and forever at the ready for the accidental slip, collected water samples to take back to the Nursery.

Now we could 'play' with our new testing equipment. The students recorded the reading of the water samples and with the help of their calculators found first their Team mean and the Site mean of Peterson Creek. These findings were compared with readings taken back in 1997 and showed an improvement in the water quality.

We explained to the students why we called this programme "FLOWING ON". We are combining 2 or 3 generations working together on a continuing project towards a common goal. So the task is FLOWING ON as we train the next generation about the importance of healthy waterways.

The TAP team had a very busy but enjoyable day. It was difficult to say who enjoyed the day more; the TAP team as they imparted their knowledge and experience being so rewarded seeing the interest and pleasure on the student's faces, or the students having so much fun and sense of achievement as they participated in the project.

The program worked very well and with just a few minor adjustments, the plan is to make this an annual event.

This new educational initiative was made possible by the successful application to the 2005 Community Natural Resource Awareness Activity Grant from the Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Nursery News

Barb Lanskey / Nick Stevens

Staff News

Peter Dellow resigned from the position of manager of the nursery in May, effective from 10th June, after taking leave. Peter has gone to the Sunshine Coast for at least a year. Nick Stevens has been temporarily appointed to higher duties, in charge of the nursery.

Neal Walters completed his traineeship in May and the next week, Gavin Kennedy commenced work at the nursery as a trainee.

New Roof

The new roof was completed in April and TREAT's Friday mornings resumed at the beginning of May after a 3 week break. The new roof lets in a lot more light and has kept us safely dry during the wet weather.

The seed room has not yet been fully screened to exclude rats and mice, but surprisingly, no predation has occurred since the new roof and walls have been in place. This is in contrast to the recent incident in the top shed where the rats had to work really hard to remove the lid from a container storing *Elaeocarpus bancroftii* kernels and then proceeded to stash the remaining nuts all around the shed for later consumption.

Wet Tropics Wildlife Corridor

The 6,000 trees set aside for the wildlife corridor at El Arish are gradually being planted by nursery staff with help from landholders, TREAT members, and recently the U of Q Gatton students. About two thirds of the trees are now in the ground. TREAT members helped with a substantial planting in July.

This is the final year of planting in a project funded by Powerlink to strengthen wildlife corridors adjacent to the Walters Hill Ranges between El Arish and Tully.

Answers to Water Watch Crossword

Down	Across
• 1. Watershed	• 2. Conserve
• 3. Organism	• 4. pH
• 5. Hydrologist	• 11. Limnology
• 6. Ecosystem	• 12. Evaporation
• 7. Bacteria	• 13. Habitat
• 8. Effluent	• 14. Salinity
• 9. Vegetation	• 15. Erosion
• 10. Pollution	

Coming Event - Field Day at Tarzali

Saturday 17th September 2pm - 4pm at Kay & Eric Coomber's property at Tarzali

Kay and Eric have some remnant rainforest on their property and this is a great opportunity to see the additional planting done by one of our regular Friday morning volunteers.

Fruit Collection April - June 2005

Species	Common Name	Collection	Provenance*
<i>Acmena hemitampa ssp. hemitampa</i>	Bluish Satinash	RE 7.11.1	2a
<i>Acmena acicula</i>	Lillipilli Satinash	RE 7.8.3, RE 7.8.2	5b,1b
<i>Acronychia acida</i>	Lemon Aspen	RE 7.8.2, RE 7.8.3	1b,5b
<i>Alphitonia whitei</i>	Red Ash	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Baileyaefylon lanceolatum</i>	Baileyoxyton	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Brachychiton acerifolius</i>	FLAME KURRAJONG, Flame Tree	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Casianoaspermum australe</i>	Black Bean	RE 7.8.3, RE 7.8.2	5b,1b
<i>Cryptocarya mackinnoniana</i>	RUSTY LAUREL, Mackinnon's Laurel	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Eupomatia laurina</i>	Bolwarra	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Ficus crassipes</i>	Round Leaf Banana Fig	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Ficus superba</i>	Superb Fig	RE 7.8.4	5a
<i>Firmiana pauana</i>	Lacewood	RE 7.8.3	5b
<i>Helicia nortoniana</i>	Norton's Oak	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Jageria pseudothunbergii</i>	Pink Tamarind	RE 7.11.1	2a
<i>Lindera queenslandica</i>	BOLLYWOOD, Brown Beech	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Litsea laetana</i>	Bollywood	RE 7.8.2, RE 7.8.3, RE 7.8.4	1b,5b,5a
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	White Cedar	RE 7.8.3	5b
<i>Melicope elleryana</i>	Pink Evodia	RE 7.3.12, RE 7.8.3	2a,5b
<i>Melicope jonesii</i>	Evodia	RE 7.8.4	5a
<i>Mitchoaspermum lachnocarpus</i>	Woody Pear Fruit	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Neolitsea dealbata</i>	White Bollywood	RE 7.8.3, RE 7.8.4	5b,5a
<i>Pittosporum revolutum</i>	Hairy Pittosporum	RE 7.8.3	5b
<i>Puleia stutzeri</i>	Hard Alder	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Schizomeria whitei</i>	White Birch	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Syzygium alliiiligineum</i>	Onionwood	RE 7.8.1	1a
<i>Trema orientalis</i>	PEACH CEDAR, Poison Peach	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Xanthophyllum octandrum</i>	Macintyre's Boxwood	RE 7.8.2	1b
<i>Xanthostemon chrysanthus</i>	Golden Penda	RE 7.11.1	2a
<i>Zanthoxylum ovalifolium</i>	Oval-leaf Yellow Wood	RE 7.8.2	1b

* RE 7.11.1 etc - Sattler & Williams 1999; 2a etc. - Tracey 1982

More Newsletters

- TREAT Newsletter Dry Season July - September 2005 (this page)
- TREAT Newsletter Cool Season April - June 2005
- TREAT Newsletter Wet Season January - March 2005
- Previous TREAT Newsletters